

Instructional Approach

As the graphic illustrates, the guiding principles of Place, Inquiry, Community, First Peoples' Perspectives, and Personal Connections are all tied to direct experience. It's through hands-on experiential learning that students are best able to make sense of the world and this is especially true in outdoor settings.

**Teaching (& Learning) in and about place:**

An experience at Cheakamus Centre connects learning across all subject areas; it is the feature of each place that determines the content. Teaching at the Cheakamus Centre takes place in real settings where what is being taught is in context, such as learning about the salmon cycle in the fish hatchery or traditional Coast Salish practices within an authentic Big House, and surrounding rainforest ecological reserve.

Engaging students with nature-based inquiry:

Cheakamus programs use local places as the context (lens) for inquiring and making connections with the real world. Students are equipped with real tools for exploration and inquiry, and are led by enthusiastic teachers, and program staff who act as role models for environmental and community stewardship. Students are given the opportunity to develop thinking skills and to learn subject matter in deep and lasting ways.

Fostering a sense of community:

Cheakamus programs foster a sense of belonging in students for their community and environment. Through cabin-living & participating in daily chores, students learn skills and strategies to create and maintain healthy relationships, recognize and appreciate diversity, and make positive contributions to their community and environment.

Integrating First Peoples' perspectives:

Cheakamus programs are designed to reflect the [First Peoples' Principles of Learning](#). The recognition that learning is 'focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place' is inter-woven throughout the learning experience. Additionally, opportunities to incorporate traditional indigenous knowledge are encouraged across a range of field study areas.

Making personal connections:

Cheakamus programs allow learners to discover personal connections with the natural world. Positive learning experiences have been shown to enhance students' appreciation of nature. In addition, exposure to the natural environment improves mental health and well-being, and promotes social-emotional skill development.