

Cluster 2: Understanding the Relationship

Learning Experience 2.1: Understanding First Nations Cultures

Lesson Plan 2.1.1: First Nations Cultural Practices

Rationale

It is important to underscore that, for First Nations, aspects of culture are learned. Other aspects come from personality traits, gifts, and talents. Culture exists in each person as a member of a society or a nation. Culture, along with environmental influences, shapes the individual. It is interwoven with language. Culture is the basis of one's world view, philosophy, beliefs, spirituality, and lifestyle. There are several cultural levels for First Nations: a physical and material culture of skills, knowledge, and adaptations within an environment, as well as deeper, more spiritual aspects of culture related to relationships in time and space.

For Indigenous peoples, language, culture, and the land are inseparable. Indigenous peoples' cultures include tangible and intangible manifestations of their ways of life, achievements, and creativity, and are an expression of their self-determination and of their spiritual and physical relationships with their lands, territories, and resources. Indigenous culture is a holistic concept based on common material and spiritual values and includes distinctive manifestations in language, spirituality, membership, arts, literature, traditional knowledge, customs, rituals, ceremonies, methods of production, festive events, music, sports and traditional games, behaviour, habits, tools, shelter, clothing, economic activities, morals, value systems, laws, and activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. Indigenous cultures are influenced by their environments; environments affect a people's common perspective of the world and underline its connection with nature. Indigenous peoples shape their views of the world and their lives are shaped by their cultures.

In this learning experience, students will acquire a deeper understanding of First Nations culture and beliefs through the exploration of tangible cultural items. These items also invite the engagement and involvement of Elders and resource people to adequately explain the teachings, traditions, and ceremony in an informed and respectful way. First Nations and non-First Nations people benefit from coming to understand the teachings behind the cultural items. Students will also examine how their world view may influence their relationships with others who may have cultures, traditions, and values that differ from theirs.

Note: You may want to invite a knowledgeable Indigenous guest speaker or an Elder to share information that is relevant to Indigenous philosophy, asking

him or her to explain the symbolism of cultural tools, to describe the ceremony and teachings associated with sacred medicines, to share the stories, and to examine the teachings contained within the items.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Wise Words cards and Reflection cards*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: stone, string, dream catcher, and Indian corn*

LESSON PLAN

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

Discuss the idea of “culture” with your students. Ask them to define it and record your collective definition on white paper or a black/whiteboard. (Note: Characteristics of culture may include language, dress, appearance, food and eating habits, attitudes about time, relationships, values and norms, beliefs, and attitudes.) Then invite a knowledgeable Indigenous guest speaker or an Elder to share information relevant to Indigenous philosophy, to explain the symbolism of cultural tools, to describe the ceremonies and teachings associated with sacred medicines, to share the stories, and to examine the teachings contained within the items. If weather permits, take the students out on the land to participate in land-based experiential learning. For example, students could be provided with the opportunity to go medicine picking after learning about the protocols of harvesting and of using sacred medicines in the classroom.

Ask students: “What makes any culture unique? What are some images we might know from First Nations cultures?” After making a list, discuss what are some similar themes emerging, such as circles, the number 4, certain colours, Elders, Earth, spirits, etc. Then discuss the significance of these and what they might mean. For example, circles are an ongoing theme when describing Indigenous world views, emphasizing ideas of interconnectedness and interdependence. These can be seen in items like dream catchers, medicine wheels, drums, and teepees/lodges.

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

Read students the phrases on Indigenous wisdom contained on the Wise Words cards and the Reflection cards from the tool kit. Have students

discuss what these phrases might mean and how they would relate to a cultural perspective about the world. Hold a discussion where students can share a brief story about a time they represented a similar idea found on the card.

Show students the logo from the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Discuss the many parts that make up the AFN logo and how they are intended to illustrate a cross-section of First Nations across Canada. Then discuss how these might represent similar or different cultural ideas from First Nations across Canada. Afterwards, examine the logos of First Nations political and cultural groups throughout Canada, and see if students can guess where each organization comes from according to the images they are seeing.

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

Choose one of the following cultural objects:

- stone
- string
- dream catcher
- Indian corn

Have groups of students research each object and its cultural significance in specific First Nations contexts. Teachers may find it useful to utilize some of the strategies found in the pre-reading. Then, in each group, have students present their findings on their cultural object.

Have students study First Nations music from the past to the current day, spanning a spectrum of expression from traditional music such as drumming or throat singing to today's country, rock, or hip hop music. Have them make a "mix tape" of First Nations music and play samples or clips of these for the school community on the intercom while explaining to their schoolmates what each song means. Have a "First Nations Music Month" where every day a piece of music is shared.

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 2.1: Understanding First Nations Cultures

Lesson Plan 2.1.2: Ceremonies

Rationale

While it would be impossible to portray all Aboriginal cultures with one description, most First Nations communities believe in a central Creator who both created them and placed them on Earth for a purpose. This Creator provides them with everything they need through the land, leading most to call it “Mother Earth”—and to consider her a caretaker and parent. Mother Earth is seen to provide everything needed to live, including plants (for foods and medicines), animals (for shelter, food, and clothing), and territories to live, hunt, fish, and trap. As she looks after them, communities therefore care for, connect to, and protect Mother Earth via ceremonies. This is a central reason why Aboriginal communities continue to feel so close to the land and to actively participate in its everyday life. Traditional First Nations world views do not separate religion from everyday life and there is little that separates ceremony from the physical act of life—they are one and the same. Over a long period of time, Indigenous people were forced to follow a different form of religion, suffered abuses in places like residential schools where they could not speak their languages, and endured policies where their ceremonial practices were outlawed. Still, many ceremonies continue to be practised today.

Ceremonies and rituals have long played a vital and essential role in First Nations cultures across Canada, embracing all aspects of the human experience, from cleansing practices to hunting to agriculture to events and milestones like puberty and the receiving of names. For many First Nations peoples, ceremony is a way to acknowledge the interconnectedness of everything, to teach values, and to express beliefs. Some ceremonies are sacred and private. But sometimes, at Indigenous gatherings, everyone present is asked to participate in a cultural ceremony, a prayer, a dance, or a feast.

In this learning experience, students will learn cultural protocols, ceremonies, and medicines found in First Nations cultures.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Don't Misuse Tobacco: Keep it Sacred* by the Assembly of First Nations (USB stick)
- *The Story of the Masks* by the U'mista Cultural Society

LESSON PLAN

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

Have students discuss ceremonies they have attended recently, such as a marriage, baptism, or funeral. Ask them: “Why are these ceremonies done?” and “What are some rules in these ceremonies?” List these where students can see them and discuss how specific First Nations have similar sorts of ceremonies. Have students create images representing different ceremonies. Create a class collage of all of the ceremonies your class knows about.

Ask students: “What is respect? How do you show respect for yourself, your family, your community, or your nation? Is someone entitled to respect just because they are older? Does respect have to be earned?” Discuss with students how respect means that we love and care for ourselves, all others, and all creation. Respect is the principle that underlies proper behaviour, the performance of ceremonies, and living a good life. Have students work in pairs to answer the question, “How can one incorporate respect into all parts of one’s life?”

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

Ask students how they might be affected or what they might do if certain ceremonies were banned or made illegal. Discuss how First Nations ceremonies were made illegal at one time, such as the ban of the Potlatch from 1885–1951 (for more information, see “The Story of the Masks” by the U’mista Cultural Society at www.virtualmuseum.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibit/the-story-of-the-masks/).

Show students how First Nations artistic practices are used to represent spiritual ideas and notions of how human beings exist in the world. Talk about how, for thousands of years, First Nations have utilized their surrounding environments not only for food, shelter, and clothing but for ideas about how to understand the world—which is reflected in their expressions. Most things First Nations communities created were decorated, and the decorative patterns were derived from spiritual beliefs representing connections to the environment, land, and animals. Often, viewers will find notions in these crafted objects such as how to live harmoniously with the universe, how to live a balanced life, and where to find beauty, medicine, and health in the world. This is reflected in many of the decorations, symbols, and symmetry found in patterns of beadwork, visual art, quillwork, birch bark baskets, footwear, rock paintings, and a host of other expressions.

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

Share with students the AFN booklet *Don't Misuse Tobacco: Keep it Sacred* from the tool kit (also found on the USB stick). Have students research the use, purposes, and health risks associated with tobacco and how it relates to certain practices like smudging or pipe ceremonies. It may be useful to have a guest speaker come and speak about tobacco or for students to witness its use in ceremony as well. Teachers may find it useful to utilize some of the strategies found in the pre-reading. Have students make presentations to younger students about the cultural uses and health risks associated with tobacco, as well as some traditional teachings surrounding its mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual use.

Have students work with a bead worker or textile worker from a First Nations community to learn the art of beadwork or another type of artistic expression. Then have students research and study symbols utilized in First Nations ceremonies throughout North America and create a “quilt” of their knowledge, with each student contributing one square. At the end, assemble all student squares together on a wall so they are attached and create a “quilt” pattern. Have a class ceremony at the completion of the quilt and invite the community to share in its unveiling.

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 2.2: Understanding First Nations Life Today

Lesson Plan 2.2.1: First Nations Experiences Today

Rationale

SAY magazine and the Healthy Aboriginal Network are two forums where contemporary social, political, and ideological issues prevalent in First Nations communities are being raised and addressed.

In this learning experience, students will examine the realities of the lives of First Nations communities, their world, their realities, their truths, and their values.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: SAY magazine*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Graphic novels from the Healthy Aboriginal Network:*
 - *Dropping Out: Level Up* by Steven Keewatin Sanderson
 - *Financial Literacy: The Game Plan* by Anthony Wong and Amancay Nahuelpan
 - *Dog Bites: The Gift* by Clifford Cardinal and Nelson Garcia
 - *Residential School: Lost Innocence* by Brandon Mitchell and Tara Audibert
 - *Maternal Child Health: It Takes a Village* by Zoe Hopkins and Amancay Nahuelpan
 - *Sexual Health: Kiss Me Deadly* by Richard Van Camp and Christopher Auchter
 - *Living with FASD: Drawing Hope* by Brandon Mitchell
 - *Youth in Care: Lighting up the Darkness* by Steven Keewatin Sanderson
 - *Smoking Prevention: River Run* by Brandon Mitchell and Tara Audibert
 - *Mental Health: Just a Story* by Steven Keewatin Sanderson
 - *Diabetes Awareness: An Invited Threat* by Steven Keewatin Sanderson
 - *Sports/Gang Awareness: Path of the Warrior* by Richard Van Camp and Steven Keewatin Sanderson

LESSON PLAN

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

Have students flip through *SAY* magazine. Explain that this is a rich resource for career and employment exploration, for programs and services for young entrepreneurs, for information on scholarships and student loans, for practical how-to articles on self-esteem, health, and wellness, and for inspirational stories and profiles of young First Nations talent and seasoned First Nations leaders, mentors, and role models. Ask students what makes this magazine different from others they may have read before. (For more information on the magazine, visit its website: www.saymag.com.)

Have students flip through one of the graphic novels referenced on the previous page. *Graphic novel* is a term used by librarians and educators to identify a specific publishing format—a book written and illustrated in the style of a comic book. Graphic novels are intended to engage students and motivate them to read. Graphic novels appear to be particularly popular with boys and struggling readers—students who are traditionally difficult to reach. Graphic novels generally have rich, complex plots and narrative structures that can satisfy all readers. The format can help improve reading comprehension for many students who struggle, because the illustrations provide contextual clues that enrich meaning and support understanding. Reading graphic novels can help students develop the critical skills necessary to read more challenging texts. If students are unfamiliar with graphic novels, explain that a graphic novel is a story with text and pictures. Demonstrate that graphic novels provide several entry points into understanding, and discuss with students how these features can help them understand the story. Some features to consider include the following:

- facial expressions
- landscapes
- representations of sound effects
- captions
- dialogue
- points of view
- sequences
- body language and relationships
- gutters (the space between juxtaposed panels)

Then, ask your students the following questions:

- How are graphic novels the same as other novels?
- How are graphic novels the same as comic books?
- Are graphic novels “real books”?

- How many of you have read graphic novels before? If you have, was the experience enjoyable or not so enjoyable? Why or why not?

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

Research the makeup of *SAY* magazine. The following are some areas for further investigation:

- Investigate the links at the *SAY* magazine website for scholarships and financial aid at www.saymag.com. Have each student pursue one source of scholarship and share the application information with the class.
- Acquire a copy of the *Annual Education Guide for Native Students*, which contains a directory of institutions and information on labour, financial aid, scholarships, and much more. Discuss ways to use the information.
- Every issue of *SAY* magazine includes a “Going Places” section. Look for a career event or conference near you.
- Every issue of *SAY* magazine showcases photos from visits to various locations. Look at how First Nations communities are represented in the magazine and how this may be different from mainstream magazines.

As students read through the graphic novels, ask them the following questions:

- What do the pictures in this graphic novel convey?
- How do colour, shape, angle, and framing create a mood, express emotion and feeling, and have an impact on the message?
- What are some of the emotional moments that are present in the story?
- Choose one moment and ascertain what emotion is being provoked. Make an accompanying drawing that captures that same feeling with one image, either from that character’s experience or from the student’s personal experience.
- What emotions do you feel when you read the stories?

Next, ask students to research a social issue raised by the graphic novel and how First Nations communities are affected by it. Have them do a brief presentation on how the graphic novel illuminates or obscures the issue.

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

Using *SAY* magazine as a model, make your own edition of a magazine. Distribute it throughout your community. Invite local officials and media to cover the launch of your project, or contribute to future issues of *SAY* magazine. Interview influential young leaders in your community and write a piece about them, or do a photo project of your community and send it to *SAY* magazine.

Using the graphic novels as models, make your own version, focusing on social and political issues not included in the series. Start by writing a script or improvising skits that illustrate an issue that is important to a student or group of students, or develop other activities around the issues raised by the graphic novel, such as a word search, a crossword, or a collage.

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 2.2: Understanding First Nations Life Today

Lesson Plan 2.2.2: First Nations Urban Life

Rationale

According to 2011 Census data, off-reserve Aboriginal people constitute the fastest growing segment of Canadian society. In 2011, 56% of Aboriginal people lived in urban areas, up from 49% in 1996. Over the last 25 years, the urban Aboriginal population in Canada has been growing steadily. In some cases, particularly in the larger cities, the Aboriginal population has more than doubled. For example, in Winnipeg, the Aboriginal population reached nearly 68,000 or 10% of the total population—more than four times higher than it was 25 years earlier.

The urban experience of First Nations people is complex. It is important to understand the many factors that underlie movement to and from urban areas. There may be advantages and opportunities but there also can be challenges and obstacles.

In this learning experience, students will understand some of the obstacles First Nations peoples have faced upon relocation from reserve life into urban centres. They will also learn about some of the contributions First Nations have made in urban centres and how urban First Nations have worked to maintain cultural knowledge and language.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks:*
Plain Talk 12: First Nations Urban Life
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide:*
Plain Talk 12: First Nations Urban Life

LESSON PLAN

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

Have students read material found in the pre-reading and discuss some of the reasons First Nations have chosen to leave their home communities and move into urban centres. Highlight some of the upsides and downsides of relocation, and record these responses for all students to see. After you finish your brief introduction, ask the class and lead a discussion on the following questions:

- Are there any students in the class who have moved and, if so, what was it like?

- What do you think it would be like to be separated from your family and friends for a long time? Do you think it would get lonely?
- What do you think it would be like to move to a place where the culture was totally different from what you are used to? Do you think you would find that difficult?

Invite a member of an urban Aboriginal community to speak about local cultural initiatives to help First Nations individuals who have relocated to urban centres maintain their culture and traditions. For example, in some urban centres, there have been sweat lodges built. Have this person explain why it is important to maintain culture, language, and tradition to support a strong identity. This discussion should happen in a talking circle. After the visitor has spoken, students will have an opportunity to share their observations and ask questions.

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

Study the history of friendship centres in Canada and the role they have played in supporting Indigenous individuals as they move to cities. Go to the website of the National Association of Friendship Centres at <http://nafc.ca/en/friendship-centres/> and examine the closest friendship centre for the programming it offers. If possible, attend an event there or offer students opportunities to volunteer and/or assist in their work in the community.

Discuss First Nations role models who have made positive contributions in urban centres. Make copies of BLM 5: First Nations Role Models. Have students choose a role model from the list and write a brief biography that covers the following:

- date and place of birth (and death, if applicable)
- major achievements
- education
- work facts
- an overview of what makes the person significant

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

Have students research and create a fictional journal of the life of a First Nations person who has moved to the city from a reserve community. Each journal should include seven entries, and three of the entries should be based on the following themes:

- what it was like when the character moved to the city
- what it was like for the character to be separated from family and friends
- what it was like moving to a new place and adjusting to a new culture

Have students research, interview participants and film sites, and create a short documentary or Powerpoint on services offered to First Nations communities in urban settings.

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 2.3: Understanding First Nations Communities

Lesson Plan 2.3.1: First Nations Education

Rationale

Throughout history, both European and First Nations have learned and benefited from each other, and they continue to do so. The goal or vision of First Nations education is holistic education systems that are autonomous and culturally appropriate environments that draw on both First Nations and western knowledge and wisdom. First Nations education is grounded in the concept of holistic lifelong learning. There is a strong belief that to get somewhere, you need to know where you come from. People need to be aware of their history.

These systems allow all individuals the opportunity to reach their full potential as healthy, productive members of their communities, working in occupations and professions of their choice. These systems ensure that everyone is engaged in learning activities that nurture their emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions, developing and building skills, knowledge, and wisdom throughout their lifetime.

In this learning experience, students will examine the importance of having schools grounded in First Nations cultures and language to support revitalizing cultural, social, and economical growth. Students will also be exposed to the significant differences in education between First Nations cultures and western or European points of view.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 10: First Nations Education*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User Guide: Plain Talk 10: First Nations Education*
- *Teaching by the Medicine Wheel: An Anishinaabe Framework for Indigenous Education* by Nicole Bell
- *Heartspeak about Shannen's Dream* (video) by Heartspeak

LESSON PLAN

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

Read the history of First Nations control of First Nations education in Canada in the pre-reading and expressed in the policy document *Indian Control of Indian Education* published by the National Indian Brotherhood. Highlight for students the following from this document:

- parents have a right to participate and partner with schools to direct the education of their children
- the federal government continue to honour agreements outlined in the treaties, including providing education funded by the Government of Canada
- communities would have the ability to locally control education in the following areas:
 - budgeting, spending, and establishing priorities
 - determining the types of school facilities required to meet local needs
 - directing staff hiring and curriculum development with a focus on First Nations languages and culture
 - locating after the maintenance of buildings
 - negotiating agreements with all levels of government
 - participating in the evaluations of schools
 - providing counselling services

Ask students: “Why would any of these be desired by First Nations communities?” and “Over the past 40 years, there have been repeated attempts on the part of First Nations to assert jurisdiction over education. Why do these efforts seem to go nowhere?” Then, lead a discussion on how one might build an education system in a community and why a community would want to do this.

Introduce the First Nations holistic learning model found in your pre-reading. Explain that in a holistic learning model everything is interconnected and interrelated. A good way to explain this is through the use of the Medicine Wheel. The online resource *Teaching by the Medicine Wheel: An Anishinaabe Framework for Indigenous Education* by Nicole Bell provides an excellent explanation about how to use Medicine Wheel pedagogy in the classroom at www.cea-ace.ca/education-canada/article/teaching-medicine-wheel.

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

Discuss with students the impact of the residential school system on the First Nations holistic learning model. Discuss how it has been difficult to develop First Nations education systems to teach important ideas like the Medicine Wheel because of disparities between schools located on- and off-reserve. Review the data shared in the pre-reading. Pick out some examples of difficulties experienced by on-reserve schools and have students in groups explore how these may be overcome.

Have students create their own personal Medicine Wheel, which outlines their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual life. Make sure the students

write their responses under each quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel should display the following:

- what each student does to nurture his or her physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual part of their being to maintain a balance as a student
- what areas the student feels could be improved to better nurture his or her physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being

After the students complete their Medicine Wheels, ask them:

- What do you think would happen if your Medicine Wheel was out of balance? For example, what if you forget to eat one day? How might that affect your ability to think and feel? How might it affect your spirit?

Have students share their responses, indicating that everything is connected and that if you neglect one area the entirety goes out of balance.

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

Have students examine “Shannen’s dream” and how one student can make a difference. Play the video *Heartspeak about Shannen’s dream* (available at www.heartspeak.ca). After watching the video, go to the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society website at www.fncaringsociety.com and click on:

- What You Can Do
- Shannen’s Dream
- Participate

The website also contains classroom resources. Click on:

- What You Can Do
- Shannen’s Dream
- School Resources

Compare and contrast the success of First Nations–controlled schools with non-First Nations–controlled schools (for instance, the Mi’Kmaq Kina’matnewey in Nova Scotia). Explore why First Nations-controlled models seem to be achieving remarkable success and improved graduation rates. Write a letter to local politicians and chiefs asking for their opinions on First Nations control of First Nations education.

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 2.3: Understanding First Nations Communities

Lesson Plan 2.3.2: First Nations Economies

Rationale

The government's plan to build a robust resource-based national economy is another example of an issue where First Nations are key players. Much of this activity will take place in and around First Nations' traditional territories. A number of significant reports identify economic development, labour force participation, investments, and access to resources as processes that can relieve First Nations economic depression and circumstances of poverty, to the benefit of First Nations, their citizenry, and the country. It is generally acknowledged that the essential elements of successful economies include education as a base requirement.

In this learning experience, students will gain awareness and appreciation of the role of First Nations in the shared history of Canada, learn about sustainable and non-sustainable economic development and their impacts on First Nations, and understand the importance of acquiring an education and maintaining a sound financial balance as a means to achieve one's goals and aspirations.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 13: First Nations Economic Growth and Employment*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 13: First Nations Economic Growth and Employment*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Dollars and Sense* (booklet) by the Aboriginal Financial Officers of Canada (AFOC) and TD Bank
- *Alberta Oil Sands, about* (video) by the Province of Alberta
- *The True Cost of Oil* by Garth Lenz
- *Topic: Sustainable Development* by the International Institute for Sustainable Development

LESSON PLAN

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

Share with students information found in the pre-reading—specifically the sections discussing economic development that has occurred on and nearby First Nations communities. Share with students the recent controversy regarding resource development, such as in the Alberta oil sands, where the First Nations remain divided about whether the economic benefits

outweigh the environmental impacts. Proponents resisting the tar sands are more in favour of sustainable economic development initiatives with less environmental impact. Play the video *Alberta Oil Sands: about*, which was produced by the Alberta government at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGx5_2IYZ4Y. After students finish watching the video, ask the following questions:

- What are some of the benefits of the Alberta tar sands discussed in the video?
- Are there any shortcomings to the Alberta tar sands mentioned in the video?
- Would you be interested in learning about careers in the tar sands?
- How have some First Nations engaged with the Alberta tar sands?

Share the information link “What is Sustainable Development,” which can be found at the International Institute for Sustainable Development website at <https://www.iisd.org/sd/>. Have students examine some of the international conferences and conversations on the page that have taken place in recent years (such as in Ottawa in 2007 or Rio de Janeiro in 1992). After the students finish examining the information on the web page, ask them “How can we describe sustainable development?” Then invite an Elder or traditional knowledge keeper to explain how traditional knowledge supports environmental and social sustainability. After the Elder talks, have the students write a reflection highlighting best practices that can be learned from the First Nations community about sustaining our environment.

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

Show students the Ted Talk by Garth Lenz at www.ted.com/talks/garth_lenz_images_of_beauty_and_devastation. If this link is removed, there are many other links that speak about the effects of oil production in North America. After the students finish watching, ask them:

- Did you learn anything in this talk that was not in the videos on the Alberta tar sands and sustainable development?
- Do you think resource extraction and/or oil drilling is a beneficial way to create a life for the future? Why or why not?
- After watching the videos, what do you think are the benefits and downfalls of using our natural resources to generate money?

After the class discussion, separate students into groups of six and have them go on the computer to research resource developments on and around First Nations. Students are to find five reasons to support a specific resource development and five issues that would provide arguments against a specific resource development.

Divide each group in half and have them participate in a 10-minute debate in front of the class. Half of the group will debate in favour of the resource development and half the students will debate against the resource development. Some examples of resource industries around or within First Nations that students could develop include:

- the oil and gas industry
- tar sands
- hydroelectric development
- mineral extraction industries

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

Invite five local First Nations role models to come to the classroom to talk about their careers. If it is not possible to invite guests, the First Nations Education Steering Committee has a resource for teachers called *First Nations Career Role Models* that includes many examples of successful Indigenous role models that could be shared with students. It is available at www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CURRICULUM-CJ-Careers-teacher-resource-for-video-2015-10-18.pdf. After students hear about the various role models, have them research a career that interests them and draft a letter applying for that career. The description should include the following:

- what level of education is required
- what kinds of skills it demands
- what is the pay scale range
- why they are interested in that job

The Aboriginal Financial Officers of Canada (AFOA) and the TD Bank have published *Dollars and Sense*. This publication has a number of activities for youth to learn about effective financial management. Have the students complete a personal financial management project using activities and information in the AFOA publication. The activities include the following:

- If I Had a Million Dollars Quiz
- Aboriginal Peoples and Currency of the Past
- Principles of Effective Money Management
- My Summer Job and \$1,200
- Spending Plan and Savings
- Consumer Awareness, Banking, and Credit
- Types of Financial Institutions in Canada
- Impacts of Sound/Unsound Financial Practices on Individuals, Family, and Community
- Careers in Finance

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 2.4: Understanding First Nations Issues Today

Lesson Plan 2.4.1: First Nations Stereotypes and Sports Mascots/Logos

Rationale

Throughout history, First Nations have been depicted as blood-thirsty savages (the earliest stereotype) or as drunken, poor, wooden, lazy, and “casino rich” (the latest stereotype), to name a few. Then there is the other side of the stereotyping coin—romanticizing of First Nations as the Indian princess, the noble savage, and the native warrior, etc. Today, there is an ongoing controversy over appropriation of First Nations or Native American tribal names for team mascots. Supporters often claim that the usage of Aboriginal-themed team names, logos, or mascots is intended to honour Aboriginal groups and/or educate their fans. In reality, this usage reduces Aboriginal peoples and cultures to demeaning cartoons and caricatures.

In this learning experience, students will examine the effect of stereotyping and bias and how these accompany policy, power, and punishment.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 9: Cultural Competency*
- “The Most Offensive Team Names in Sports: A Definitive Ranking” by Marc Tracy
- *Proud to Be* (video) by the National Congress of Indians (U.S.)

LESSON PLAN

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

Define the terms *stereotype* and *bias*. Definitions for these two terms can be found in your pre-reading. After it is clear that the students understand these terms, explore with them how people might measure others’ behaviour against certain values, beliefs, and perspectives.

Demonstrate to students that different cultures express manners in different ways and that what may be appropriate in one culture may not be appropriate in another. It is for this reason that we must always be aware of how our bias may cause us to make unfair judgments that negatively affect our relationships with others.

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

Discuss the widespread use of stereotypes among professional sports teams that use Indigenous names and images in derogatory ways. Show the students the *New Republic* article by Marc Tracy called “The Most Offensive Team Names in Sports: A Definitive Ranking,” found at <https://newrepublic.com/article/115106/ranking-racist-sports-team-mascots-names-and-logos>.

Teachers may also print out some contemporary sport team mascots, such as those of the Washington football team and the Cleveland baseball team. After reviewing some of the names and photos, ask the students the following questions:

- Do these mascots, fans, and photos honour First Nations people or do you think they are insulting and degrading?
- Do you think teams should be required to change their names or mascots when they depict stereotyped images of a cultural group?

Play the commercial *Proud to Be*, which was produced by the National Congress of Indians in the United States at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mR-tbOxlhvE>. Ask students the following questions:

- How does this commercial combat common stereotypes about First Nations people?
- Do you have some negative stereotypes about First Nations people? Where do you think you learned these stereotypes?
- What message do you think the National Congress of American Indians is trying to give the audience?
- Did watching this commercial change your views about the use of mascots using Indigenous people and images?

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

Have students write letters to a professional sports team expressing their opinions about the use of a derogatory image or mascot.

Have students collect 10 media images that depict stereotyped images of First Nations and write a brief explanation about the image they chose, what purposes it serves, and what is problematic about it.

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 2.4: Understanding First Nations Issues Today

Lesson Plan 2.4.2: Ending Violence against Aboriginal Women

Rationale

First Nations women experience violence at a significantly higher rate than other women in Canada. First Nations women disappear and/or are murdered in Canada at a shocking rate that is disproportionate to their numbers. Indigenous women have faced historical violence and brutality that still continues today. In Canada, Indigenous women are five times more likely than other women to die as a result of violence. This problem is not localized to one region, but is spread across the country. This abuse affects women physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Some say that government policy has made women vulnerable. Regardless, what we must understand is that these women are not statistics. They are not anonymous case numbers. They are real people—daughters, granddaughters, wives, mothers, sisters, aunties, and neighbours. We must understand that the solutions to combating public perceptions about murdered and missing Indigenous women lie within all of us.

In this learning experience, students will acquire statistical information about the rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls, learn about the underlying factors that have resulted in higher levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls, and explore some of the grassroots initiatives that have been started by First Nations communities to lobby for action in addressing the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National Plain Talks: Plain Talk 11: Ending Violence Against Women*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide: Plain Talk 11: Ending Violence Against Women*
- *Digital Life Story of Evangline Billy* by the Native Women's Association of Canada
- "Missing, murdered Aboriginal women in Canada deserve an inquiry" by the *Toronto Star*

LESSON PLAN

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

Have students read material found in the pre-reading. Then show students the video produced by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) titled *Digital Life Story of Evangline Billy* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3AsE7jX6vY>. After students watch the video, ask them the following questions:

- Who was Evangline Billy?
- What was her family like?
- Did she have any children?
- What was her personality like?
- What kinds of things did she like to do?
 - Did she work?
 - Did she go to school?
 - What community was she from?
 - What were her hopes and dreams?

There are also many other profiles, stories, and accounts available through the NWAC. By acquiring brief insights into the individual women's lives, including their many talents and hopes and dreams and their relationships with their children and other family members, we are reminded of the humanity and the unique personhood of each woman.

Invite an individual who works in the area of violence prevention to talk about some of the factors that have resulted in increased proportions of violence against First Nations women and girls. The speaker should also address actions the students can take individually to support efforts to end violence against First Nations women and girls.

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

Tell students that each missing and murdered woman has a unique life and story. Have the students separate into groups of five to research and create a 10-minute presentation that includes pictures of one of the victims. The presentation should answer the following questions:

- What is her name?
- What was her family like?
- Did she have any children?
- What was her personality like?
- What kinds of things did she like to do?
- Did she work?

- Did she go to school?
- What community was she from?
- What were her hopes and dreams?

Share the *Toronto Star* editorial “Missing, murdered aboriginal women in Canada deserve an inquiry” in the pre-reading. Discuss with students why leaders are lobbying for a national inquiry and outline previous, current, and ongoing efforts to try and address the issue of violence against First Nations women and girls. Have students create a “pros” and “cons” chart addressing whether a national inquiry to examine this issue should take place.

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

Expose students to the many lobbying efforts that have been initiated to put pressure on government to deal with the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. These actions have helped to raise awareness about this issue. Some examples of these efforts include the following:

- Annual Sisters in Spirit Vigil
- Annual Women’s Memorial March
- The Red Dress Campaign
- The We Care Campaign

Discuss some of these initiatives in class. Make sure to share photos. Have students choose one of the above lobbying efforts and research a report that covers the following:

- the history of the lobbying effort
- who is involved in organizing the lobbying effort
- what they hope to achieve
- whether any actions have occurred as a result of the lobbying effort

Have students perform a gallery walk at the end—and even decorate a mural in the school hallway—with their reports.

Organize a social media campaign asking First Nations leaders and Canadian politicians to take action on the issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women. Use Twitter, Facebook, and emails.

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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