First Nations 12

**Traditional First Nations Education p. 52 - 53**

**Philosophy**

* children regarded as gifts to the community and keepers of culture
  + for community to prosper, it was the community’s responsibility to pass on collective knowledge
  + community worked together to support each member
* traditional education includes the whole person with intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions = holistic education
* learning viewed as cyclical and a life-long endeavour
  + training begins at birth and proceeds through the stages of life
  + as people mature they take on more responsibilities in teaching
* extended family took responsibility for caring for children and encouraging them to discover and learn about life
* children raised in atmosphere of tolerance, without criticism or direct control of child’s behaviour so they learned to think independently and become self-sufficient
* as soon as children physically able they participated in activities of daily life, learning by observation and practice, as they grew older, more formal training might be given in specific skills and knowledge
* youth was time of apprenticeship when young people prepared to take on jobs and responsibilities of adulthood
  + learned specific roles and understood value of contributions made to community

**Rites of Passage**

* transition from adolescence into adulthood was marked by special ceremonies and rites
  + vision quest: young men moved away from community for days or weeks, surviving on their own and seeking spiritual guidance through visions or dreams
    - in many societies the person on the vision quest acquired a spiritual guardian
    - usually restricted to young men, but some societies women could also seek a spiritual guide
  + teenage girls received important teachings about womanhood when they began menstruation
    - secluded from the rest of the community at that time for several days or even weeks, while they were nurtured and instructed by their close relatives or Elders
* young men faced rigorous and disciplined training for roles that required strength, stamina, and spiritual power to be successful hunters or warriors

**Land and Resources**

* important to understand land and resources
  + knowledge of who ancestors were and how connection with land was passed down
  + children learned much about land and resources when travelling between seasonal camps
  + Elders passed on history of extended family through stories