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Ordering

A PDF version of this handbook is available at no cost from the LinkBC-managed Tourism Online Resource Centre: www.bctorc.ca (keyword: handbook).

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Printing Notes

When requesting copies from your print shop using this PDF file, ask that the front and back covers be printed one-sided on cover-weight paper, while the inside pages should be printed double-sided on regular text-weight paper. Cerlox or coil binding are ideal. NOTE: this page should be the first page on the right when you open the booklet.
Purpose of this Handbook

This provincial resource handbook has been prepared to support the development of a strong Aboriginal tourism industry workforce in BC. Career opportunities in this area have increased since the unprecedented global attention on BC Aboriginal cultural tourism that occurred during the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The handbook presents a BC program delivery model for training and education programs at three different levels. It supports colleges and universities by presenting a set of provincial guidelines that build on lessons learned by institutions offering Aboriginal tourism programs, and by encouraging use of learning resources developed by the Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC (AtBC). It encourages institutions to share ideas, resources, and collaborate in approaches to provincial delivery that would reduce duplication.

The guidelines have been inspired by the success of AtBC’s Trailblazers: Cultural Interpretation, a program that provides skills for employment to Aboriginal youth and career changers. The handbook provides a framework to connect this non-credit program, and others like it, to credit-based college/university tourism/hospitality education offerings.

The Trailblazers Learning Principles

See more details about the Trailblazers: Cultural Interpretation program on page 10. All three components of this provincial delivery model incorporate Aboriginal learning principles as practiced in the Trailblazers program:

- **Respect for the culture:** involvement of elders and a focus on ‘telling and sharing our story’
- **An exploration of what Aboriginal cultural tourism means,** and the cultural foundations of this sector of the industry
- **Learning by doing:** a strong focus to include experiential learning activities
- **Respect for the student/trainee:** acknowledgement of different learning styles and personal goals/circumstances
British Columbia Tourism Learning System

The BC Tourism Learning System refers to the range of laddered programs now available throughout the public post-secondary system in BC, all with industry-validated core content or themes. These programs range from tourism career preparation programs in secondary schools, through post-secondary certificates and diplomas, to bachelor-level degrees (the Bachelor of Tourism Management and Bachelor of Hospitality Management), and graduate degrees in some areas of specialization. Some private career colleges offer programs that are accepted for transfer into public institutions. Aboriginal tourism courses and programs are usually delivered as a sub-set of BC tourism management certificate or diploma programs.

Other BC Tourism Learning System Publications

- BC Tourism Management Diploma Program
- BC Hospitality Management Diploma Program
- BC Adventure Tourism Certificate Program
- BC Bachelor of Tourism Management Degree Program
- BC Hospitality Management Degree Programs

“This is the powerful thing about Aboriginal cultural tourism: it is the only industry that builds the social fabric of our community because it also preserves culture, it promotes culture, it promotes understanding and it promotes pride.”
What is Aboriginal tourism?
The 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games shone the spotlight on Aboriginal tourism like nothing before, greatly increasing awareness that this is a significant part of BC’s tourism industry. ‘Aboriginal tourism’ describes all tourism businesses that are owned or operated by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

What is Aboriginal cultural tourism?
Aboriginal cultural tourism usually refers to businesses offering experiences involving the customs, social structure and art of an Aboriginal culture. While AtBC recognizes and supports all tourism-related businesses owned by First Nations communities or individuals, special attention is given to those offering an authentic cultural experience for guests/visitors.

Tourism is of significant interest to Aboriginal communities. If developed in a thoughtful and sensitive manner, it can have significant potential positive economic, social and cultural impacts. Many communities have undertaken tourism-development activities to support cultural revival, inter-cultural awareness, and economic growth. This growth brings many job and career opportunities for Aboriginal people at all skill levels.

Supporting this growth is the Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC (AtBC). The association was formed in 1996 to support the development of the Aboriginal tourism product in the province. Today, AtBC is a formal society with a vision to spearhead the development of a healthy, prosperous and dynamic Aboriginal cultural tourism industry.

AtBC Vision:
A prosperous and respectful Aboriginal cultural tourism industry sharing authentic products that exceed visitor expectations.

AtBC recognized that if the industry was to achieve its potential, more research, resources and a long-term plan was needed. In 2005, the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC was released to guide AtBC in its early years. Building on this, the primary focus of AtBC is now on growing Aboriginal cultural tourism products and experiences.
Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC

This handbook has been developed to directly meet the education & training goals of the Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy.

What are the benefits of tourism?

As Aboriginal people and communities develop tourism opportunities, they may experience the following benefits:

- **Economic Development**: communities and individuals are provided with a range of economic diversification opportunities, including jobs and business development for entrepreneurs.
- **Cultural Strengthening**: Aboriginal communities obtain the means and motivation to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices.
- **Social Exchange**: visitors experience and understand Aboriginal community heritage and culture directly from the originators of that culture. Simultaneously, host communities gain the opportunity to learn about the cultures of their visitors. These exchanges can be catalysts for cultural healing and intercultural understanding and education, which can help to reduce racism and foster cultural pride.
- **Self-determination / Control**: Aboriginal communities become more self-reliant with more control of their own destinies. Carefully planned tourism development often allows Aboriginal communities to have more control over their culture and determine what aspects to share with visitors. Through culturally-based tourism hosts can have a greater say over their own lives and benefit by being paid to do what they love.
- **Heritage Appreciation**: Aboriginal youth become familiar with and proud of their heritage by teaching them about their cultural traditions, language and values.
- **Political Positioning**: community awareness increases regarding land use and ownership issues, governance, wildlife/environmental management and resource-sharing issues central to treaty negotiations.
- **Alliance building**: opportunities arise to link Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses for long term economic, social and cultural development.

What are the Challenges?

Before Aboriginal people and communities can harness these benefits of tourism development, however, there are often a number of constraints to overcome:

- **Limited awareness**: within the Aboriginal tourism sector of the benefits of tourism development and a lack of knowledge of the available support programs and services.
- **Community restrictions**: especially in relation to community approval and protocol processes for tourism development.
- **Human resource limitations**: inadequate staff capacity to address a range of business management, supervisory and front-line tourism/hospitality service skills.
- **Marketing constraints**: issues related to the use of stereotypic imagery by tourism marketing organizations and a lack of integration of Aboriginal tourism marketing with provincial and regional tourism marketing initiatives.
- **Barriers to product quality**, reliability and authenticity standards.
- **Partnership issues** between Aboriginal operators and the mainstream tourism sector.
- **Limited investment and support programs** for Aboriginal tourism product development.
- **The complex socio-cultural considerations** relating to ‘service vs. servitude’.

More details on these challenges can be found in the Blueprint Strategy document. These are all topics tourism/hospitality students should be encouraged to explore while taking the specialty courses outlined in this handbook.
AtBC’s Mission: to provide training, awareness, product development and marketing to support a sustainable authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in British Columbia while contributing to cultural preservation and economic development.

AtBC Strategic Objectives:
• Improve awareness of Aboriginal cultural tourism among Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs.
• Support tourism-based community, human resources and economic development in Aboriginal communities.
• Capitalize on key opportunities, such as Klahowya Village and other festivals and events that will forward the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism.
• Together with other tourism industry partners, participate in market research and marketing promotion and advertising initiatives and activities that benefit the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry.
• Improve communication with Aboriginal cultural tourism industry, keeping industry partners informed of important developments and AtBC’s plans and activities and providing them with opportunities to provide input into the association.

AtBC Action Plan:
• **Branding** - destination branding is primarily oriented to enhancing the appeal and market awareness of a destination in targeted marketplaces. A successful example of destination branding is BC’s Super, Natural British Columbia. The Aboriginal tourism industry’s complimentary brand, *our story. your experience.* ensures Aboriginal cultural tourism products are certified, authentic, and market-ready.

Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Authenticity Program - An authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experience is majority Aboriginal owned or controlled, satisfies industry standards for market readiness and sector requirements and has high operating standards. It has sufficient content that is culturally appropriate and recognized by the originators of that culture, while providing an opportunity for visitors to interact with Aboriginal people during the cultural tourism experience.

• **Product development and marketing** - tailored to three developmental stages of Aboriginal cultural tourism products:
  • **Tier 1** - Training and Awareness aims to help develop interest in tourism, enhance training for Aboriginal people, attract more Aboriginal workers and raise the retention rate within the Aboriginal tourism sector.
  • **Tier 2** - Product and Business Development is aimed at existing tourism operators that do not have a market-ready product, and there are clear gaps in terms of market ready industry standards, hospitality, service levels and other shortfalls.
  • **Tier 3** - Marketing and Promotion promotes Aboriginal cultural tourism business to the travel trade and visitors and is for tourism products and satisfy market ready standards.

For each of these tiers, a series of programs to spur growth of the Aboriginal tourism industry are offered. For example, in Tier 1, AtBC has developed the innovative Trailblazers Cultural Interpretation career awareness and training program. This handbook outlines the connection between this program and the BC Tourism Learning System.

Blueprint Strategy:
• A higher-skilled and better-qualified Aboriginal labour force for tourism employment.
• More employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal people.
• Greater recognition of the richness and diversity of First Nation cultures and languages in British Columbia (also building on the successful profile at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games).
• More quality, market-ready, culturally-appropriate Aboriginal tourism products to complement existing BC tourism products and travel trade packages.
• More contributors to overall BC tourism product development.
• A more diversified and stronger British Columbia tourism industry.
• A model for other provinces to support the development of the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry.

For more information about AtBC visit [www.AboriginalBC.com](http://www.AboriginalBC.com)
BC Aboriginal Tourism & Education: Program Delivery Model

To support the AtBC Blueprint Strategy, a consortium of BC colleges and universities, AtBC and the LinkBC network, has developed a shared approach for the delivery of Aboriginal tourism education/training in the province. The three components of this plan support the key workforce development recommendations included in the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC:

• **Increase focus** on Aboriginal youth, career awareness & development.
• **Develop and support** more entry-level career programs.
• **Ensure more coordination** and support of existing education and training programs.
• **Create more** community-focused Aboriginal tourism training.

This collaborative model also addresses the challenges identified in the summary document Aboriginal Tourism Employment, Training and Education: a Current Snapshot, prepared by Spo7ez 2010 Aboriginal Training Adjustment Committee (available at www.torc.bc.ca):

• Linkages need to be strengthened among institutions: this will minimize ‘one-off’ Aboriginal tourism programs that result in missed opportunities for sharing lessons learned & articulation/partnerships.
• Communication needs to be improved among schools, and between colleges/universities and funding organizations - the wheel often gets reinvented resulting in poor use of resources.
• The concept of cultural tourism needs to be better understood by overall college/university system (administrators, etc.).
• The government funding partners would benefit from industry-specific guidelines to use when considering what training programs to support and/or fund.
• Links need to be improved between secondary and post-secondary systems.
• The need for better connections between non-credit ‘skills for employment’ programs in Aboriginal tourism (e.g. Trailblazers) and traditional college & university tourism/hospitality programs.

College/university educators from throughout BC, AtBC board members, and AtBC & LinkBC staff, met during 2009/2010 at a Forum and in two working group meetings to deal with this situation. The approach outlined in this handbook begins to address these issues. The model is not prescriptive, but has been developed to provide these benefits for participating institutions:

• Includes a set of common curriculum and instructional guidelines for two levels of community-based training, and core content for Aboriginal tourism courses at the college/university level.
• Integrates appropriate use of, and links to, recognized resources.
• Defines common modular elements and courses that can be used as building blocks to include in a variety of programs.
• Provides information to help educators and communities understand the common objectives of various Aboriginal tourism education programs.
• Creates a mechanism for AtBC to connect in a consistent and productive way with the post-secondary institution system.

**What the handbook components have in common**

The three components in this program delivery model prepare individuals for front-line, supervisory and entrepreneurial positions in tourism. They are intended to:

• define a common approach for effective community-based training.
• Create consistency amongst colleges/universities.
• Incorporate recognized learning resources and build upon successful delivery models.
• Define education/training paths for students or career seekers.
• Emphasize experiential learning.
• Use the Trailblazers ‘philosophy’ of a values-focused approach to training/education.

"Appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture grows when Aboriginal people are the entertainers, guides, speakers, dancers, and are involved throughout the entire business."
Aboriginal Tourism: Community-Based Training Programs

Purpose
These are foundation programs for those of Aboriginal ancestry who may or may not have completed high school. The focus: increasing self-confidence and presentation skills, cultural awareness and life skills. Provides an introduction to tourism/hospitality job and career opportunities. Individuals first identify and then learn how to share their own cultural story.

Length
Short introductory career awareness programs that vary between 1.5 and 4 months.

Required Content
- Trailblazers learning outcomes
- FirstHost workshop
- Presentation skills (our story, your experience.)

Optional Content
- Outdoor skills development activities
- Heritage interpretation
- Events coordination
- National emerit Tourism Essential Skills

Credentials
- Program Completion Certificate
- Workplace & tourism industry skills certificates (e.g. First Aid, FoodSafe, FirstHost, WorldHost, WHMIS, Serving it Right)

Career Options
- Employment in the industry
- Further skills development and education (see pages 11 & 12)

Completion of this Aboriginal community-based training may allow for ‘preferred entry’ into college/university level programs in the BC Tourism Learning System.

Example
- Trailblazers: Cultural Interpretation; Aboriginal Ambassadors program.

*These community-based training programs may be offered in sequence, or concurrently.
Purpose
These are "applied" college-level certificate programs that build upon the objectives of the foundations program. They provide specialized training in a number of occupational areas. They develop knowledge and hands-on skills experience that will lead to jobs in the tourism/hospitality industry.

Length
These practical programs vary between 4 and 8 months.

Required Content
• Trailblazers learning principles
• Practicum (learning by doing)
• FirstHost workshop
• Inclusion of AtBC training resources (AtBC Business Planning Guide, AtBC Cultural Attractions Map etc.)
• National emerit Tourism Essentials Skills workbook
• National industry standards-based training components for job specific skills (emerit resources and certification)
• Tourism industry skills workshops (e.g. FoodSafe, WorldHost)

Optional Content
These programs include a variety of skills training resources according the tourism/hospitality specialty e.g.:
• Aboriginal cuisine
• Tour/Outdoor guide
• Hospitality operations
• Cultural Interpretation
• Events management
• Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism course from page 13

Credentials
• College/university certificate or citation.
• Tourism industry skills certificates (e.g. FirstHost, FoodSafe, WorldHost, WHMIS, Serving it Right)
• Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC): emerit Tourism Essential Skills certificate plus knowledge completion certificates for individual jobs

Career Options
• Front-line skilled employment in the tourism industry
• Further skills development and education (BC tourism/hospitality diploma programs)

Completion of these Aboriginal tourism community-based programs may allow for advanced standing and credit recognition into college/university level programs in the BC Tourism Learning System.

Examples
Aboriginal Cuisine; Cultural/Heritage Interpretation; Hospitality Operations; Outdoor Guide; Events Planning; ‘Ready-to-Work’ Program.

Purpose
These are courses for students wanting to learn more about Aboriginal tourism. They are usually included in tourism/hospitality diploma or degree programs that lead to an operations or management career in the industry.

Length
These are usually offered as credit courses (35-50 hours) and tie into the laddered programs of the BC tourism Learning System.

Required Content
• Trailblazers learning principles (included in the courses) (p.2)
• One or more of the three specialty courses:
  - Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism (BC foundation course)
  - Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Interpretation
  - Host-Guest-Place Relations in Aboriginal Tourism
• Inclusion of AtBC training resources (AtBC Business Planning Guide, AtBC Cultural Attractions Map etc.)
• Use of Aboriginal tourism collection (www.bctorc.ca )
• Aboriginal Tourism: directed studies assignments
• Aboriginal Tourism: Research projects

Credentials
• College/University Tourism or Hospitality Operations Certificate usually 1 year), Management Diploma (2 years) or Management Degree (4 years).

Career Options
• Employment in Aboriginal or mainstream tourism at a senior front-line, supervisory or management-trainee level
• Business development opportunities
• Post-Graduate education in Aboriginal tourism development

Examples
One or more of these Aboriginal tourism courses are offered at: Native Education College, University of Northern BC, Capilano University, College of the Rockies, Thompson Rivers University, Camosun College, Vancouver Island University, Northwest Community College.
As noted previously, these programs vary in length. All Level 1 programs are encouraged to follow the Trailblazers learning principles noted on page 2 and include all or most of the following learning outcomes of the Trailblazers Cultural Interpretation Program. At the end of the program, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate confidence and knowledge in their personal history.
- Represent their culture and ancestry in an holistic and culturally appropriate manner.
- Explain what Aboriginal tourism is and its role in BC's tourism industry.
- Explain what AtBC is and its role in supporting the industry
- Describe examples of Aboriginal tourism operations in BC and in their region.
- Demonstrate their ability to share/teach culturally appropriate arts and crafts.
- Demonstrate their ability to research, plan and present a cultural interpretative session.
- Demonstrate an understanding of flawless guest-service skills.
- Develop, plan, and coordinate a special event.
- Problem-solve guest-host situations effectively.
- Demonstrate their ability to follow local first nations protocols and practices.
- Describe tourism risk management and liability levels, at an introductory level.
- Describe why a risk management plan is essential in cultural interpretation.
- Demonstrate Level 1 First Aid skills.
- Demonstrate FoodSafe knowledge and skills.
- Explain the BC visitor information system, its role and function.
- Describe tourism/hospitality entry-level jobs, career paths and available education options.

Level One programs also include the culturally specific one-day workshop: FirstHost.
Objectives for workshop learning circle members are:

- Define ‘hospitality’.
- Describe the host-guest-place relationship.
- Express the ‘power of place’.
- Explain the role of the host.
- Describe the concept of flawless service.
- Greet guests appropriately.
- Explain how to make a first impression a positive one
- Describe the role and responsibilities of the guest and guest expectations.
- Handle guest concerns and problem solve.
- Define cultural tourism.
- Discuss issues and concerns on ‘sharing our culture’.
- Explain the scope of First Nations’ involvement in the tourism sector.
- Describe the importance of tourism in BC.
- Conduct a tourism resource inventory of your community/region.
These programs offer a common approach and instructional resources, but the focus will vary depending on the specific tourism/hospitality occupation(s) being covered.

In addition to the Trailblazers and FirstHost learning outcomes highlighted on p.10, these programs use the *emerit* Tourism Essential Skills learning resources. These help develop skills for entry-level and frontline workers in tourism and present the skills, attitudes and behaviours that employers expect. Workers who have these skills are often given opportunities to advance because they are able to adjust to shifting workplace conditions, and strive to gain further knowledge and skills. The workbook includes review and self-evaluation activities. Successful completion results in a certificate from *emerit* (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council [www.cthrc.ca](http://www.cthrc.ca), represented by go2 in BC [www.go2hr.com](http://www.go2hr.com)).

**Tourism Essential Skills standards include:**

**Attitudes**
- Demonstrate a positive attitude
- Demonstrate responsibility
- Demonstrate adaptability
- Demonstrate willingness to continuously learn
- Value safety

**Skills**
- Demonstrate communication Skills
- Demonstrate numeracy skills
- Demonstrate computer and other technology skills
- Manage information
- Demonstrate thinking skills
- Demonstrate ability to work with others
- Demonstrate job search skills

**Knowledge**
- Demonstrate knowledge of tourism sector
- Promote the tourism sector and your company
- Provide professional introduction

In addition, specific occupational skills training in b-level programs should use *emerit* training and certification resources. (there are standards available for over 50 occupations, and certification for more than 30). Students can achieve an occupational knowledge certificate for different occupations, which are credited towards professional certification—the highest nationally recognized tourism credential.

**AtBC Learning Resources to Incorporate**

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC has developed a range of useful learning resources that instructors should consider incorporating into community-based training programs and the Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism course (page 13).

These include:
- Aboriginal Cultural Expressions Protocols.
- Cultural Authenticity Guidelines.
- Aboriginal Cultural Attractions Map.
- Transforming Communities through Tourism: A Handbook for Community Tourism Champions (LinkBC with AtBC) with Aboriginal Tourism Development: Community Profiles.

"It takes quite a bit of effort to get a community behind a project." - ATTC BPG Checklist
Did You Know?

- Aboriginal tourism in BC is projected to grow to over $50 million by 2012, up from approximately $35 million today.

- There are upwards of 200 Aboriginal tourism businesses in BC, and more than half of these offer cultural tourism experiences.

- Adventure Tourism (31%), Tourism Services (22%) and Accommodation (21%) collectively comprise almost three quarters (74%) of existing Aboriginal tourism businesses in B.C.

- Tour operators are seeing growing consumer demand for authentic cultural experiences, with 89% indicating in a recent Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC (AtBC) survey they would consider offering or expanding Aboriginal experiences as part of their packages.

- Over a third (36%) of travelers surveyed in a study commissioned by AtBC for the Blueprint Strategy indicated they had visited Aboriginal sites/attractions and events on previous trips to BC.

- Two-thirds (63%) of Aboriginal cultural tourists indicated that they planned to return to BC for Aboriginal tourism within the next three years.

Source: www.AboriginalBC.com

**College & University Courses**

**Aboriginal Tourism**

**Foundation Course:**
Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism

**Optional Course:**
Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Interpretation

**Optional Course:**
Host-Guest-Place Relations in Aboriginal Tourism

The commonly offered topics and learning outcomes for these courses were identified after extensive consultation with Aboriginal tourism leaders and many educators from BC post-secondary institutions. Together, they provide a broad introductory level of knowledge about Aboriginal cultural tourism. The course titles may vary at different colleges/universities but those offering the Foundation course will include at least 80% of the outcomes listed.

These courses are intended to be offered as 3-credit, 45 instructional hour offerings at the certificate/diploma level in BC colleges and universities. This length may vary at some schools. They may also be offered in an elective format at the degree level. Some colleges or universities may consider them to be a mandatory part of an Aboriginal tourism-focused program. Others will offer the foundation course and offer the optional courses as electives to help both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners gain a better appreciation of the topics.

As well as the identified key resources noted for each speciality course, instructors are encouraged to use other valuable resources listed under “Supplemental Resources.”
Foundation Course:  
Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism

Recommended Prerequisite:  
Introduction to Tourism course offered in tourism and hospitality diploma programs.

Credits:  3

Overview:
This introductory course covers the opportunities and challenges facing the development of authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. Students will learn about Aboriginal community perspectives and viewpoints on tourism business development. The course explores conceptual and historical underpinnings, relationships, protocols and appropriate communication approaches related to Aboriginal tourism. Topics discussed include demand, demographic influences, and organizations involved with Aboriginal tourism. Further discussion develops an understanding of the benefits, challenges, and impacts related to this area of study. Areas of Aboriginal tourism growth (domestic/international perspectives) are explored and compared. The course is framed within a regional destination, community & business development perspective.

Learning Outcomes:  
Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

• Explore key concepts, demographic influences, and demand for cultural and Aboriginal tourism. Understand the definitions of Aboriginal and cultural tourism.
• Discuss the influences that history and diverse world views have on Aboriginal people in BC.
• Discuss the benefits and challenges facing Aboriginal communities developing tourism experiences.
• Discuss community tourism development issues and practices, particularly in the Aboriginal context.
• Describe the importance of building respectful relationships when working with Aboriginal people.
• Explain the importance of protocols and appropriate communication approaches from an Aboriginal perspective. Identify examples.
• Understand the importance of authenticity for cultural tourism, and identify examples of culturally-authentic experiences or products in BC.
• Identify and analyze problems and impacts such as commodification and commercialization of a culture.
• Explore the relationship between culture, heritage and tourism and understand their potentially competing values.
• Examine the growth areas for Aboriginal tourism development, e.g. wellness tourism, eco-tourism, interpretation, cultural and heritage sites, Aboriginal-focused events.
• Identify examples of Indigenous tourism initiatives outside of Canada (e.g. US, New Zealand and Australia) and compare to the current BC situation.
• Describe the role of organizations supporting Aboriginal tourism development (e.g. Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia and their current vision, plans and programs such as Trailblazers: Cultural Interpretation).

Suggested Resources:
• Notzke, Claudia. 2006. The Stranger, the Native and the land – Perspectives on Indigenous Tourism. Captus Press

Supplementary Resources:
• Transforming Communities through Tourism, A Handbook for Community Tourism Champions 2010 (LinkBC, AtBC, Union of BC Municipalities) www.bctorc.ca
• Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC 2005 www.AboriginalBC.com
• AtBC Cultural Attractions Map 2009 www.AboriginalBC.com
• LinkBC Tourism Online Resource Centre (www.bctorc.ca select Aboriginal Tourism under Industry Resources)
Optional Course 2: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Interpretation

Recommended Prerequisite: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism. It is also recommended that instructors have the CTHRC Certified Heritage Interpreter designation.

Credits: 3

Overview: This course provides an overall examination of the principles of heritage interpretation and demonstrates how ‘knowledge holders’ can help guests appreciate the cultural or natural significance of a destination or attraction. Students will gain a theoretical and practical understanding of interpretation with special considerations for how Aboriginal people and communities can effectively tell the story of their cultural and heritage sites and attractions.

This course will explore issues significant to Aboriginal cultural tourism, such as the process used by Aboriginal communities to record and share their history, ownership of knowledge, recovery of traditional skills, repatriation of cultural artifacts and finally, how this information and these collections are shared. Learners will be provided with information about what approaches Aboriginal tourism businesses can take to create a more authentic and valuable experience and learning opportunity for their visitors.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Define what interpretation is and what an interpreter does.
- Describe the key components of the national emerit occupational standards for Heritage Interpreter.
- Demonstrate effective communication styles and techniques essential for high-impact interpretation programs.
- Learn how to research a topic to build an effective interpretation program.
- Describe key concepts and principles of heritage interpretation.
- Examine how people learn through a variety of learning styles.
- Describe special considerations for Aboriginal communities sharing culture and local knowledge with visitors.
- Enhance public speaking skills and demonstrate cultural knowledge and interpretative skills through in-class and in-field presentations.
- Discuss the importance of effective signage and kiosks, etc. to deliver information to guests when no guide is present.
- Identify examples of successful BC Aboriginal cultural and heritage sites and explain their main interpretive features.
- Using case studies, discuss the issues surrounding the repatriation of artifacts for display at cultural centres and museums.
- Understand issues of protocol and authenticity when interpreting Aboriginal culture and heritage.
- Use the AtBC provincial cultural tourism brand, our story, your experience, to build an interpretive program based on their own personal ‘story’ (Aboriginal students may want to work with their own community to develop an interpretative story.)
- Describe what tools and techniques Aboriginal tourism businesses can use to provide guests/visitors with a better appreciation of local history and Aboriginal culture, such as: historic and contemporary displays, themed events, cuisine, graphic design, staff dress code, music, architecture, logo and design elements, art, maps, products for sale, menu design, on-site and directional signage, language, traditional welcome, etc.

Instructors & Coordinator Resources:

- emerit Heritage Interpreter Occupational Standards (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council) www.emerit.ca.
- Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council Heritage Interpreter Workbook.
- Check www.bctorc.ca: Interpretation and Tourism collection.
Optional Course 3: Host-Guest-Place Relations in Aboriginal Tourism

Recommended Prerequisite: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Tourism; FirstHost workshop (can be included within course)

Credits: 3

Overview: This course builds on the popular FirstHost workshop. It delves more deeply into how sharing Aboriginal culture with guests and opening communities to strangers requires a careful approach: a balance between the needs of the host, the guest, and the place itself. The ‘new hospitality model’ developed by the late Dr. George Kanahele is described as the basis for a sustainable tourism industry. This knowledge, and the sensitivity developed from it, is important as the Aboriginal tourism industry continues to grow in BC.

This course also considers the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships over time and gives learners a better appreciation for the complex cross-cultural challenges that continue to shape today’s British Columbia. The appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture for visitors grows when Aboriginal people are actively involved as entertainers, guides, speakers, dancers, and participants throughout the entire business. Students will study the concept of values-based management, as it applies to the course theme, by using case studies and applied research.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

• Describe what visitors need and want from an Aboriginal tourism business (as different from a non-Aboriginal business).
• Discuss the objectives behind, and the key components of, the FirstHost workshop.
• Describe the unique nature of the host-guest-place relationship, and the importance of this to the Aboriginal tourism industry.
• Understand the importance of the ‘sense of place’, its key role in the visitor experience, and how this concept relates to current policies and practices such as ‘buy local, hire local’, the ‘100 mile diet’ etc.
• Understand the mutual importance and sometimes complex relationships between the host and the guest.
• Explain why the demand for tourism relies on the quality of the unique host-guest-place relationship (another definition of sustainability).
• Discuss how the host-guest-place relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal BC people has evolved over the centuries.
• Discuss the host-guest-place relationship using examples from Aboriginal communities.
• Describe philosophy and policies used by Aboriginal cultural attractions/facilities in preparing for and welcoming guests.
• Understand how tourism can be the ‘keeper of the culture’ and provide examples of this.
• Describe the opportunities for providing a guest with an authentic and memorable experience, particularly in an Aboriginal tourism/community context.
• Describe ‘managing by values’ principles and explain why these are important in the Aboriginal tourism industry.
• Understand the impact that hosts and guests can have on culture and the environment and how values-based management can mitigate the impacts.

Instructors Resources:
• Stand Tall, A Search for Hawaiian Values (Kanahele, George S. (1986). Ku Kanaka, University of Hawaii Press)
• Stand Tall, A Search for Hawaiian Values (Kanahele, George S. (1986). Ku Kanaka, University of Hawaii Press)
• FirstHost Circle Member Workbook (Native Education College, 1999)

“ Our province offers many outstanding Aboriginal tourism experiences, but head-to-head on the world stage, Aboriginal tourism in BC is still in its infancy. We’re scratching the surface of what’s possible. ”

– ATBC
Notes for Instructors

BC colleges and universities are encouraged to collaborate in the common development and delivery of community-based training and college-university offered Aboriginal tourism courses. This allows for effective sharing of instructors and learning resources, and helps address issues relating to enrolment, funding, and specific regional needs.

Successful Approaches to Cross-Cultural Learning
Recognize Our Shared History: Utilize the Right Resource People

If not already doing so, administrators and instructors choosing to offer Aboriginal tourism courses in BC colleges and universities should become familiar with the history and make-up of Aboriginal people in BC and Canada. Currently there is limited instructional expertise built up in this new area. Non-Aboriginal program administrators and instructors are encouraged to:

- Involve local First Nations community members as Aboriginal tourism instructors and resource people for these recommended courses, and assist them in developing as instructors.
- Invite resource people who work at the many Aboriginal cultural centres and tourism businesses located throughout BC.
- Provide professional development for these instructors and resource people, including detailed strategies for bringing the learning outcomes ‘to life’ for students.
- Hire Aboriginal staff as sessional instructors; consider a team teaching approach.
- Call your colleagues in other LinkBC network schools for recommendations of qualified Aboriginal tourism instructors and resource people.
- Consider hosting an Aboriginal cross-cultural education workshop for your team (e.g: Indigenous Corporate Training [www.ictinc.ca])

The Elder’s Box

The elder thrust forward what appeared to be an empty box. The elder asked, ‘How many sides do you see?’

‘One,’ I said.

He pulled the box towards his chest and turned it so one corner faced me. ‘Now how many do you see?’

‘Now I see three sides.’

He stepped back and extended the box, one corner towards him and one towards me. ‘You and I together can see six sides of the box.’

Aboriginal Knowledge

...is based on observation, direct experience, testing, teaching and recording in the collective memory through oral tradition, storytelling, ceremonies, and songs. The fact that Native science is not fragmented into specialized compartments does not mean that it is irrational, but rather that it is based on the belief that all things are connected and must be considered within the context of that interrelationship. In order to maintain harmony and balance, this holistic approach gives the same importance to rational thinking as it does to spiritual beliefs and social values.

Understand the Value of Holistic Lifelong Learning

The Canadian Council on Learning and its Aboriginal Learning Centre published *Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning, 2007*. Included in this document is a section on ‘Understanding First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning’ which outlines key characteristics of holistic lifelong learning. The context of their work is that Aboriginal people often advocate a holistic lifelong learning approach based on the nurturing of relationships among the individual, the family, the community, the nation and all of Creation. Understanding this cultural emphasis can help non-Aboriginal instructors consider and develop relevant approaches for instruction.

[Source: Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC Consumer Intercept Study & Visitor Post Trip Survey and Literature Review (2005).]

Did You Know?

Travelers interested in Aboriginal tourism experiences in B.C. tend to be:

- Well-educated, upper middle-income wage earners, female baby boomers.
- Visiting from primarily North American and European destinations.
- Including Aboriginal tourism in their B.C. travels for the first time (65%).
- Taking part in Aboriginal tourism in places beyond B.C. (64%).
- Spending more money per trip than other tourists.

Compared to other B.C. travelers, these tourists are more apt to:

- Spend more trip days in B.C. (average of 13 days).
- Include Aboriginal experiences on more of those trip days (average of 3 days).
- Visit more than one Aboriginal location on B.C. trip (average of 2.2 sites).
- Visit Aboriginal interpretive centres (24%), attractions (22%), museums (21%).
- Travel in larger parties (average of 3.6 persons).

[Source: Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC Consumer Intercept Study & Visitor Post Trip Survey and Literature Review (2005).]
Characteristics of Aboriginal Learning

Learning is:

- **Holistic** - the learning process simultaneously engages and develops all aspects of the individual.
- **A Lifelong process** - learning is connected to all stages of human development, beginning before birth and continuing through childhood to old age.
- **Experiential in nature** - the traditional Aboriginal classroom consisted of the community and the natural environment, experiential learning is seen as connected to lived experience, as in learning by doing.
- **Rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures** - through language, Aboriginal people transmit cultural knowledge from one generation to another and make sense of their shared experience.
- **Spiritually oriented** - knowledge is a sacred object, and seeking knowledge is a spiritual quest, ‘when the spirit is absent, learning becomes difficult, unfulfilling, and, perhaps, impossible.’
- **A communal activity**, involving family, community and elders - elders play a key role as facilitators of lifelong learning and teach responsibilities and relationships among family, community and creation, reinforcing intergenerational connections and identities.
- **An integration of Aboriginal and western knowledge** - Aboriginal learning is not a static activity, but rather an adaptive process that derives the best from traditional and contemporary knowledge.

Include Experiential Education Activities

As noted above, experiential education, while important for all learners, has shown to be a most effective instructional strategy in the Aboriginal learning community. Instructors are encouraged to include as many field experiences as possible, and to include ‘real-life’ learning opportunities for students involving communities and Aboriginal attractions/businesses. These could include research projects developed in partnership with attraction managers or community elders, analysis of local case studies, and Aboriginal tourism development or planning projects with community and business leaders.

Connect Your Course/Program to the Provincial Tourism Learning System

All BC tourism and hospitality programs are encouraged to consider offering at least one of the recommended courses in their range of offerings. Administrators are encouraged to ensure that credits for these specialty courses are recognized for credit transfer through other tourism/hospitality management programs in the BC Tourism Learning System. This will assist students wishing to arrange for block transfer into BC tourism/hospitality degree programs.

Redefining How Success is Measured

...states that ‘learning is tied to place in ways that could be described as ‘spiritual.’

It also suggests Aboriginal people’s relationship to the land is ‘not one of ownership per se, for we are owned more by the land is owned by us. We are tied to it by obligations and responsibilities established by our ancestors in times far back, and we pass those obligations on to our children and grandchildren. Integral to the learning process is knowledge of sacred places such as burial sites and traditional hunting grounds which tie the culture to the land and remind people of their past and their future, their ancestors and their offspring, their spirit and their obligations.’
Learn more by visiting the extensive Aboriginal tourism collection at TORC - the Tourism Online Resource Centre - featuring reports and links from cultures around the world: www.bctorc.ca
My vision for Aboriginal tourism is that when our visitors see the messaging about Canada as a country, they see a seamless integration or fusion of Canada and its indigenous population. We tell the same story from two different perspectives, but together we create the whole story about this country.

*Brenda Baptiste, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC*