

# Traditional Knowledge (Ininiw Kiskentamowin)

Presentation by  
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# Types of TEK

- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (from generation to generation)
- Empirical (learned from observation)
- Revealed Knowledge (obtained from spiritual origins and recognized as a gift)

(MacGregor, 2004)

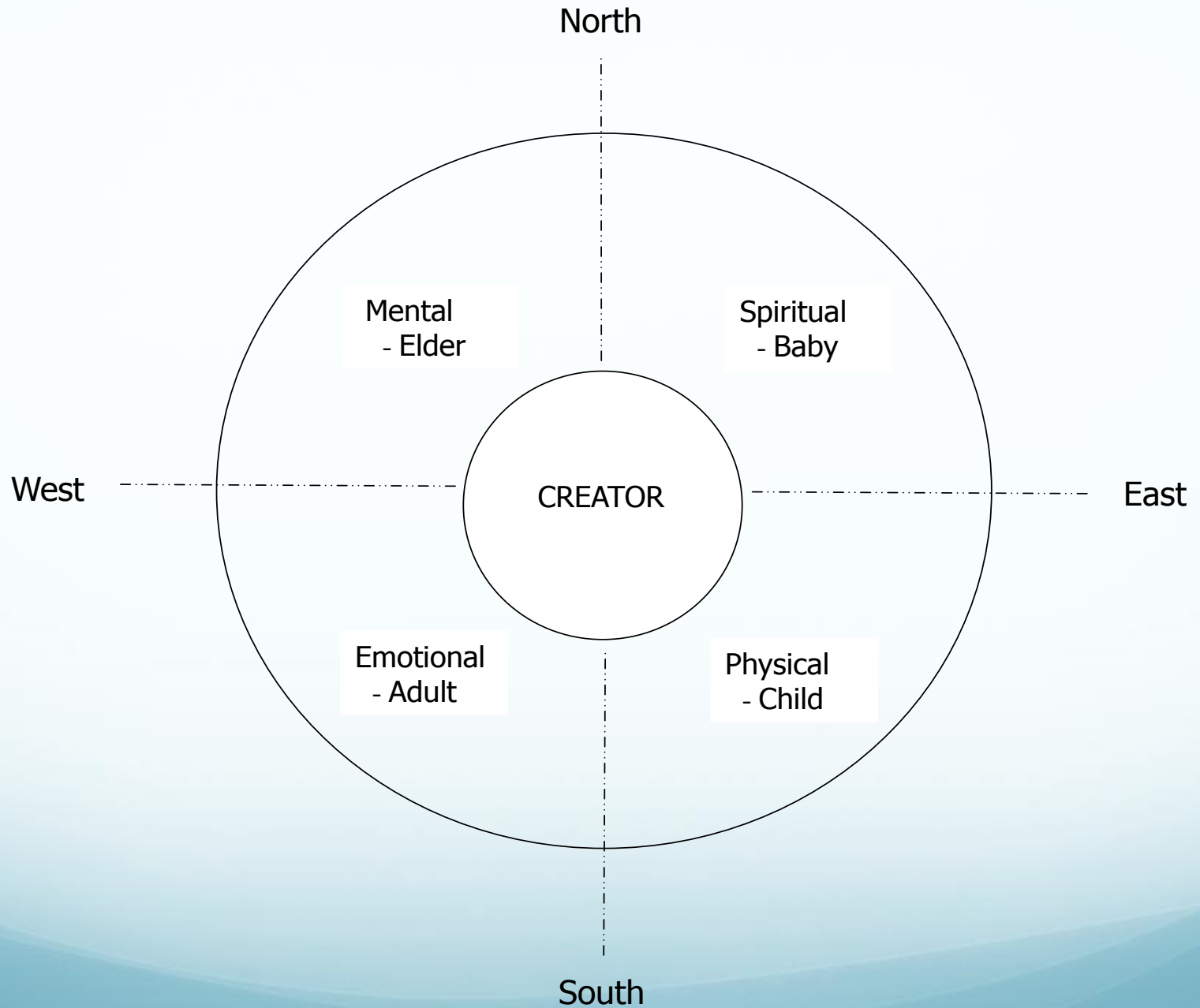
# Utilization

- Environmental Assessments, land use planning, cultural and historical research, community planning
- Way of life
- Academia
- Emerging fields (such as this conference and history interpretation)

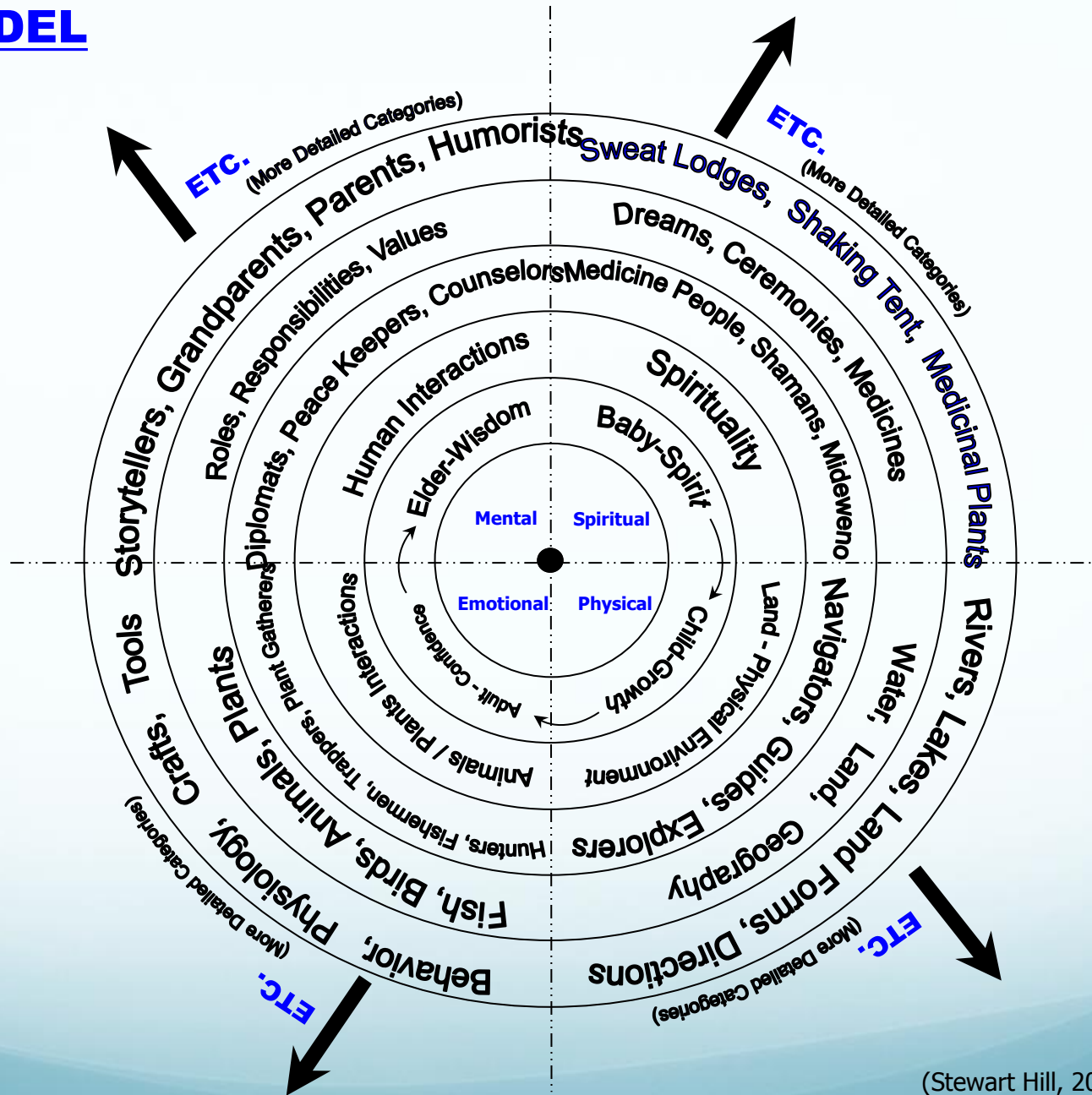
# Definition of Traditional Knowledge

Traditional Knowledge is the total understanding by indigenous people of their relationship to the earth and the universe, and the knowledge inherent within that relationship. This knowledge includes the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental aspects of a person and related components of the earth and universe to these aspects.

In Cree, we call this “Ininiw Kiskentamowin.”

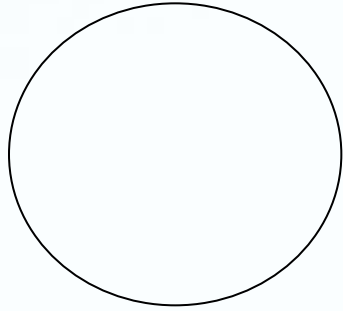


# LIFE MODEL



(Stewart Hill, 2007)

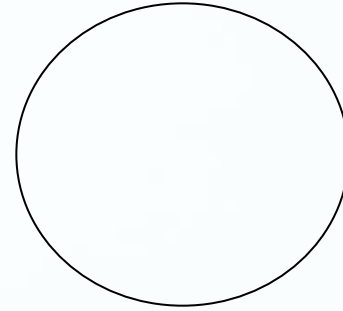
## Traditional Knowledge



Holistic/Circular

- Study Areas:- Land Use Mapping
- Harvest Studies
  - Environmental Knowledge
  - Place Names
  - Archeological Information
  - Etc.

## Western Science



Categorized/Hierarchical

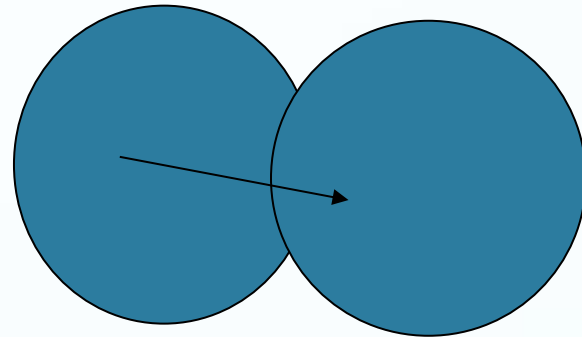
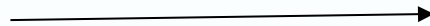
- Biology
- Botany
- Chemistry
- Geology
- Anthropology
- Psychology
- Etc.

This diagram is very general and is only intended to illustrate that traditional ecological knowledge represents a body of knowledge which is unique from western science.

# THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION

Traditional Knowledge

Western Science



Holistic/Circular

Study Areas:

- Land Use Mapping
- Harvest Studies
- Environmental Knowledge
- Place Names
- Archeological
- Information

Etc.

Categorized/ Hierarchal

Areas of Study:

- Biology
- Botany
- Chemistry
- Geology
- Anthropology
- Psychology

Etc.

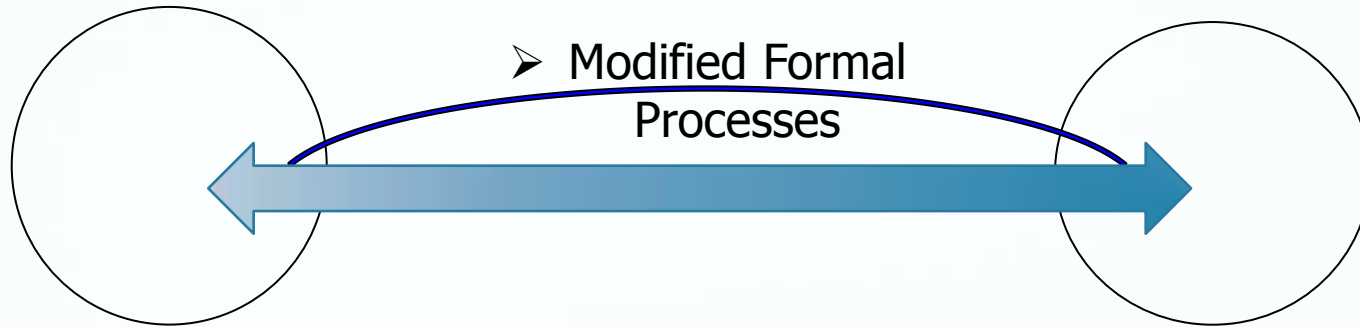


# CONCEPT OF BRIDGING

**Traditional Knowledge**

➤ GIS/ Technology

**Western Science**



**Holistic/Circular**

**Categorized/Hierarchal**

**Study Areas:**

- Land Use Mapping
- Harvest Studies
- Environmental Knowledge
- Place Names
- Archeological Information

**Areas of Study:**

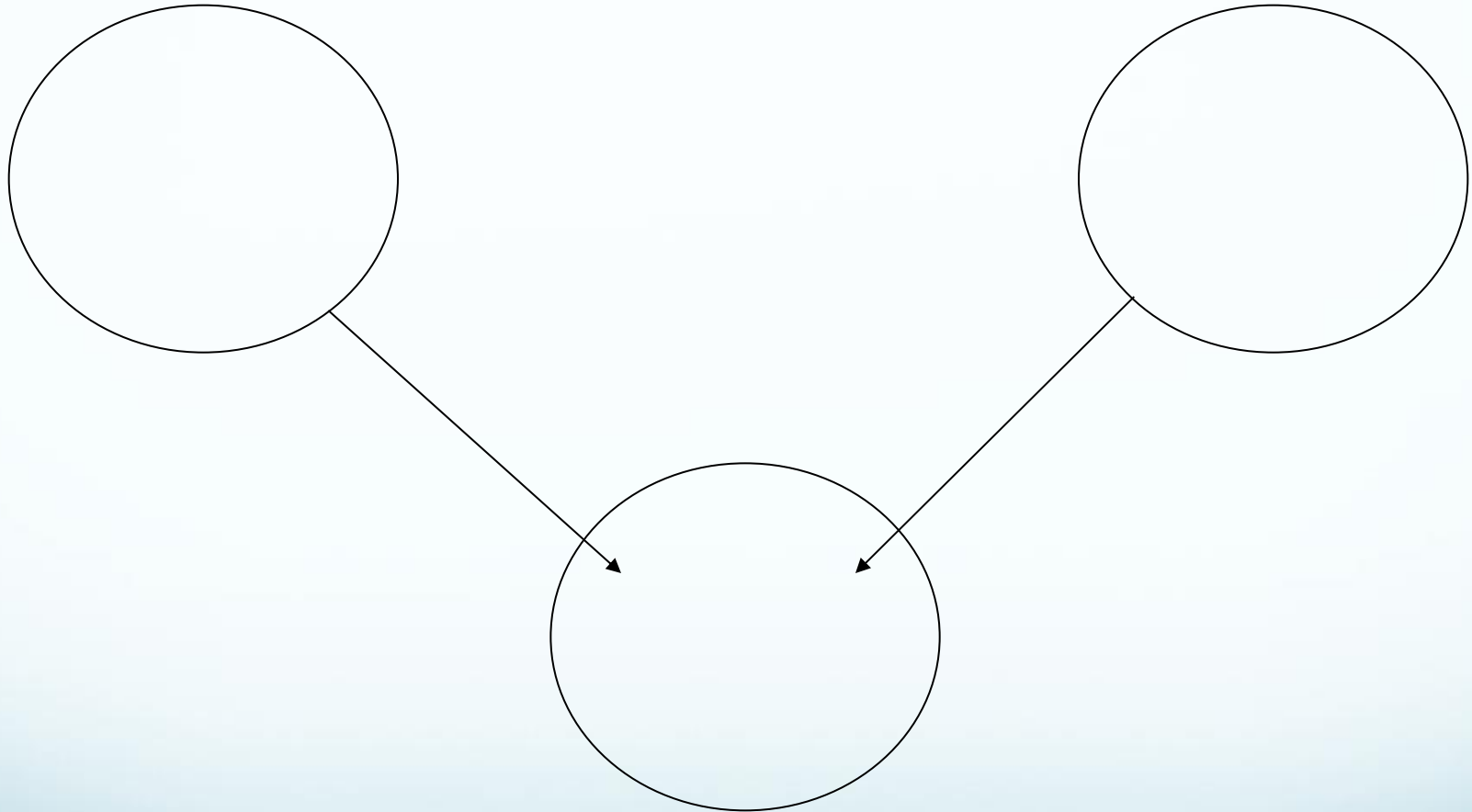
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Etc.

# CONCEPT OF SYNTHESIS

**Traditional Knowledge**

**Western Science**



**Combined Knowledge Base  
(Unique and Balance)**

# DIMENSIONS OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- **Spatial**

Usually in the form of traditional territories. However the environmental knowledge is not necessarily confined by the territorial boundaries.

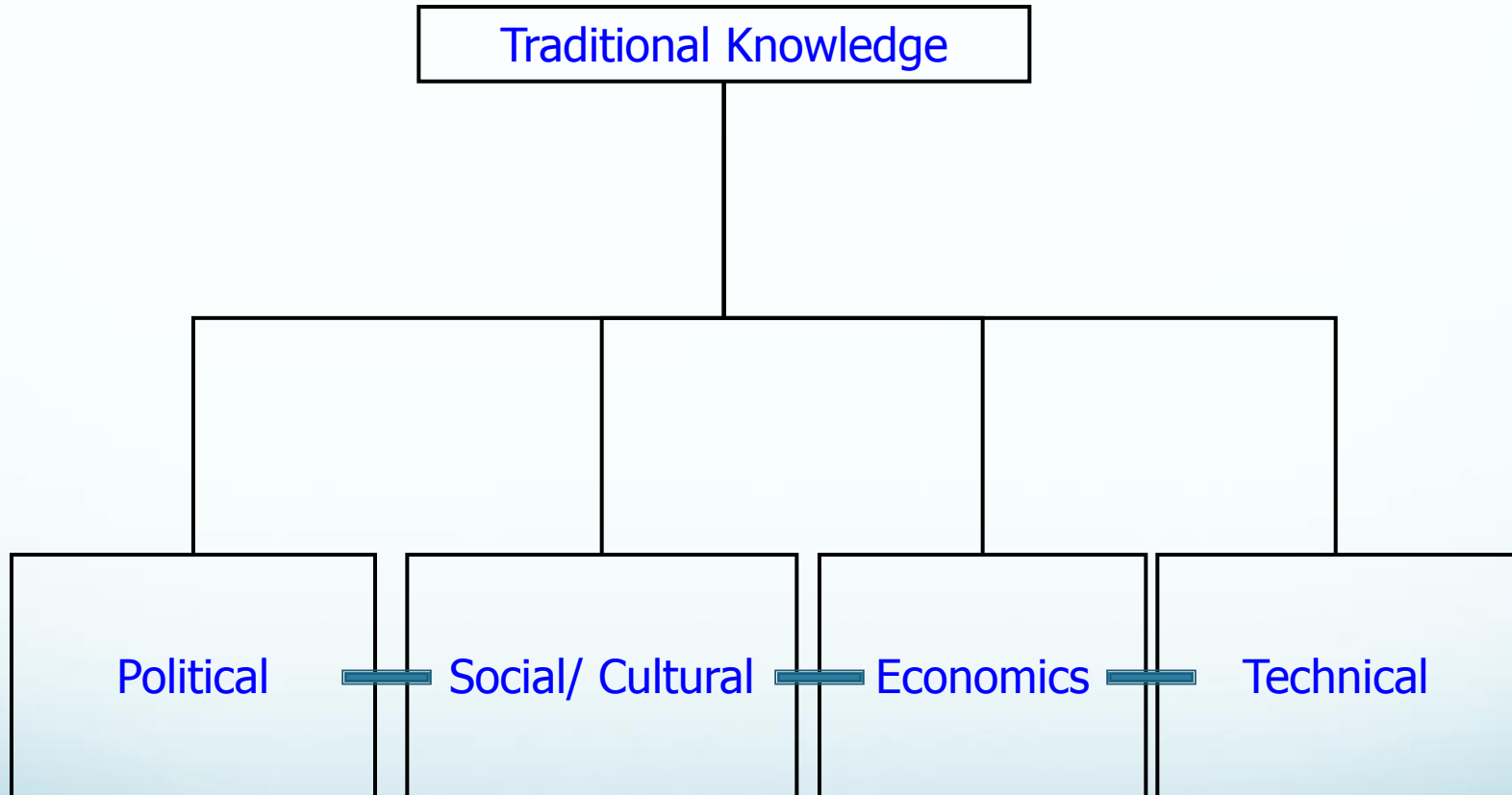
- **Temporal**

Traditional ecological knowledge is acquired through time, passed on from generation to generation. The knowledge usually has a time component; for example, when recording land area use on a map, there is a corresponding “calendar” of how and when those activities are practiced throughout the year as well as how an area was acquired by an individual (the prior generation?) and how long he/she has been utilizing the area.

- **Spiritual**

There is also an unseen dimension in the form of the human and earth relationship.

# Aspects of Traditional Knowledge



# Value of Traditional Knowledge

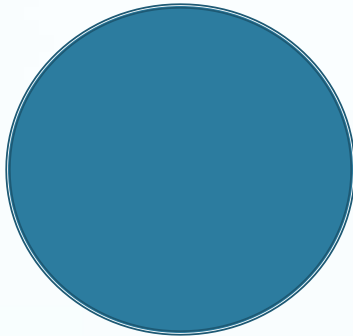
Traditional Knowledge can be used for:

- Environmental Assessment
- Education
- Land Use Planning
- Negotiations
- Treaty Land Entitlement Selections
- Cultural / Heritage Designations
- Fire Suppression Planning
- Natural Resources Management

ETC.

# How do Traditional systems and Science systems compare?

## Traditional System



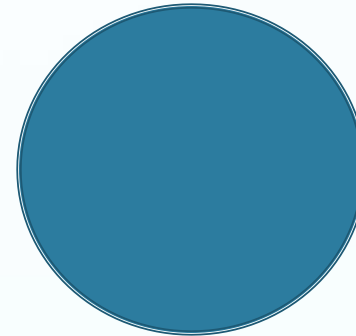
Holistic/Circular

Study Areas:- Land Use Mapping

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## Science System



Categorized/Hierarchal

- Biology
- Botany
- Chemistry
- Geology
- Anthropology
- Psychology

Etc.

# General Comparison of the Science-based System and the Traditional Aboriginal System

## Science- based System

### **LAW**

-Legislation

### **POLICY**

-To carry out the law and regulations

### **REGULATIONS**

- To ensure the law is obeyed

## Traditional Aboriginal System

### **LAW**

- Natural Laws  
- Respect

### **RULES OF CONDUCT/ SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

Examples: certain treatment of animal bones such as hanging up in trees of bear skulls; no wasting of animal parts; no contamination of animal parts; certain practices after killing certain animals; humility; etc.

### **BELIEFS/SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES**

Examples: In Cree culture, the word is "ka-osh-chi-nan" which was a curse (for lack of a better word) befalling upon a person if the laws were broken such as disrespecting an animal by torturing it. This would result in bad luck in hunting for that person but also his/her entire family, which could result in starvation in historical times.

Another Cree word is "ki-sha-wen-ta-koh-sin", which basically means if you do good, then good will things will come to you. Breaking the law will have consequences, and will come back to you and your family. The price will paid in some form or fashion.

\*In traditional times, the rules of the aboriginal systems were well ingrained in a person's thinking and beliefs, since they were taught from the time they could understand and start learning the traditional way of life.

# COMPARISION SUMMARY

## **Western Science System and Traditional Aboriginal System**

### **Science-based System**

*Based on **Numbers** and **Intervention in the Natural Environment***

### **Traditional Aboriginal System**

*Based on **Need/ Availability** and **Conforms to the Natural Environment***



# Themes

- There is a traditional Aboriginal system with respect to the natural environment;
- The traditional knowledge of the Aboriginal system is valuable and can be of great benefit to Aboriginal communities today;
- Given the context within which the western science system and the traditional Aboriginal system were developed, neither system is superior to the other but each have their inherent strengths and weaknesses; and
- Traditional knowledge is a complex and immense body of knowledge.

# Recommendation

- Utilization of TEK must go hand-in-hand with empowerment and benefit for the people sharing their knowledge
- Ways and processes should be explored to enable this to be part of any utilization or incorporation of TEK into biomedical research and environmental health