

"You know things are good when it's May and we have the Symposium."

These are the words of a regular attendee as she greets some of her colleagues on the first morning of the **Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE) Symposium 2019**. She wasn't let down. The NOIIE Symposium once again lived up to its legacy as a positive and supportive gathering of educators in an enthusiastic celebration of learning.

This year, educators from all over BC and the Yukon — along with international guests from England, New Zealand, Australia, Spain and Finland — engaged in lively dialogue and

reflection about teaching and learning. The collective goal: leaving more curious than they arrived while making meaningful connections, and understanding, respecting and supporting Indigenous ways of learning.

Doing What Matters Most was the theme guiding this year's conversations. Presentations emphasized the central role that stories and relationships play in making a difference in education. A compelling message was that for transformative and life-long learning to occur, it's crucial to honour our own identities and personal 'learning stories' and those of our students. Getting to know ourselves as educators, as members of the community, as learners, and as beings in connection with others allows us to channel our



Reflections on Teaching and Learning

by **Silvia Mazabel & Nikki Yee**

energy in productive ways. It is only when we open our hearts and minds to build respectful, trusting, understanding and caring connections with our students that we enable them to thrive and become agents of their learning. It sounds relatively easy on paper but in reality it is a challenging journey.

Fortunately, over the years NOIE has generated the space and time for committed, persistent and generous educators to collaborate in thinking deeply about how to support learners but — more importantly — about how to create a network of educators to collectively shift educational beliefs and practices. It's a lofty goal that so far has reached many communities, schools and children across the world.

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Dr. Helen Timperley started out in the Pre-symposium by guiding educators and leaders in conversations to address underlying beliefs

and values that need to happen before teaching practice can be changed. In the following days, presenters such as Brad Baker and Brooke Moore demonstrated the importance of engaging with our own stories, and the stories of our colleagues and students, to create the kind of deep and meaningful relationships that are so important for learning and being.



Presenters in other sessions shared their stories of learning as researchers, school districts, and school staffs engaged in their own cycles of inquiry to uplift students and to advance teaching and learning. These efforts have led to exemplary practices across the province, as noted by Deputy Minister of Education Scott MacDonald.

Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert once again facilitated three days of sharing, with invigorating ideas to support staff and students. Most importantly, attendees witnessed the power and potential of complex and adaptive networks to support every learner in crossing the stage with dignity, purpose, and options.

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