

## North2North Description for UArctic Website

*Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning*

### Description

The Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning is an Indigenous land-based initiative delivering accredited post-secondary education and conducting community based research. Our head office is located in Yellowknife, Denendeh/Northwest Territories, on the homelands of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

Land is at the core of our programs. We take creative approaches to delivering courses in various Northern regions and communities, knowing the importance that land-based education has in building a future of Dene self-determination and education. Our blended model of education innovatively combines Indigenous knowledge with academic credentials to ensure students are positioned for success on the land, in the community, in post-secondary education and in employment.

At Dechinta, our approach to teaching and learning is rooted in decolonizing and land-based pedagogy. Many Western institutions and schools have outdoor education programs that do not view education or the land in the same way as an Indigenous land-based pedagogy does. Indigenous land-based learning emerges from Indigenous frameworks of intelligence which view the land as a mode of education and a source of knowledge. Dechinta programs are not just education delivered outdoors, it is about having our students learn from and with the land in ways that transform how they understand themselves and the world around them.

The land, environment and animals have roles as your teachers. In your classes, you will encounter academic and Indigenous knowledge. You will learn from elders and Northern leaders as well as lecturers. Sometimes these worlds, voices, and knowledge will be woven together – other times they will diverge. Dene Knowledge, philosophy, ethics and theory is generated by land based practice. The land, and the complex relationships Dene have with the land, are the foundation of their intelligence and their brilliance. At Dechinta, we privilege Dene Knowledge. This sets us apart from other university experiences.

Video: Land-Based Education at Dechinta

[https://vimeo.com/454192136?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=4014216](https://vimeo.com/454192136?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=4014216)

### Facts and Figures

- **Website:** [www.dechinta.ca](http://www.dechinta.ca)
- **Year Established:** 2010
- **Number of Staff:** Dechinta currently has **29 employees**, which includes Indigenous faculty members, YKDFN elders and graduate students.
- **Program Stats:** Since 2019, Dechinta has offered **24** accredited and community-based programs, with **65** post-secondary students and over **2000** community participants ranging from ages **2-80** years old. Dechinta have been able to provide over **150 days** of land-based academic and community programming over these past three years.

- **Focus Areas:** In partnership with the University of British Columbia, Dechinta offers accredited courses in a community land-based environment. These courses are 'Indigenous Land-Based Studies' (INLB) Courses. Our courses involve land-based and cultural practices, as well as university lectures from our Dechinta faculty members. Students spend a significant amount of time on the land learning skills, harvesting, and engaging with Elders. This is supplemented by 'classroom work' where students learn Indigenous theories and engage their critical thinking skills.

Depending on the season and the program, students can expect to learn: How to check fish nets, practices around fish nets, learning fish classification, learning Wíilíideh words for fish, how to chop wood, how to light and keep a fire going, how to cut fish, how to filet fish, how to make dry fish, different ways of showing respect for the fish, how to check for muskrat pushups, how to harvest a muskrat, how to clean and skin a muskrat, how to make bannock, how to snowmobile, how to bead and sew, different artistic practices, how to set a rabbit snare, how to look for spruce gum, how to properly ask for consent when harvesting on the land, how to use tobacco to show respect, how to identify animal tracks in the snow, how to soak and tan hide, how to make a birchbark canoe, and how to make tools, to name a few.

As students complete the land-based component of Dechinta, they will also learn about different topics and theories in Indigenous studies from Dechinta faculty and guest speakers, such as: governance, language, Indigenous science, history, law, guardianship, research, Indigenous arts, storytelling, and writing.

### **Contact Information**

Inquires about attending a Dechinta Program: [studentsupport@dechinta.ca](mailto:studentsupport@dechinta.ca)

General Inquiries: [admin@dechinta.ca](mailto:admin@dechinta.ca)

Phone: 867-445-1897

Address: 233 Utsingi Dr, Yellowknife, NT X0E 0Y0

Instagram: @dechintacentre

Twitter: @dechinta\_

Facebook: @DechintaCentre

YouTube: @DechintaCentre

### **Related News and Articles**

**Article:** In the Bush: Northern Harvesting and Land-based Learning

<https://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/publications/sduk/wading/dechinta-in-the-bush-northern-harvesting-and-land-based-learning>

**Film:** A Field Trip to Dechinta Łiwe Camp (watch on our website or our youtube channel)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuB6JHx1jy0>

**Film:** Dechinta 2018 Spring Semester, Reflection by Madeline Whetung

[https://vimeo.com/447958212?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=4014216](https://vimeo.com/447958212?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=4014216)