**Getting oriented outside**

This activity helps students orient themselves to their school and community using a First Nations method of observing the path of the sun and also using a compass and map making approach. Two eyed seeing. Take time to reflect with students on the differences in these two ways of understanding directions and where we are.

This is a video explaining the **Two Eyed seeing** approach by Elder Albert Marshall

<http://www.uinr.ca/programs/netukulimk/>

These lessons serve two purposes:

* To gain a physical understanding of the cardinal directions
* To understand the sacred principals attributed to each direction

Materials

* Paper
* Pencils
* Clipboards
* Permanent marker used to mark on stones
* Four compasses

Begin with a walk around school grounds. Bring 4 compasses and have students divided into four groups each with a compass. ( If possible have three volunteers who know how to read a compass.) Go to the approximate center of the grounds.

Ask students to point out the sun and identify what time of day it is. What season is it? We know that the sun is more to the south in the winter and more to the north in the summer in the northern hemisphere. It rises in the east and sets in the west. The sun is highest in the sky at 12 noon. Can students tell what direction the sun is in from what time of day and the season?

After everyone has discussed in what direction the sun may lie, each group can check with the compass, once students have found north, ask them to point in each of the other cardinal directions. Give each group one direction. Have each group mark the direction they represent with on a stone with a permanent marker. Place these stones in a small circle to create a medicine wheel.

 When returning to class have students draw a circle and divide it in four sections like to create a medicine wheel with the north being the top of the circle. The First Nation culture promotes balance with nature and continuity which is represented by the medicine wheel.



 Have them a mark the four directions. Each direction represents many things in First Nation’s culture. Teach them a few and have them include them in their medicine wheels. Seasons, elements, races of man, stages of human life, four parts of human health.

Which direction do they think would represent winter, north, working clock wise which season follow winter, spring (east), summer (south) and fall (west).

**North:** air, elderly, white skinned people, mental health

**East:** fire, infancy, yellow skinned people, emotional health

**South:** water, youth, red skinned people, spiritual health

**West:** earth, adults, black skinned people, physical health

\*Lesson can expanded on by inviting a Mi’kmaq Elder or traditionalist to the school to learn more about the inter-relatedness of Mother Earth and humans.

Lesson adapted from ***Ethnobotany: Patterns in Relationships*** written and complied by Illene Pevec, MA