

Nuxalk Education

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Today, we, the Nuxalkmc, are working hard to restore many of the traditional teachings. We operate our own school, Acwsalcta, which translates to "A Place of Learning." Acwsalcta meets both government curriculum standards while providing classes on Nuxalk language, history, carving, potlatches and other knowledge related to traditional Nuxalk culture.

Traditional Nuxalk education is very interactive. Young people learn through listening, watching, and ultimately being directly involved in activities and give students a unique understanding of Nuxalk perspectives and values.

Through stories, songs and dances children learn about ethics, religion, politics, biology, wildlife, ecology, fisheries, medicine and many other topics. These oral teachings are put into practice and strengthened by the involvement of the children in daily and seasonal activities such as hunting, fishing, and the gathering of foods and medicines. Through these interactions, the children become well educated in many aspects of the natural and supernatural worlds.

Through Acwsalcta, Nuxalkmc are aiming at restoring traditional teachings and provide students with a solid grounding in Nuxalk identity. This is extremely important as we face an often violent colonial past and present. Traditional teaching methods were put under tremendous stress with the introduction of the Indian Act, the creation of small reservations, mandatory attendance at residential schools and the banning of potlatches in 1884. Laws that outlawed our traditional culture, language and identity severely disrupted the traditional education system of the Nuxalk people. Without the ability to freely tell stories, sing and dance at potlatches or freely live on the land, the Nuxalk education system was severely compromised.

Despite the government tactics to erase a Nuxalk identity, we remain dedicated to protecting our ways of life, our language, and our ties to our families and Ancestral Territory, as did our grandparents before us.