

Cluster 1: Historical and Cultural Foundations of First Nations in Canada

Learning Experience 1.1: Pre-Contact Life

Lesson Plan 1.1.1: Pre-Contact

Rationale

First Nations have lived on Turtle Island since time immemorial and have survived in North America despite enormous pressures and challenges. By the time Europeans appeared, the Indigenous populations numbered in the millions, living and prospering from coast to coast to coast—with a variety of social, economic, political, spiritual, and cultural systems and practices. It is important to understand that prior to contact First Nations peoples had developed sophisticated and intricate ways of living and thriving in their environments and on their lands.

In this learning experience, students explore the cultural, social, and political fabric of First Nations communities in what has become Canada. They examine First Nations traditional practices and perspectives and how First Nations peoples have historically viewed the world, constituting some of the oldest traditions in the Americas. To assist in this work, teachers may need to review the history of Indigenous peoples prior to European contact in the land that would become Canada. Teachers are also encouraged to contact local Elders and Keepers of Knowledge as resources. Note: Teachers should be aware of protocols when working with Elders, such as the offering of tobacco and the importance of gifts or honoraria. For more on this, see page 27 in *First Nations Teachings and Practices* by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC), found in the tool kit.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 2: Pre-Contact*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 2: Pre-Contact*
- *First Nations Teachings and Practices* by Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Say to students: “Throughout history, each civilization has conceived theories that explain the origin of life and the world. First Nations are no different, having devised elaborate tales to explain how people, non-humans, and other beings in creation should interact with each other. These legends, myths, and teachings were not formally recorded but existed in an oral tradition committed to memory by selected members of the community. These honoured storytellers used sand paintings and pictures drawn on birch bark scrolls, animal hides, and stones to illustrate the stories as they retold them.” After this, share with students a traditional creation story (preferably from a First Nation within your community). You may use books containing creation stories from your local library or invite an Elder to share one with your students.

Ask students: “What makes any community unique?” It may be helpful to have students develop personal criteria for terms used to describe themselves. Examples include clothing, language, practices, traditions, and/or geography. Encourage students to utilize organizers (such as “cultural,” “linguistic,” “regional,” “legal,” and “personal”) to develop criteria. Then, brainstorm a list of distinctive aspects of First Nations life and culture (e.g., meaning of land, traditional education, sacred medicines, potlatch, storytelling, wampum belts, totem poles). Choose a “top ten” and place these on poster paper, taping them in an area for all to see.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Make available a collection of creation stories from various First Nations cultures. Have each student choose and read one story with a partner and then have her or him discuss it to see what parts are similar or different. Educational strategies such as a Venn diagram may be useful to do this. You may also consider creating larger groups of students so they can present their stories to one another.

Organize students into groups and divide the list of brainstormed topics for further research in the library. Note: You may want to prepare materials with your school librarian beforehand and focus on two or three First Nations (to focus research and scope). Each group will research and define their term and examine the history, basis, and examples of their assigned term. At completion, students write their findings on the provided poster paper.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Students will create a short script from a creation story and collectively present these to their peers in a “Reader’s Theatre,” using a narrator, characters, and props. Have students discuss how each story belongs to a specific First Nations geography and community, and answer questions on how each story illustrates a specific First Nations community’s experience in a territory and time.

Perform a gallery walk, with each student group presenting their terms on their poster paper. Have students connect their definition with a specific First Nation and show how their findings are specific to their history, geography, and experience in a place.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for learning*)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

(Note: BLMs are included in Appendix IV of this document.)

Learning Experience 1.1: Pre-Contact Life

Lesson Plan 1.1.2: First Nations History and Maps

Rationale

Before contact, the First Nations of North America were self-sustaining societies with complex social, economic, and political structures. Throughout this time, First Nations had many achievements, conflicts, high points, and low points in their complex and turbulent histories.

In this learning experience, students explore maps and a timeline, helping them understand that First Nations peoples are strong and resilient and that their struggle has always involved the protection and preservation of rights and resources, culture, and language.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 2: Pre-Contact*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 2: Pre-Contact*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: "Canada and the First Nations Historical Timeline" (USB stick)*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- *First Nations Profiles Interactive Map* by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- *Native American Cultures, 1500* by Maps 101

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Post "Canada and the First Nations Historical Timeline" (found in the tool kit) on the wall and have students view it. Explain to students how timelines are graphic representations of the passage of time on a line that is plotted chronologically. Have students point out significant events on the timeline. The following are some sample questions:

- What was a significant event that occurred in 1763?
- When was the first Indian residential school opened?
- What year was the *British North America Act* signed?

- When were the majority of treaties signed?
- Find some of the Supreme Court rulings located on the timeline and name the cases.

On a smart board or in a computer lab, have students access a map of traditional First Nations territories. The website *Maps 101* has an appropriate map that is available for licence for use in the classroom at www.maps101.com/. Explain to students that the maps reflect the diversity of First Nations culture and heritage, their connection with the land, and their history. Access this online map from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, which shows the locations of contemporary First Nations. Explore the differences and similarities of First Nations localities. Have students examine the location of 20 specific First Nations across Canada at <http://cipppn-fnpim.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/index-eng.html>.

Optional: Play a “scavenger hunt” game to find certain First Nations and mark them on a map.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Separate students into groups of five. Provide each group with a long strip of butcher paper and a marker. Hand out a list of dates with information about when treaties were signed in Canada from BLM 4. Students are required to write on their timeline the name of the treaty, the date it was signed, and where the signing occurred. Then, students choose one treaty and research what was negotiated and where that First Nations reserve was located.

Have students choose one First Nation from their research into the interactive map and research the following online:

- pictures of their chosen First Nation, including the people, the land, and any nearby historical landmarks
- the specific community or communities that reside(s) in the First Nations
- where the band is located (a band is a small government on a First Nations reserve run by its citizens)
- the population (on- and off-reserve membership)
- the language(s) spoken in the community
- the kinds of employment in which people are engaged in the community
- how the location of the First Nation affects the local diet, culture, ceremonies, and transportation

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

After each group is finished writing out their timeline and researching one treaty, have them present their findings to the class, giving a description of each treaty and how it affected First Nations life. Note: Many aspects of treaties are similar, so it may help students to collectively acknowledge similar aspects and focus their attention on what is unique in each treaty.

Have students label a map and prepare a small project where they compare and contrast three First Nations in five different areas of the country, how they live, their cultural and political contexts, and how similar/different their lives are.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for learning*)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.2: Historical Foundations for Canada

Lesson Plan 1.2.1: Impacts of Contact

Rationale

The arrival of Europeans profoundly affected First Nations cultures. The impacts were widespread, affecting every aspect of Indigenous life. Diseases (particularly smallpox and tuberculosis) devastated Indigenous people by killing, by many estimates, upwards of 50% of local populations. Interruptions to trade and food routes, war, and industrialization decimated communities—creating a death rate as high as 90%. In addition, trade in alcohol and guns introduced foreign notions of private property, addiction, and deeply affected long-standing community values. This process, often called *colonization*, fostered a sense of entitlement and privilege among many Europeans and an atmosphere of urgency and desperation among many First Nations. It is a testament to the strength, will, resistance, and power of Indigenous peoples that they have survived the profound threats to their existence precipitated by European pressures. Today, most First Nations communities suffer worse health, higher unemployment, lower education rates, higher infant mortality rates, and a shorter lifespan than anyone else in Canada. It is not possible to understand the difficulties that First Nations peoples have experienced and continue to experience without first understanding the impacts of colonization.

In this learning experience, students explore the profound influences that contact with Europeans had on the lives of First Nations peoples—effects that are still being felt today.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 3: Impacts of Contact*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 3: Impacts of Contact*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- BLM 6: A Chronology of First Nations in Manitoba
- "The Indian Act in Plain English" by Nora Loreto
- *First Nations Teachings and Practices* by Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Ask students: “What is different when you go to another community or culture?” Brainstorm a list of responses, including food, customs, languages, ceremonies, practices, religions, money, homes, way of life, genders, etc. Teachers may find *First Nations Teachings and Practices* (published by MFNERC and found in the *It’s Our Time: First Nations Educational Resource Tool Kit*) useful in finding what practices First Nations employ. Then ask students: “How do you feel when you encounter something very different from your home? What are your impressions of the new place versus the old?”

Place photographs and images around the classroom that clearly depict pre-contact First Nations tribes as vibrant, strong, and independent nations. Photographs from the *SAY* magazine in the kit would provide excellent examples. Have students perform a gallery walk of these photographs and ask them: “What makes a healthy community? What parts of a community are necessary for it to be healthy?” Have students come up with a list of words like “government,” “laws,” “food,” “housing,” “land,” “schools,” and “entertainment” and put each one on a note card.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Explore the concept of stereotyping and discuss how stereotypes are harmful and hurtful, how stereotypes are ingrained at an early age, and how stereotypes remain easy to recognize but hard to get rid of. Have students think critically about stereotypes. Brainstorm a list of false stereotypes about First Nations people and/or other ethnic groups, and discuss where these stereotypes come from and why they are wrong. Then, explore how stereotyping finds its way into laws and policies such as the 1876 Indian Act, which, among other things, legislated

- federal control over “Indians” and their governments (via the Indian Agent)
- who could and could not be a Status Indian
- the creation of reserves, who could live there, and what could happen on those reserves
- the banning of ceremonies such as the Potlatch and the Sundance
- the removal of children from communities to attend residential school

Have students examine the amendments made to the act until 1951 and see how the Government of Canada changed policy over time to control Indigenous peoples.

Have students lay out all of their note cards listing “aspects of a healthy community.” Have them remove one of these note cards every three minutes

and discuss what would happen when one of these necessities is removed from or replaced in a community. How would the health of the community be challenged? Have students connect this activity to the events in BLM 6: A Chronology of First Nations in Manitoba (found in Appendix IV of this document), and have them show how, in each case, First Nations communities were systematically disempowered—and challenged—as a result. An example could be how the loss of First Nations languages might influence a community, its government and cultural practices, and everyday relationships.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Once the students have a clear understanding about specific impacts of colonization, the teacher will find four case study videos portraying contemporary First Nations communities. These videos can be easily found on YouTube. Select two short case study videos depicting First Nations communities that have been able to overcome some of the negative impacts of the Indian Act by achieving local economic development, social programming, and education, and then select two short case study videos highlighting a First Nations community that continues to struggle as a result of colonization. Then have students research a local First Nations community and uncover ways in which it has changed over time due to policy, but also how it has grown as a result.

Divide the students into groups of five and provide each group with magazines and one shoebox. Each group will be responsible for making a group time capsule illustrating what a strong First Nations community would look like today. The website *Dolce et Decorum* by Nora Loreto includes a plain language version of the Indian Act at <http://noraloreto.ca/the-indian-act-in-plain-english/>. Use some of the amendments of the 1876 Indian Act, and explore how this community changed over time. Students are to write a brief description under each photo explaining why they chose the photo. All the photos are to be placed in the box and handed in to the teacher at the end of class.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for learning*)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.2: Historical Foundations for Canada

Lesson Plan 1.2.2: KAIROS: The Blanket Exercise

Rationale

Kairos is a Greek word for the “right time.” The term has been adopted by organizations around the world to represent movements to educate people and correct injustice. The Blanket Exercise is an interactive teaching tool designed to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the denial of Indigenous peoples’ nationhood in Canada, the historic relationship between Europeans and Indigenous nations, and the impact of colonization. The exercise reveals the historic ways First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples lost access to their land, what impact this loss had on their communities, and how Indigenous people have resisted, and continue to resist, assimilation. Since its creation in 1997, thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups have participated in the exercise as a means of opening or continuing a conversation about decolonization.

In this learning experience, students will learn about the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the effect of federal policies and programs on First Nations. The Blanket Exercise provides an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to undergo a factual and emotional experience of historical events from a First Nations perspective, to learn about our shared history, and to form a common memory.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 1: KAIROS: The Blanket Exercise*
- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User’s Guide: Plain Talk 1: KAIROS: The Blanket Exercise*
- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User’s Guide: Plain Talk 7: First Nations Historical Timelines and Maps*
- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: “Canada and the First Nations Historical Timeline” (USB stick)*
- *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: “Turtle Island” map; “Treaties” map; and “Aboriginal Lands Today” map by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (USB stick)*
- “500 Years in 2 Minutes” by the CBC

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Discuss with students the following concepts found in the pre-reading: sovereign nation and treaties, Aboriginal/First Nations, Métis, and assimilation. It may be helpful to use visual representations. Put up on the wall “Canadian Indigenous Historical Timeline” (found in the tool kit) for the duration of the activity. Place pictures of First Nations leaders beside Canadian political leaders to show that, although they may look different from each other, both are deemed equal to one another by their respective communities. Have students compare and contrast current leaders from both communities.

Show students the video “500 Years in Two Minutes” from the CBC series *8th Fire* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7LY-fXzhZI>. Ask students: “What makes a healthy relationship? What are the historical elements that affected relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canada?” Discuss responses and place these on the blackboard for the duration of the Blanket Activity.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Allocate roles for the activity after reading through the script and discussing it with participants. Here are some potential roles:

- the teacher or another adult in a leadership role in the school as the narrator
- an adult (such as an educational assistant/teacher’s aide) as the European
- students as First Nations

Print and fold or roll scrolls with numbers on the outside to identify them, and have students read them beforehand. Scrolls are located throughout the text of the exercise.

Go over materials containing maps of Turtle Island, treaties, and Aboriginal lands today, which can be found in the tool kit or on the Kairos Canada website at www.kairosblanketexercise.org/resources, to better represent the vast area being discussed in the exercise. Discuss how these will be utilized in the activity and what the role of land, culture, and politics will be in this activity.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Ensure you have enough blankets (i.e., one blanket for every three to four students). In addition to these, you will need one blanket to be used for a smallpox blanket and one more blanket that will represent a residential school. If you are asking students to bring blankets from home, be aware that when blankets are taken away during the exercise, it can heighten and/or intensify the impact. Ensure that you have enough white and yellow cards for half of the students, and mark one of the yellow cards with an "X." If possible, clear the classroom desks to the perimeter or use a room with plenty of floor space to ensure mobility and enough room during the exercise. Begin the exercise by following the steps provided in pre-reading. Conducting the exercise may take a total of two to three hours.

Take photographs or film the activity and create a brief slideshow, reflecting upon specific moments that happened during the activity, how students felt, what was the historical and social moment addressed, etc. Discuss the political and social impact of certain issues, policies, and laws on First Nations throughout history, connecting students to real-life events that occurred.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for learning*)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.3: Two Paths of Relationships in Canada

Lesson Plan 1.3.1: Treaties

Rationale

First Nations are nations. The Europeans who discovered what we now know as North America encountered independent, distinct, self-governing, and self-sufficient societies with whom they negotiated agreements to share territory and to create an eternal relationship. Treaties are broadly recognized throughout the world as international agreements among autonomous peoples, describing how two nations will live *independently yet interdependently*. First Nations (treaty people) signed over 300 treaties with Europeans during the 1700s and 1800s.

In this learning experience, students will learn how treaties were shaped by First Nations cultures, religions, governments, and ways of life.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 4: Treaties*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 4: Treaties*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Kinikinik* by Ian Ross, published by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- *Manitoba Treaty Education Initiative Tool Kit* by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- *Saskatchewan Treaty Kit K-12* by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Separate the students into pairs and have them discuss the question, "What does it mean to say your word is your bond?" Have them record their responses on a piece of loose leaf. After the students finish this brief exercise, have them negotiate a simple task like sharing an apple. They may only speak gibberish and must make an arrangement based on good will, verbal and non-verbal communication, and body language such as handshakes. After they have finished making the deal, have one of the pair renege on the deal, take all the apple, and refuse to share. Have them record their reflections on a piece of paper and hand it in.

Place a large sheet of white paper on the wall at the front of the classroom. Ask the students "What is a treaty?" Place the students' responses on the piece of paper located at the front of the room. Then, tape a second piece

of paper beside the students' responses and write out the definition for "treaty," which can be found in the pre-reading. Have the students compare and contrast their original understandings of a treaty with the definition found in the pre-reading.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

After the apple activity, ask students the following questions:

- How did you feel during your treaty negotiation? Was it awkward? If it was awkward, can you please explain how?
- How did you feel when your partner broke your treaty agreement by taking the whole apple? Do you think it was fair? Why or why not?
- How do you think your pair exercise relates to some of the current tensions between First Nations people and the Government of Canada? Why do you think it is still important to all Canadians that we honour the treaties?
- It has been said that everything negative that has happened to the Indigenous population of the American continents happened because of selfish greed. Do you agree? Why?

Once the students demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept of a treaty, begin discussing the history of treaty making with First Nations in Canada, including the Two Row Wampum treaty of 1613 between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch colonists (1613), the Royal Proclamation (1763), the numbered treaties (1871–1921), as well as the modern-day treaties (1975–2002). Treaties can sometimes be a very abstract concept for students. It may be helpful to use pictures. For example, you could use a picture of the Two Row Wampum Belt when explaining this. Manitoba and Saskatchewan also have excellent resources for teaching about treaties. This includes the *Manitoba Treaty Education Initiative Tool Kit* by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba and the *Saskatchewan Treaty Kit K-12*, available at the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Discuss how the failure to honour treaties has resulted in a growing tension in Canada. After reviewing the pages, ask the students:

- What do you think First Nations would look like today if the treaties were honoured?
- First Nations people believe in sharing land and resources. Europeans believe in control and ownership. How can these points of view be reconciled?
- Is it possible to share land and resources or do you think that one side must have full ownership and control?

Teachers may find it useful to refer back to the apple activity and/or discuss the concept of sharing space in a school, home, or community. Then, separate students into groups of four or five and have them create a group poster of what Canada would look like if treaties were honoured. Have students hang posters around the classroom and present a brief explanation to their peers in a gallery walk about their poster and how it reflects the honouring of a treaty relationship.

Have students read the play *Kinikinik* by Ian Ross, published by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. Turn to Plain Talk 9: “Cultural Competency” in the *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User’s Guide* for a step-by-step, entertaining, and interactive way for students to experience and understand the concepts of sharing and ownership via treaty. Have students debrief by making masks or puppets of the characters, perform the show for the community, and present how respect, sharing, ownership, culture, and self-determination are a part of treaties—spreading the message that “*We Are All Treaty People*.”

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for* learning)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.3: Two Paths of Relationships in Canada

Lesson Plan 1.3.2: The Indian Act

Rationale

The Indian Act is a complex legal document, designed to address the “Indian problem” in Canada. It does this by singling out a segment of society, largely on the basis of race, removing much of their land and property from the commercial mainstream, and giving the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and other government officials a great deal of control over their lives. Even though the Indian Act has been described, justifiably, as archaic, outdated, colonial, racist, paternalist, and repressive, it is still in effect today. While the act has been highly criticized and many want it abolished, it still dictates much of the unique relationship First Nations share with Canada. Many want First Nations to be able to make their own decisions as self-governing peoples and, while the act is inhibiting that freedom, it must be replaced with some document that legally defines the relationship. This is a complex issue.

In this learning experience, the purpose and laws contained in the Indian Act will be examined and students will learn about how the Indian Act has had profound impacts in historical and contemporary times.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 5: The Indian Act*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User Guide: Plain Talk 5: The Indian Act*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: “Turtle Island” map; “Treaties” map; and “Aboriginal Lands Today” map by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (USB stick)*
- “The Indian Act in Plain English” by Nora Loreto

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Visit the website *Dolce et Decorum* for a plain language version of the Indian Act that students can use at <http://noraloreto.ca/the-indian-act-in-plain-english/>. Separate the students into groups of five. Have each group appoint a spokesperson and a recorder and have them discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of traditions and celebration do you practice with your family?

- What are some important values you have learned at home that guide the way you behave in the world?
- How would you feel if someone came into your home and removed you from your house and demanded that your family no longer practise your traditions and values? How do you think you would respond?

Lead a discussion with students on the parameters of the Indian Act and what it controlled. Discuss how First Nations would have been affected by the laws included in the Indian Act and whether the document is easily replaceable.

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Show students the following quote from Duncan Campbell Scott, head of the Department of Indian Affairs, discussing the Indian Act:

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department. That is the whole object of this Bill.” (National Archives of Canada)

Discuss with students the provisions of the Indian Act and how Scott’s vision could be implemented. Have students conduct research on how the Indian Act affected First Nations lives and communities.

Invite an Elder to the classroom who is knowledgeable about the Indian Act and its continued negative impact on First Nations people. Ask him or her to address the following topics:

- How the Indian Act enabled colonization, institutional racism, and social issues that are still common in communities today
- The continued effects of the Indian Act on First Nations individuals, families, and communities
- The pros and cons of abolishing the Indian Act and how that could be best achieved in consultation with First Nations people

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Separate students into groups of six to participate in a brief debate about one of the laws found in the Indian Act. Have students do additional online research on the Indian Act to support their work. Three of the students will research arguments in favour of the law and the other three students will research arguments against the law. Students will present their debate in front of the class.

Make groups of five students and have them collectively respond to the following questions:

- In the Indian Act, the word *Indian* is a legal term. In the act, an Indian is deemed not to be a person. In your opinion, can a government ever determine who is and who is not a person? Why or why not?
- In the Indian Act, First Nations languages and cultures were seen as inferior or negative to the extent that they were legally banned. The federal government also banned ceremonies and other spiritual practices of First Nations people. Do you think a government should have the right to control a group's culture, language, and traditions? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the Indian Act? Do you think it was a good or bad idea? Please explain.

Have the students appoint a recorder and reporter who will report back to the whole class when they are finished with their discussion.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for* learning)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.4: Forming Relationships in the Canada of Today

Lesson Plan 1.4.1: Residential Schools

Rationale

It is important that everyone—men and women, people of all ages, Indigenous and non-Indigenous—have an understanding of the impacts and consequences of the residential schools. The damage from residential schools continues to profoundly affect survivors, families, and communities. The apology that was made by the federal government to the Aboriginal people of Canada on June 11, 2008, acknowledges that generations of Indigenous people have been deeply affected and states that there is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail. Acknowledging this chapter of Canadian history recognizes some of the unique challenges that First Nations students have faced or are facing. It is a link to the shared history of First Nations and Canadians and, as such, has the power to promote understanding and respect within the classroom, as well as recognition of the variety of backgrounds and histories of students.

In this learning experience, students will learn about how residential schools were utilized as the main tool to assimilate and indoctrinate First Nations people into Canada and how residential schools contributed to the continued social and economic disruption to First Nations individuals, families, and communities.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 6: Residential Schools*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 6: Residential Schools*
- "Indian Residential Schools of Canada" (map) by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools* (video) by the Legacy of Hope Foundation
- *Reconciliation . . . towards a new relationship* by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)
- *Canada apologizes for residential school system* (video) by the Parliament of Canada
- *A Lost Heritage: Canada's Residential Schools* by the CBC

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Play the Legacy of Hope Foundation video *Where Are the Children?: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools*, at www.wherearethechildren.ca/en/resources/#57 (27 minutes). After students have finished watching the video, have them sit in a talking circle (BLM 1) to share the thoughts and observations they had that stemmed from the stories told by the survivors and their children. Some focusing questions to guide your discussion are as follows:

- What did children lose out on once they were removed from families?
- Many of the children and youth experienced deep-rooted feelings of humiliation, shame, and abandonment, leading to low self-esteem. Why do you think they felt that way?
- Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that occurs as a result of traumatic events. Many residential school survivors continue to suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress, including flashbacks, nightmares, and cultural trauma. For some survivors, traumatic memories are even triggered by certain smells. What were some examples of residual trauma communicated by the residential school survivors in the movie, and how did they move forward with their lives in spite of their horrendous experiences?
- What were some of the inspiring messages about kindness and caring shared by the survivors in the movie?

Organize the students in pairs and share with them information from the pre-reading. Hand out the following list of questions that students can use to guide their reading, and have students complete these questions and/or discuss them.

- What were residential schools?
- How long did residential schools exist?
- Why were residential schools created?
- How did residential schools operate?
- What were students' experiences like in residential school?
- How did residential school students fare as adults?
- How did residential schools affect non-Aboriginal people?
- When did the Canadian public learn about residential schools and their legacies?
- How did religious institutions react to the disclosure?
- How did the Government of Canada react?
- What was the response of the Assembly of First Nations?

- What actions have been taken by the federal government? The churches? Survivors?
- What is the 2006 Residential School Settlement Agreement and what does it do?

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Invite a residential school survivor to your classroom to share his or her experience. This will give students an opportunity to listen to and ask questions of a residential school survivor. This discussion should utilize a circle discussion format. After the circle is complete, have the students write a letter to the guest speaker. Students can use the following questions to guide their responses:

- What did you know about residential schools before our guest speaker came to the class?
- How have your perspectives changed after you heard the guest speaker's story?
- What was the main message you got from the guest speaker?
- What can you do as an individual to ensure all people's human rights are protected in the future?

Discuss the concept of reconciliation and why this concept is so important in moving Canada forward. Information about reconciliation can be found on the Truth and Reconciliation website at www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=312. After the students clearly understand the concept of reconciliation, play the residential school apology in class. The apology can be found online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ryC74bbrEE>. Then ask the students the following questions after viewing the video:

- Why do you think First Nations feel an apology, even after so much time, is a necessary step in the path to reconciliation?
- In what ways did the Prime Minister indicate that residential schools continue to affect individuals, families, and communities?
- The apology talks about forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities, and vibrant cultures and traditions will continue towards a stronger Canada for all of us. What does this mean? How can it work? What can you do as an individual, a school, or a community to further these ideas?

After completion of this class discussion, have students go online and post a personal statement on the Truth and Reconciliation website to support the initiative "It Matters to Me" at www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=328.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Have the students create a poster or collage depicting what they think it would have been like for individuals who had to go to residential school. Some suggestions for poster themes could include the following:

- the impact of family separation
- the loss of culture and language
- separation from land and community

Have students create fictional diary entries of residential school students based on CBC's series *A Lost Heritage: Canada's Residential Schools*. This can be found in the CBC Digital Archives at www.cbc.ca/archives/teachers/lesson-plan/residential-school-diary.html. Students will write a series of three to five diary entries from the point of view of a First Nations student. Each entry should be correctly dated and be at least half a page in length. Explain that the goal is to understand what the students experienced and how it might have affected them. The entries should reveal the student's state of mind and explore his or her feelings and fears.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for learning*)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

Learning Experience 1.4: Forming Relationships in the Canada of Today

Lesson Plan 1.4.2: First Nations Quality of Life

Rationale

There is no commonly accepted definition of the concept of quality of life. One person's definition may be very different from someone else's definition. That being said, there is no doubt that quality of life of First Nations peoples in Canada is not what it should be.

In this learning experience, students will learn how there are different measurements of quality of life that are influenced by one's cultural world view and perspectives, as well as about the contemporary quality of life for First Nations living on- and off-reserve.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks:* Plain Talk 8: First Nations Quality of Life
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide:* Plain Talk 8: First Nations Quality of Life
- "10 First Nations with more than 10 years of bad water" by the CBC
- "Drinking water advisories: First Nations South of 60" by the Government of Canada

LESSON PLAN

I. Activating Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Ask students:

- What does *quality of life* mean to you?
- What is necessary to have a "good" quality of life?
- Is it possible to maintain quality of life without money and material things? How? What does that life look like?

Separate students into groups of five. Have them read material from the pre-reading and then respond to the following questions in groups:

- What specific things would improve your quality of life?
- What power do you have to improve the quality of life for your family, community, and nation?
- What would happen to a community if one part of it didn't have a good quality of life but another part did?

II. Acquiring Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Using the information found in the pre-reading, discuss how current standards of living related to housing, education, health, language, family, and wellness have had a negative impact on the quality of life for First Nations individuals in Canada. It would be helpful to gather pictures from First Nations in Canada to provide students with visual representations during your discussion.

Do some brief research on the situations involving water at Grassy Narrows First Nation, Ermineskin First Nation, Shoal Lake First Nation, and Attawapiskat First Nation. Examine the CBC audio resource “10 First Nations with more than 10 years of bad water” at www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/10-first-nations-with-more-than-10-years-of-bad-water-1.2755728. Mention that, as of June 30, 2015, there were 132 drinking water advisories in effect in 91 First Nations communities across Canada, excluding British Columbia. See the Government of Canada website *Drinking Water* at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/public-publique/water-dwa-eau-aqep-eng.php.

After this research presentation, separate the students into groups of five to answer the following questions:

- Were you aware that there are places in Canada where people do not have access to running water? If not, were you shocked by what you watched in the video?
- The United Nations indicates that each person requires a minimum of 50 to 100 litres of water daily to meet basic needs and to avoid health concerns. It is not uncommon in First Nations for individuals only to have access to 11 litres a day. What responsibility do you think the government has to ensure that all persons in Canada are given an adequate quality of life?
- What do you think you can do as an individual to help address this issue?

After the students answer these questions in small groups, have them share their responses with the whole class.

III. Applying Strategies (includes assessment *as learning*)

Have the students write a letter to the government expressing their opinion about the current quality of life of many First Nations around Canada. Students can choose whether they feel comfortable to send their letter (this choice should be left up to them).

Say to students: “Although economic and social disparities are not unusual within First Nations populations, First Nations continue to be national role models and positive contributors to Canadian society. First Nations have contributed to the worlds of literature, medicine, music, politics, academia,

sports, and the arts.” Have students research and write a biography about an individual from the First Nations community who is a leader in her or his chosen field. The biography should include the following:

- a picture of the leader
- the name of the individual
- what First Nation they are from
- where (s)he was born
- where (s)he went to school
- obstacles (s)he overcame to achieve his or her goals
- how (s)he has given back to the community
- what the student admires about this leader

Students may display their role models using the “Honour Your Role Models” poster from the *It’s Your Time Tool Kit* as a template.

IV. Assessment (includes assessment *as, of, for* learning)

- Hold a talking circle (BLM 1)
- Have students write in their reflection journal (BLM 2)
- Complete teacher reflection (BLM 3)

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