

Multiple Ability Task: Identity Imaging Using the Medicine Wheel Concept

(Courtesy of First Nations Ten – Saskatchewan website on Wiki)

“The Medicine Wheel teaches us that we have four aspects to our nature: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual. Each of these aspects must be equally developed in a healthy, well-balanced individual through the development and use of volition. All elements are contained within the Medicine Wheel, and all elements are equal within it. The Medicine Wheel is symbolic of the total universe. For people who recognize this holistic unity, the natural forces of the universe inspire wholeness of being. An indigenous worldview holistically interrelates all components. Tribal structures of life cannot be fragmented due to the intrinsic binding and interconnecting power of the circle.”

This activity to be used after an introductory lesson on the universal indigenous recognition of the circle and the more localized interpretation of health through the medicine wheel (Ojibwe and other bands). While the Medicine Wheel may not be used in all tribes, the holistic conception of health is a universal characteristic of all First Nations. For students to gain a better understanding of this concept, you can use the activity below to help them visualize themselves in the medicine wheel:

ACTIVITY:

Ask students to draw a large circle on a blank piece of paper, divide it into four parts (this is the basis for a medicine wheel).

Next, ask students to close their eyes (if comfortable to them) and visualize a time in their lives when they felt good about their ‘physical’ self. Ask them to recreate this time in their minds (ie: at a sporting event, walking through the woods, etc.). Tell them to imagine in detail; what sounds they heard, what they felt, what they saw, and more.

Repeat the above exercise for each of the remaining categories, about one minute for each; *mental* (ie: finding a solution to a problem, playing chess, reading a book, etc.), *emotional* (ie: a situation where you felt loved and felt the capacity to love others, a moment shared with a relative), and *spiritual* (ie: when they felt a strong connection to their history, religion, nature, creativity or more).

Lastly, students write down on their wheels what they have imagined for each part of the medicine wheel for themselves. Teacher communicates that this is the students own personal view of their best health. Ask students to create as much detail as possible to give themselves the best possible outlook on their four aspects of self.