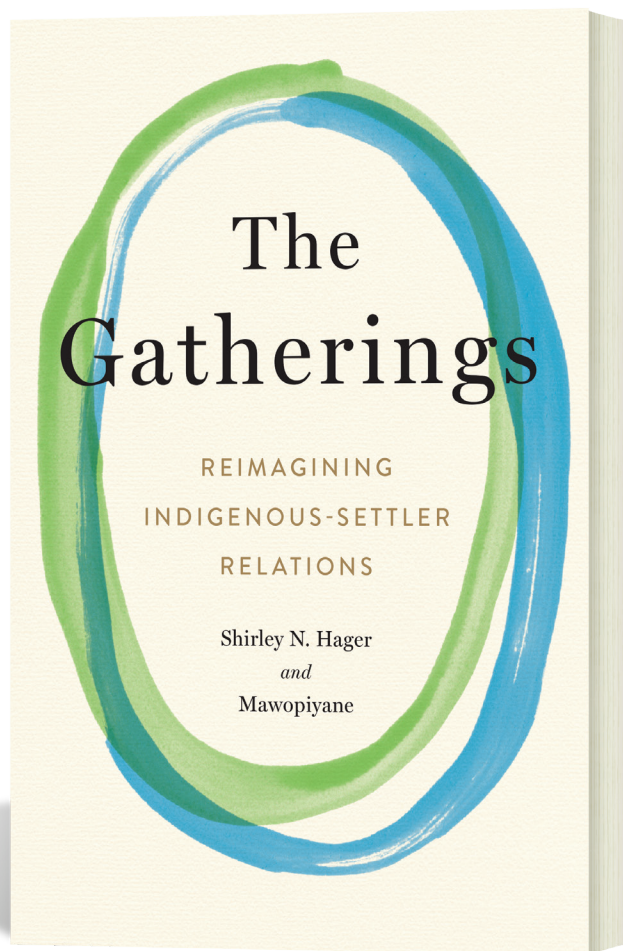


TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane



The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

MAWOPIYANE

Mawopiyane is a name chosen to describe the full group of co-authors. It means, in Passamaquoddy, “let us sit together.”

Mawopiyane:

Gwen Bear
Shirley Bowen
Alma H. Brooks
gkisedtanamoogk
Frances Hancock
JoAnn Hughes
Debbie Leighton
Barb Martin
Miigam’agan
T. Dana Mitchell
Wayne A. Newell
Betty Peterson
Marilyn Keyes Roper
Wesley Rothermel

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

CONTRIBUTORS

The teacher's guide for *The Gatherings* was developed following the writing team's participation in a book study sponsored by the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association (MCLA; <https://www.mainecla.org/>). With the generous support of UNUM through their Social Justice Fund program and the University of Toronto Press, the writing team crafted this resource in hopes of supporting colleagues from across the United States and Canada, and beyond, as they guide students in their journey through *The Gatherings*.

Writing Team

Courtney Belolan

Former Executive Director, Maine Curriculum Leaders Association (MCLA)

Jane Chamberlain

English Teacher, Camden Hills Regional High School, Maine

Beth E. Clifford, Writing Team Coordinator

Curriculum Coordinator, Maine Indian Education

Christiane Cullens, MSED

National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)

English Teacher, Mount Desert Island High School, Maine

Jennifer Rennie

Latin Teacher, Gorham High School, Maine

Mathy M. Terrill

Social Studies Teacher, Orono High School, Maine

Michael Young, MSED

Social Studies Teacher, Cape Elizabeth High School, Maine

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Guide Reviewers**Kate Gardoqui**Senior Associate,¹ Great Schools Partnership, Based in Portland, Maine**Chris Newell (Passamaquoddy)**Co-founder, Akomawt Educational Initiative;² Visiting Lecturer, UCONN College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS); and Published Children's Book Author**Darren J. Ranco, PhD (Penobscot)**

Chair of Native American Programs and Professor of Anthropology, University of Maine

Consultants**Miigam'agan (Mi'kmaq)**Co-author, *The Gatherings*

Elder-in-Residence at St. Thomas University, New Brunswick, Canada

Shirley N. HagerCo-author, *The Gatherings*

Associate Professor, University of Maine Cooperative Extension (retired)

Miigam'agan and Shirley met with the writing team, shared their wisdom and guidance, and provided clarity and focus for the development of the teacher's guide. We are grateful for their contributions and support.

¹Senior associates "serve as school coaches, who work to build capacity and help educators address inequity and improved learning for all students" (<https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/what-we-do/>).

²Akomawt is "a majority Native American owned consultancy group and educational support service for K-12 schools, colleges and universities, museums, media, and cultural sites" (<https://www.akomawt.org/>).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Dear Teachers,

We are deeply grateful for the enthusiastic support of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association (MCLA) for this teacher's guide, and to the extraordinary writing team that created it.

As part of their process, the team met with Miigam'agan and me prior to the creation of the guide. That was my first experience of the depth of commitment, self-awareness, and knowledge embodied in this group. It was therefore no surprise, but still extremely gratifying, when I read the first draft. The sensitivity, creativity, and astuteness demonstrated in the exercises and activities was beyond my expectations. The guide was a document that reflected the heart, the intentions, and the hopes of our book.

During our process of creating *The Gatherings*, Miigam'agan would say, "This is for the children." This teacher's guide makes that intention literal and tangible. While our book and this guide draw on experiences and examples from Wabanaki territory, we feel that the lessons are universal, not only in service to Indigenous-settler relations but to all relations, as we strive toward a more just and equitable world for all. We hope you think so too.

Shirley Hager and Mawopiyane

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 7 |
| Preparing for Circles | 9 |
| Building Circles..... | 11 |
| <i>Touchstones</i> | 12 |
| <i>The Circle Way</i> | 14 |
| <i>Talking Circle</i> | 15 |
| Standards Alignments | 17 |
| Building Context | 20 |
| Entering the Gatherings | 21 |
| <i>Part I: Gathering</i> | 22 |
| <i>Preparing</i> | 22 |
| <i>The Talking Circle</i> | 23 |
| <i>The Last Gathering</i> | 26 |
| <i>Part II: The Giveaway Blanket</i> | 27 |
| <i>Circle and Ceremony</i> | 27 |
| <i>Allies, Friends, Family</i> | 28 |
| <i>How We Got Here</i> | 29 |
| <i>How It Could Be Different</i> | 30 |
| Resources | 31 |

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

INTRODUCTION

Dear teachers,

Thank you for taking on the work of bringing the culture, history, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples to your students and for exploring Indigenous-settler relations. We know that many of you have been searching for guidance and resources on how to do that, and we sincerely hope that this guide supports you. Before you move ahead with reading this guide and planning for some incredible work with the learners in your classes, we have some heartfelt advice for you.

First, come to this work with a deep sense of cultural humility. If you are White or non-Native, remove yourself from the center of your understanding of what you think you know. Instead, adopt the stance of a respectful learner and open yourself to taking in the truth, perspectives, and information from the Wabanaki voices in this book. Sit with your worldview and be ready to welcome the worldview of Indigenous peoples and their deep sense of belonging to the land and one another. Be willing to think, reflect, and be aware of your own thinking in relation to theirs. Be careful about your language and practice using inclusive language, such as using the word Indigenous to describe the people who first lived and thrived on the land.

Second, prepare yourself thoroughly before sharing this book with students. Read the whole book first. Watch some of the videos with the authors. Do some learning for yourself about things you didn't know, or are curious about as you read the book. It is essential that you read the whole first half of the book before starting a circle practice with students. Speaking of circles, you will see that we recommend using circles as the primary way to discuss this book. You do not need to feel like a "circle expert" in order to have successful circles. In fact, they may be awkward and clunky at first. We are just asking you and your students to approach reading and discussing this book in a different way. (If you have never experienced a circle as a participant, you may wish to seek out that experience as part of your preparation. Various restorative justice programs offer training that would allow you to experience a circle before leading one.)

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

The questions provided are for guidance and if you find you need some prompts to get discussions going. If you never use a single one of them, that is wonderful. Let the circles be organic, with ebbs and flows of silence and voices. As a note, you may want to do some reading about how to handle “big emotions” in circles, as it can happen. At the end of this teacher’s guide, we have included links to some information related to this used in restorative practices.

Third, make the learning and experiences around this book part of a bigger learning experience. The possibilities for including this book in a larger unit of study, project, or exploration are endless. You may decide to let learners follow their interests in the different questions and topics that come up. You may decide to frame the book with specific topics and assignments. You will not be able to thoroughly explore all the ideas and concepts that come up, so choose a few and do them well.

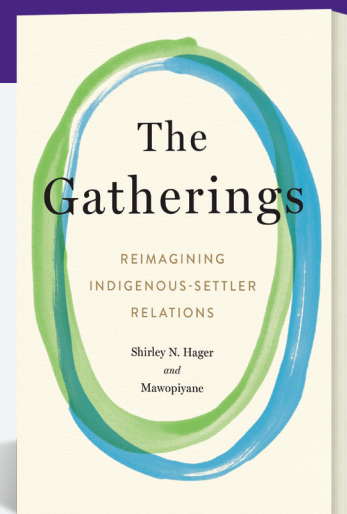
Finally, know that you are doing important work and that it is okay to grow and learn right alongside your students. You may make mistakes in the kind of language you use, or how you show up, or how you support a circle, or in any number of ways. Recognize when it happens, then correct yourself without judgment or much fuss. Model the learning process. There may be times when you feel unsure or the circle discussions feel flat. Keep going. Let there be space for the circles to grow and unfold naturally.

With love,
The teacher’s guide authors

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

In a world that requires knowledge and wisdom to address developing crises around us, *The Gatherings* shows how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can come together to create meaningful and lasting relationships.



PAPER: 9781487545888

\$24.95

Available as an ebook

PREPARING FOR CIRCLES

Circle Quotes

“Mawopiyane, in Passamaquoddy, literally means ‘let us sit together’” (xi).

“What we experienced ... is that, in spite of our history, understanding is still possible, trust is still possible, laughter is still possible. These rewards, however, do not come easily or quickly. Interactions are filled with anxiety and awkwardness. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations are inevitable ... Patience, flexibility, and persistence are required” (xxix).

“This is not a debate or dialogue where one speaks directly to, or contradicts, someone else in the Circle. Rather, it is a sacred sharing into the Circle of what is deepest in one’s heart or uppermost on one’s mind. There are no rules or expectations about what to say. The message can be personal or political, or both. One may speak or pass. If one chooses to pass, the Stick will come around again for another chance” (9).

“One of the dynamics of the Circle is that you take whatever time is needed to process something; you don’t rush things. Once people ‘have the floor’ they know they can speak about their concerns in whatever way they want, however long they want, and the rest of us are obligated to listen. As soon as you give up the Talking Stick, or whatever object you’re using, the process gets reversed. Someone else starts speaking and you become part of the bigger Circle again, with an obligation to listen as others did to you. It’s a sacred responsibility ...” (22).

“... we’re not afraid to talk about issues, even when we don’t see eye to eye. We’ve actually built a ‘sacred circle of learning.’ ... That’s what I call the space where we’re not afraid to bring who we are and what we represent. It’s a sacred space because it is a place of trust and safety, free from intimidation. I hold these places in the highest esteem because they deserve that” (26).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

“... meeting in a Circle was key to the success of the Gatherings. An obvious advantage of meeting in a Circle is that every person can see everyone else, and also there is no visual hierarchy. As gkisedtanamoogk’s Elder, Slow Turtle, says, ‘In a Circle, no one is taller than anyone else’” (66).

“... we talked about learning to sit with people’s anger, to experience it but not to ‘take it on’ ... you have a visceral response when you hear that much candid, raw emotion, and we were taking a walk to catch our breath and remember that it’s a privilege to be trusted enough to hear it. It’s still a struggle for me to hear anger and not want to turn into a ‘fixer,’ but in the Circle, it’s your job to just sit and acknowledge. In that Circle there’s nothing you can do but to be with the person speaking” (80).

“The secret of the Circle lies in giving oneself over to it ... allow the power of the Circle to transform us, and resist the urge to control it” (131–2).

“I think people were willing to make themselves vulnerable, to take risks, to recognize that the process is messy. To be willing to apologize when we hurt someone and take responsibility for that; and on the other side, to be willing to forgive unintended hurts. Both have to be present – the willingness to apologize, and also to know that there will be forgiveness extended because the relationship is more important than any given thing we screw up and say or do” (153).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

BUILDING CIRCLES

It's important to establish mutually agreed-upon commitments before entering a circle. Clearly articulating the expectations and boundaries of listening and speaking ahead of time allows all members of the circle to abide by them and support each other to do the same. Another key element of a circle is wait time. It's critical that each member know that the group's focus is on them while they have the floor. This can create some discomfort, as the experience can be a new one for some.

It will be helpful to prepare circle participants ahead of time by discussing the process and emphasizing that experiencing discomfort is not the same as not feeling safe. The group should agree upon a specific object that will be passed around the circle to indicate whose turn it is to speak. Indigenous communities sometimes use a talking piece while conducting a circle. It is helpful to use something that is important to/valued by the group for this purpose.

Strategies for waiting on others to speak (engaging in active listening, focused breathing, averting one's gaze, consciously reflecting on the feelings in each area of one's body, etc.) can be provided. Once participants have had experience with being in a circle, they can brainstorm their own suggestions. It's also important to recognize that being in a circle requires discipline — to be attentive, patient, and fully present. Participants will need to build stamina over time.

Some general guidelines are as follows:

- Before gathering in a circle, consider providing time for reflection through writing/journaling.
- Come to the circle without digital devices and other distractions.
- Place chairs at a comfortable distance from each other, leaving desks and other furniture outside of the space.
- Circles build through the development of trust and shared understanding. Begin with questions/topics that are more comfortable and move toward those that are more complex.

Some samples of circle guidance are listed on the following pages. You can modify this content for your group's needs.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Courage & Renewal
Touchstones*Give and receive welcome.*

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech."



Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Courage & Renewal
TouchstonesCENTER for
**COURAGE &
RENEWAL***When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.*

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself:

- I wonder what brought them to this belief?
- I wonder what they are feeling right now?
- I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?

Set aside judgment to listen to others – and to yourself – more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from silence

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silences as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people whom we chose to say it – whether in small groups or in the large circle – and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

THE CIRCLE WAY

The following content is from **The Circle Way – Basic Guidelines for Calling a Circle** and Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea's *The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair* (2010).

Setting Circle Agreements

The use of agreements allows all members to have a free and profound exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group.

Agreements often used include:

- We hold all stories or personal material in confidentiality.
- We listen to each other with compassion and curiosity.
- We ask for what we need and offer what we can.
- We agree to employ a group guardian to watch our need, timing, and energy.
- We agree to pause at a signal when we feel the need to pause.

Three Principles

1. Leadership rotates among all circle members.
2. Responsibility is shared for the quality of experience.
3. Reliance is on wholeness, rather than on any personal agenda.

Three Practices

1. Speak with intention: note what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
2. Listen with attention: be respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
3. Tend to the well-being of the circle: remain aware of the impact of our contributions.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

TALKING CIRCLE

The following content is from **Talking Circle: Fact Sheet**.

Talking circles are based on the sacred tradition of sharing circles. People leading a traditional sharing circle will have a blessing from an Elder to do this, and will use special prayers and sacred objects in the ceremony.

The purpose of the less formal talking circle, used as part of classroom instruction, is to create a safe environment in which students can share their point of view with others. In a Talking Circle, each one is equal and each one belongs. Participants in a Talking Circle learn to listen and respect the views of others. The intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with one another.

- Participants sit in a circle. The circle symbolizes completeness.
- Review ground rules with participants. For example:
 - Everyone's contribution is equally important.
 - State what you feel or believe starting with "I-statements," e.g., "I feel ..."
 - All comments are addressed directly to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.
- An everyday object such as a rock or a pencil is sometimes used as a talking object.
- When the talking object is placed in someone's hands, it is that person's turn to share his or her thoughts, without interruption. The object is then passed to the next person in a clockwise direction.
- Whoever is holding the object has the right to speak, and others have the responsibility to listen.
- Everyone else is listening in a non-judgmental way to what the speaker is saying.
- Silence is an acceptable response. There must be no negative reactions to the phrase, "I pass."
- Speakers should feel free to express themselves in any way that is comfortable: by sharing a story or a personal experience, by using examples or metaphors, and so on.

This excerpt on talking circles ©Alberta Education, *Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners*, 2005, p. 163.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Cautions

- Consider the individual needs of the participants.
- Respect the differing comfort zones of the participants.
- Ensure that the participants feel safe.

References

First Nations Pedagogy Online: <http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/circletalks.html>

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS

United States Common Core Standards

Reading: Informational Text >> Grade 9–10

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3. Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Reading: Informational Text >> Grade 11–12

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

United States C3 Standards

Dimension 2, Human-Environment Interaction

- D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced the cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

Dimension 2, Change, Continuity, and Context

- D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Dimension 2, Perspectives

- D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.
- D2.His.7.9-12. Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.
- D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

The Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Learning in Schools

Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing modes of language(s) as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively.

The Atlantic Canada ELA Curriculum, Key Stage Curriculum Outcomes**Speaking and Listening**

- examine others' ideas and synthesize what is helpful to clarify and expand on their own understanding
- ask discriminating questions to acquire, interpret, analyse, and evaluate ideas and information
- respond to a wide range of complex questions and directions
- reflect critically on and evaluate their own and others' uses of language in a range of contexts
- recognize elements of verbal and non-verbal messages that produce powerful communication
- consistently demonstrate active listening and concern for the needs, rights, and feelings of others
- demonstrate how spoken language influences and manipulates, and reveals ideas, values, and attitudes

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Reading and Viewing

- articulate their own processes and strategies in exploring, interpreting, and reflecting on sophisticated texts and tasks and reflect on their responses
- articulate and justify points of view about texts and text elements
- critically evaluate the information they access
- show the relationships among language, topic, purpose, context, and audience — note the relationship of specific elements of a particular text to elements of other texts — describe, discuss, and evaluate the language, ideas, and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genres

The Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum, Key Stage Curriculum Outcomes**Citizenship, Power, and Governance**

- analyse major issues involving the rights, responsibilities, roles, and status of individual citizens and groups in a local, national, and global context
- compare and evaluate the distribution of power in societies and the sources of authority in the lives of citizens
- evaluate public issues, taking into account multiple perspectives

Culture and Diversity

- analyse the factors that contribute to the perception of self and the development of a worldview
- evaluate the causes and consequences of differing world views
- evaluate patterns for preserving, modifying, and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or societal change

Interdependence

- evaluate and propose solutions to issues resulting from interactions among individuals, groups, and societies

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

BUILDING CONTEXT

Map of Wabanaki: People of the Dawnland:

<https://matlt.org/wabanaki-people-of-the-dawnland/>

Pronunciation Guide

Mawopiyane (Mow-bee-yah-neh)

Miigam'agan (MIG-ah-mah-han)

Mi'kmaq (MIG-mahg)

gkisedtanamoogk (gis [hard "g"]-ed-TAHN-ah-mook)

Possible Template for Teachers to Use with Students – To Modulate with Their Voice/Style/Inflection

Dear Students/Class/Course,

Engaging in circles to better understand everyone's perspective is not a practice many of us have had. Circles are not class discussions, debates, nor even a space where one student should directly address another. Nor is it graded. It is, however, an opportunity to experience a way to learn that is very different from what you are used to. A circle is a shared space where individuals speak their own truth to the group as a whole.

Because not many of us have practiced this, doing it can feel uncomfortable at first. Yet, it is from this discomfort and vulnerability that we learn the most.

It is incredibly important that during circles we put all technology away. Instead, bring your ability to listen well and your patience to give people the space they need to engage. It will take time and practice, but you have to trust the process. You do not have to speak, but you do need to support and maintain a tone of respect and humility.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

ENTERING THE GATHERINGS

Essential Questions

- How can people be better allies for one another across cultural differences?
- How can non-Native people in the Americas be allies for Native people?

Preface

- According to the preface, what is the authors' purpose for this book?

With Gratitude

- Why is it important to name the people who have contributed to making the book a reality?

Notes on Terminology

- What is the concept of “alliance” in the context of this book?
- If this book is meant to be the model described in the preface, then in what ways can we, as a class, begin to implement and enact this concept of alliance? What could this look like in a classroom context?

Introduction

- How can we cultivate a core appreciation for our bioregion as central to the work of “reimagining Indigenous-settler relations”?
- Discuss the analogy of “houseguests” on page xxv.

Possible Extensions

- How does where we live shape our understanding of the world?
- Have students explore local weather, round of seasons, the map of the bioregion, physical map, and animals that live here. As a class, create a time-graph of how the population changed, resources were used, and boundaries were shifted. (Here is a possible resource: <https://native-land.ca/>.)

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

PART 1: GATHERING

Preparing

Connected Topics

- Collective vs. individual orientation

Notes on Methods and Activities

- Class discussions should happen as typical for the classroom
- Share the letter from the guide authors
- Class creates their norms for the rest of the learning experience

Possible Discussion Questions

- How does the format of a circle support our abilities to share, speak, and listen?
- What is cultural humility, and how can we increase our practice of it?
 - Prior to using this discussion question, you may want students to read the section “Humility versus White Guilt” on pages 198–200. It could be interesting for students to do some exploration of the two words “guilt” and “humility.” Perhaps as an introduction, before reading the segment, they could draw pictures illustrating those two words, or describe the two words as characters, one named Guilt and one named Humility. (What does Guilt carry in his pockets? What does Humility wear? What does their hair look like? What is their posture like?)
 - Students could create a Venn diagram to help them think about the connections and differences between the two words. Then they could read pages 198–200, and then they might be ready to talk about why humility is a healthier attitude to bring to allyship.
- On page 9, the author states that a circle “... is not a debate or a dialogue where one speaks directly to, or contradicts, someone else in the Circle. Rather, it is a sacred sharing into the Circle of what is deepest in one’s heart or uppermost in one’s mind.” With this in mind, how could a Circle facilitate learning in place of a classroom dialogue or discussion? (collective vs. individual orientation)
- What elements of preparation for and engagement with the Gatherings are essential but perhaps unfamiliar or potentially challenging from a Eurocentric worldview? And how does learning the reasons behind them create an opportunity for growth – not only in understanding other cultures but also in re-assessing elements of our own?

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Possible Extensions

- This would be an excellent time to find a talking piece for the circle. Explore different possibilities with the class and come to a collective selection.

The Talking Circle**Connected Topics**

- Identity of being instead of doing
- Truth and reconciliation
- Allyship
- Importance of relationships
- Cultural appropriation
- Visibility
- Traditional knowledge and cultural understandings
- Generational trauma
- Rematriation
- Centering
- Seven generations thinking
- Collective vs. individual orientation
- Indigenous worldview

Notes on Methods and Activities

- Circle format starts now for exploration of specific quotes or questions on readings if they have not happened naturally as a result of discussion and reflection.

Possible Circle Questions

- Several times, the Native authors bring up feelings of anger. **In what ways can anger open possibilities, and in what ways can it close off possibilities? What about other emotions/feelings (vulnerability, awkwardness, fear, trust, love, etc.)?** (*truth and reconciliation*)

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

- On page 23, Wayne speaks about the lack of talk about one's educational level during the Gatherings. Instead, he notes that Indigenous knowledge was elevated and valued during circles. He says that this validated traditional wisdom and knowledge in a way that made him feel good and calm. **In these times, what are the things that stop others from seeing us as we are, with all our strengths? What are the things that help us see one another? Are there spaces anywhere in our school or community – clubs, classes, musical groups, teams, service groups, etc. – where you think the kids really see each other for who they are? What makes that happen?** (*identity of being instead of doing*)
- On page 51, Barb discusses how “[t]hat poverty mentality wasn’t in our heads and in our spirits like it is now. It’s definitely there now among the kids because of television and radio and everything else around them – the mass media.” **What effect does lack of representation, or misrepresentation, in the media of the dominant culture have on many Native peoples? How is this changing? Students may benefit from exploring the concept of egalitarianism.** (*cultural appropriation, visibility*)
- **How would the idea of thinking seven generations back and seven generations ahead affect the way a community or culture approaches making decisions?** Try to present this question in reference to a specific decision that is currently being considered in the school local community. (*seven generations thinking*)
- On page 59, in discussing philosophical differences between White and Indigenous cultures, gkisedtanamoogk states that “... one culture says the land belongs to them and the other culture talks about belonging to the land.” **What’s the difference? Why is this an important distinction?** (*Indigenous worldview*)
- On page 54, Barb states that she “... doesn’t trust people who want to help you ... because they want to help you to not be who you are. Either that or they want you to be an ‘authentic Indian’ with the feathers.” **What is the difference between an ally and a savior?** (*allyship, cultural appropriation*)
 - Consider having students do some exploration of the two words “ally” and “savior.” Perhaps as an introduction, before reading the segment, they could draw pictures illustrating those two words, or describe the two words as characters, one named Ally and one named Savior. (What does Ally carry in their pockets? What does Savior wear? What does their hair look like? What is their posture like?)
 - Students could create a Venn diagram to help them think about the connections and differences between the two words. Have students read page 54, and explore the differences between the words “ally” and “savior.”

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

- On page 80, Shirley B. talks about how challenging it was to sit and listen to another person's anger. **How does engaging in a circle help develop the skills to build empathy, rather than attempt to fix or avoid hard feelings? Why is this so important?**
- (*centering; importance of relationships*)

First and foremost, work in the circle to develop a good, working, and useful definition of empathy. In developing this definition and using the circle, have students figure out and discuss how they can relate to each other, even though they think they are very different from each other. Be sure to point out that there is a difference between empathy and sympathy.

When and if they find common ground (it might not happen this time around the circle) students could then discuss why having empathy is important – especially when it comes to being an ally.

Possible Extensions

- Art connections – *The Visual Language of Wabanaki Art*, Jeanne Morningstar Kent. A great resource for understanding how Wabanaki use symbol, art, ornamentation, and tattoos to designate social structure, history (petroglyphs), storytelling, celebration of daily life and connections with the natural world. Possible connections with how non-Native people use symbols today, especially in terms of tattoos and personal ornamentation, researching and utilizing students' own ancestry. Tattoo design is also currently a hot topic for misappropriation.
- Impact vs. intent – *Reel Injun*, a documentary by Cree-Canadian Chris Eyre. It takes a hard look at how Hollywood has represented Indigenous people throughout film history and the damage it's done. Have students look for places in media narrative where Native voices are similarly or differently represented. How does that affect real Indigenous people?
- Interviews with elders – Throughout the course of a class/semester, have students choose an elder with whom they can conduct interviews as they move through the book. Generally, elders need to be older than 60, genuinely care about the student, and be accessible for interviews at regular intervals. These interviews can serve two purposes. First, if students feel very shy or unsure, it can help for them to have a trusted adult's thoughts to share, at least at first. Second, they can allow for a different kind of conversation where the expectations of school (grading, competition) give way to a more authentic exchange between generations.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

- ***Consider the following supports for students:***

1. Do some training around interview etiquette and allow students to practice interviewing one another in class before going to interview someone outside the school community. Discuss cultural norms and how your students will convey respect for their interviewees.
2. Practice writing good interview questions and taking accurate notes or recording (with permission).
3. Set up safety systems so that students are interviewing elders/community members on Zoom or in a public place, ideally at school if the interviewee can get there, or with a parent or teacher present if the interview will happen someplace else. You'll want to have support there if a situation turns strange or awkward. This does not apply if the student is interviewing a family member or someone close with their family.
4. Help your students write and mail thank-you notes after the interview.

The Last Gathering

Connected Topics

- Cultural appropriation
- Cultural humility
- Truth and reconciliation

Possible Circle Questions

- On pages 117–18, Shirley H. describes what it was like to be shown her own Gatherings invitation by a Native woman, and how after years of using the same design and layout, she "... saw it for the first time ... [she] had thought the design was a way of honoring Native cultures." **What had changed? How does impact challenge intent?** (*cultural appropriation*)
- Later, on the same page, Miigam'agan explains the context: "At that time, there was nothing to safeguard any of our rights ... So it was really insulting when we saw non-Natives doing what we couldn't do – practice our own traditions." **How could the decision to end the Gatherings be seen as an act of cultural humility?** (*cultural humility*)
- The Decision (page 119) – **If you had been a participant at the Gatherings, would you have encouraged the group to continue to meet? Why or why not?**

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Possible Extensions

- According to the research of Dr. Stephanie Fryberg and others, the use of Native American mascots and portrayals of Native Americans for Halloween causes psychological harm to Indigenous students. Have students research the ongoing use of these and the harm they cause, then produce an informative presentation or write an informative essay.

PART 2: THE GIVEAWAY BLANKET

The Circle and Ceremony

Connected Topics

- Cultural appropriation

Possible Circle Questions

- On page 136, Shirley discusses cultural appropriation. On page 138, Wayne talks about non-Natives' beliefs that they can possess Indigenous knowledge. **What is cultural appropriation? How can non-Natives ensure that in their attempt to honor Native Americans they are not practicing cultural appropriation?** (*cultural appropriation*)
- Luther Standing Bear wrote in 1933, "What a School Could have been Established," speaking of a school where mutual respect of knowledge and exchange of ideas would take place. On page 143, Miigam'agan also speaks of gathering places where Native and non-Native people could meet together and make common connections, culture to culture. **Can such a place be established in today's society? If so, where and how?** (*truth and reconciliation, importance of relationships*)
- **Describe a group/gathering you have engaged with that would have benefited from having a "giveaway" blanket. What would you have offered and why?**

Possible Extensions

- Visual representations of student "giveaways": We often use the term "takeaways" when asking students to consider what they've learned or gained from a particular text, activity, or experience. The concept of "the giveaway blanket" creates an opportunity for students to move beyond the concept of "takeaways" and focus on perhaps the truer value of their knowledge, learning, and thinking as something they can now share and offer to others. In this vein, consider having students design their own version of a "giveaway blanket." Perhaps this is as simple as a bulletin board-type tapestry combining quotes, ideas, and their own thoughts and reflections from

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

their experience with the text and circle discussions. Or perhaps it is some other type of product – whether digital or hands-on – that students can conceptualize and create with the purpose of sharing their learning to impact others. (This could be whole-group or small-group; there might be individually designed aspects, but ideally these should come together into a larger whole, to create a conglomeration born of cooperation and communication.)

Allies, Friends, Family

Possible Circle Questions

- On page 147, Miigam'agan contrasts the work world with the real world. **How can interacting with the “real world” as Miigam'agan defines it (the natural world) improve individual relationships and society at large? What makes your world real, and how does that impact your relationships?** (*identity of being instead of doing – being present*)
- On page 152, Shirley H. explains, “Traditional Wabanaki understood the Earth as feminine. The Earth gave Life, and was therefore sacred and to be protected. It followed then, because women were the Lifegivers, that their role was sacred, to be revered. It was the sacred duty of the men to be the protectors of that Life.” **How can this concept be applied to the fight for environmental protection? How else can this concept be applied to society's treatment of women today?** (*belonging to the land*)

Possible Extensions

- Ask students to think about the Circle and how we might extend its uses in the “real world.” Can they think of any situations we have here in our state, country, or worldwide where a Circle might be a more beneficial way to communicate and get things accomplished? In order to achieve this, using the white board or three large pieces of paper, label one “State,” another “Country,” the last “World.” Have students brainstorm what topics or situations they feel the Circle could help with. When the brainstorm is done, break the students up into three groups and have each group pick a topic from the brainstorm. Allow each group to conduct their own Circle. Allow students to determine if they have had enough time within the Circle – if not, allow for it, even if that means time at the start of next class. Once they have been able to work together within their Circles, have them report out on the work that they have done.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

How We Got Here

Connected Topics

- Land Claims

Possible Circle Questions

- Page 167 states that “... in 1875 the people of Maine ratified a constitutional amendment forbidding [article 10, section 7] to ever be published.” This article requires Maine to uphold all treaty obligations with “the Indians.” Research why the State of Maine chose to amend the constitution back in 1875, and why, after multiple attempts to add it back into print, the state has failed to do so. (*land claims*)
- On page 176, when speaking about a Maine law that requires Maine Native American history and culture to be taught in schools, Wayne shares that “[t]he Maine legislature passed LD 291, and what happened was they tried to dump it on the Natives. They tried to say it was the Natives’ responsibility, and it clearly wasn’t.” **Why did Wayne believe that developing resources and teaching lessons for the state to use was not the responsibility of Wabanaki peoples?** (*countering entitlement*)
- On page 181, Seneca scholar John Mohawk is reported to have said, “... North Americans realize they aren’t here legitimately, and that’s why they don’t want to talk about Indigenous issues or want to pretend that these issues are in the past.” **How does this comment resonate with you? How can these issues be addressed today, and what do you think they should lead to ultimately?** (*countering entitlement*)

Possible Extensions

- The map of the United States has expanded significantly, at the expense of Native land, since the country declared independence from Great Britain. Prior to reading “How We Got Here,” provide students with a blank map of North America and have them draw a rough outline of the United States at the time of the Declaration of Independence (1776).
- As a further extension, have students research Native land in the United States in the following years, and use different colors to shade the loss of Native land over time: 1790, 1830, 1890, and today.

Note: Extensions inspired by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz et al.’s *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People* (2019).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

How It Could Be Different

Possible Circle Questions

- On page 186, gkisedtanamoogk says, “What we really need, in my view, is a place in the general curriculum for Indigenous philosophy, Indigenous science, Indigenous law, Indigenous spirituality. All we get now is one perspective.” **How can we bring this into our schools, responsibly and effectively?** (*traditional knowledge and cultural understandings; countering entitlement*)
- On page 196, Miigam’agan muses, “We’ve lived side by side for so long but we don’t know each other.” **How have you experienced this in your own life? How can Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples rectify this?** (*importance of relationships*)

Possible Extensions

- Have students explore the Indigenous language and culture offerings available, both online and from resources local to your school. For example, Middlebury (Vermont) Language Schools has an Abenaki course, and the University of Southern Maine offers a Wabanaki Languages Certificate Program (https://catalog.usm.maine.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=3&poid=691&returnto=79). There is also a wealth of resources on the Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal (<https://pmportal.org/>).

Further Extension Activities

- Art activism – Use a specific style of art as a social statement to create an activism display (think mural, large poster, sculpture, etc.) that can be used to address core concepts of allyship as well as core topics from *The Gatherings*. How would you visualize this work?
- As a group or individually, create a film trailer or segment that addresses core concepts from this text. What are the key takeaways? Who might your audience be?
- Choose a speaker from *The Gatherings* and utilize either a poetry website or collated poetry by instructor as well as art pieces to create a paired reading and viewing. You can annotate, provide a reflection, record, or even make a poster to discuss the threads between your chosen poetry and the speaker.

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

RESOURCES

The following are additions to the resources included in *The Gatherings*.

Author Presentations

- Shirley Hager and Wayne Newell (Passamaquoddy): <https://vimeo.com/652898184>
- University of Toronto Press Talks presents a book launch for *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_t38lviX8DE
- Maine Calling – February 22, 2022, Shirley Hager, gkisedtanamoogk (Wampanoag of the Otter and Turtle Clans), Shirley Bowen, Barb Martin (Mi'kmaq woman from New Brunswick), and T. Dana Mitchell (Panawahpskek/Penobscot from the Bear Clan): <https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2022-02-24/a-new-book-chronicles-how-native-and-non-native-people-from-this-region-met-for-years-to-exchange-perspectives>
- *Upisktwo and the Art of Reimagining* – An online conversation with Shirley N. Hager and co-author Rev. Shirley Bowen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBffi4snlXk&t=14s>
- Zoom author visit with Barb Martin (Mi'kmaq woman from New Brunswick) and Shirley N. Hager: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSizeanGuMw&t=2s>
- Author talk with T. Dana Mitchell (Panawahpskek/Penobscot from the Bear Clan) and Shirley N. Hager: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWAah8wiTyc>

Additional resources can be found at

<https://www.thegatheringsbook.com/more-from-the-authors>.

Other Resources

Dawnland: <https://dawnland.org/>

Restorative practice guides: <https://www.iirp.edu/school-resources/guides-for-implementation>

National Museum of The American Indian – Native Knowledge 360: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/faq/did-you-know>

The Abbe Museum: <https://www.abbemuseum.org/>

The Abenaki Museum: <https://museeabenakis.ca/en/>

Native Land Map: <https://native-land.ca/>

Passamaquoddy People: At Home on the Ocean and Lakes: <https://passamaquoddypeople.com/>

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

Talking Circles

WERU “Dawnland Signals” program hosted by Maria Girouard (Penobscot Nation) and Esther Anne (Passamaquoddy) with guest Alivia Moore (Penobscot Nation), archived on the WERU website from 4/16/20: <https://archives.weru.org/dawnland-signals/2020/04/dawnland-signals-debut-4-16-20-the-power-of-talking-circles/>.

Mascots (Use of Indigenous Names and Imagery)

The film *Fighting Indians* (<https://fightingindians.com/>), about the struggle to get Skowhegan High School, Maine, to drop their mascot (the “Indians”). It was selected for several film festivals in 2021.

Additional Circle Quotes

“We did not have an agenda ... Instead, our primary objective became simply to know and understand one another” (xxiv).

“In these Gatherings, over time, we discovered the power and strength in coming together. We shared our life stories, and also our talents, perspectives, and philosophies” (xxvii).

“... the gifts we exchange when we come together in friendship are profound and varied – intellectual, emotional, and spiritual” (xxx).

“... things will happen without, or maybe in spite of, my fretting. Circles will begin, and end, when the time is right ... I feel myself begin to relax into a rhythm” (7).

“None of the non-Natives defend themselves, or leave. We stay, and listen. Because of the sense of reverence established in the Circles, over time it begins to feel safe to say anything” (9).

“... seeing all those people willing to sit there, listening in the heat, that was one of the things that impressed me the most” (17).

“Creating relationships is simply making that effort to get to know one another in small steps” (20).

“... there was a willingness to exchange ... a mutual desire to understand one another, to reach out to one another in all ways” (22).

“Feeling accepted allowed me to start acknowledging what others brought to the Circle” (24).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

“What I learned in the Gatherings was how to manage and articulate my feelings in a healthy way” (24).

“There’s powerful stuff going on in that Circle, and if you’re not ready for it you can get damn nervous seeing your issues that close up. That’s the reality of the situation. But those of us, both Native and non-Native, who stayed on, and who were willing to do the work necessary, were able to go to another level of relationship” (26).

“We spend a lot of time protecting our vulnerability, but as I grow older I understand that it’s in vulnerability that we learn the most. By letting our shields down, we leave ourselves open to new thinking, new teachings, new relationships” (26).

“I become more self-aware every time I listen to those who have been in the Circle with me” (27).

“From the Native perspective I was born with, the reason you meet together is because there is nothing more important to do” (32).

“What I have come to understand is that everyone is a Light ... When a Circle is made, it makes all the Lights brighter ... It doesn’t matter who is in that Circle; at that point we’re the human family” (32).

“The group wasn’t confrontational. That was an important element for me” (33).

“The Gatherings were an opportunity and a ‘coming out’ for me, a chance to speak about my culture and to learn about other cultures, a chance to find the heart connections that can exist among us. The Gatherings showed me the importance of our connection. They set me on my path” (42).

“We didn’t try to control anything, we didn’t try to manage anything, we just let the Spirit flow” (47).

“And we fed everyone, which is something in our culture that is very important. When people come, we feed them” (48).

“When we’re together in that Circle, it’s full. It’s full of pain. It’s full of joy. It’s full of love. It’s very serious, but then we laugh. And we go around again and maybe there’s quiet weeping, and then we all cry together. But we understand that what’s happening there is very sacred. When I’m in a Native Talking Circle, there is Spirit there. We’re ‘in the zone’ and we become one. We feel like we’re one. I feel people’s pain. I relate to what they say even if I haven’t had that experience. I can hear it, and feel it” (52).

The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

"We can't know one another's hearts until we make ourselves vulnerable" (59).

"It doesn't matter what color we are, or what ethnicity we come from, we're all children of Earth. And this is where we start, right here in the House of the Creator, to begin the process of unraveling all of the mindless stuff that we've done to each other ... That's the power we're working with. That's why we need to come together" (63).

"At some point I started to realize that the relationship – building the relationship – was enough, and it was actually very big, because to even say that we had a relationship meant that we had actually begun to heal some of our history together. It was okay not to know where it was going; it would evolve" (69).

"I took my watch off and simply showed up and tried to be open and without an agenda" (77).

"In the Circle we don't make direct comments to one another. We speak our own thoughts and feelings" (78).

"It was hard for me, as a White man, to keep my mouth shut, to just sit there and listen. But that's the purpose of having the Talking Stick, so you listen" (86).

"When you bring people together who have been preparing to be together, already something has happened" (109).

"The Circle seemed to hold us in a particular way, protecting and supporting us in our vulnerability with each other" (131).

"Spirit is supposed to flow. You don't control a Circle. It will do its work. You just have to leave it alone and stop trying to manage it" (132).

"Generally, in our Circles, we did not need to make decisions or plans; our focus was primarily to share our life stories and to find and strengthen our sense of common ground" (132).

"... the absolute truth is not in us individually; the absolute truth is in us collectively" (149).