

## Cluster 4: Foundations for a New Relationship in Manitoba

### Learning Experience 4.1: First Nations History in Manitoba

#### Lesson Plan 4.1.1: First Nations of Manitoba

##### Rationale

As of 2012, there were over 140,000 registered First Nations members in Manitoba, with 60 percent living on reserves. Manitoba is second only to Ontario in terms of First Nations population. Approximately 60 percent of First Nations members in Manitoba are under the age of 30.

In this learning experience, students will study the unique history of First Nations in Manitoba and connect this to the broader movements of First Nations in Canada. They will also learn about the key role that educational service providers play in disseminating information about First Nations in Manitoba.

##### 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 Manitoba User's Guide: The First Nations Political Tribal Organizations and Educational Service Providers of Manitoba: A Brief History and Overview*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Wabwung: Our Tomorrows (1971)* by the Indian Tribes of Manitoba
- BLM 6: A Chronology of First Nations in Manitoba
- *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* by Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair and Warren Cariou

##### LESSON PLAN

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

Ask students: "What does Manitoba mean?" and "How did Manitoba come to be?" Discuss how the name *Manitoba* comes from two words: *Manito-API* (referring to the petroforms in the Whiteshell) and *Manitowapow* (referring to the sound of waves crashing at the narrows).

For more on this, see *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* by Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair and Warren Cariou at [www.portageandmainpress.com/lesson\\_plans/plan\\_304\\_2.pdf](http://www.portageandmainpress.com/lesson_plans/plan_304_2.pdf).

Show students the history of the great Lake Agassiz, which once covered Manitoba, and how First Nations came to Manitoba after the land had been carved out by the water, creating one of the most intricate and widespread river networks in North America (and the Lake Winnipeg watershed). During the last Ice Age, between 10,000–30,000 years ago, Manitoba was at the bottom of a great glacier that covered most of North America. As this great body of ice melted, it became a huge body of water—the great Lake Agassiz—that eventually drained into the world’s oceans or formed parts of the local ecology (for instance, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Winnipegosis, and Lake Manitoba are remnants). This has created one of the most dynamic and rich ecological networks in the world, with an abundance of wildlife, aquatic life, and rich and fertile land. Then have students go through BLM 6: A Chronology of First Nations in Manitoba (found in Appendix IV at the end of this document), marking significant dates in First Nations history in Manitoba. Have students fill in the years of the events from 1985 onwards and add to the list.

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

Study the history of the seven First Nations linguistic groups in Manitoba and where they reside: Cree, Ojibway (Anishinaabe), Dakota, Ojibway-Cree, and Dene. Also study the history of the Inuit, who used sections of northern Manitoba for hunting, migrating, and some settlement. Then study the rise of the Métis in Manitoba.

Examine some creation stories from the above nations and how these stories connect to their arrival in Manitoba. Connect these to other First Nations creation stories throughout Canada to demonstrate a wide network of intercultural and political collaboration, movement, and trade. Specifically examine the Ojibway (Anishinaabe)/Cree story of Wenabozho and the flood and connect this to the story of the great Lake Agassiz and the rise of Lake Winnipeg.

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

Have students research the following organizations and examine how cultural affiliations operate in the political world. Have students notice how tribal groups have come together and collaborated to form alliances across Manitoba and Canada, continuing a tradition that has existed for a long time:

- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak (MKO)
- Southern Chiefs’ Organization (SCO)

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
- Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Inc. (DOTC)
- Interlake Reserves Tribal Council Inc. (IRTC)
- Island Lake Tribal Council (ILTC)
- Keewatin Tribal Council Inc. (KTC)
- Southeast Resource Development Council Corp. (SRDC)
- Swampy Cree Tribal Council Inc. (SCTC)
- West Region Tribal Council Inc. (WRTC)

Have students complete a small project on each organization, identifying its current leader and the major issues it works on.

Examine the 1971 document *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* by the Indian Tribes of Manitoba—particularly the introduction by Grand Chief David Courchene. How is that document a history of First Nations in Manitoba? How is it a document advocating for a different kind of Manitoba than we know today? Have students imagine what a school system might be like if *Wahbung* were made into policy.

#### **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 4.1: First Nations History in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.1.2: Manitoba Map of First Nations

#### Rationale

Manitoba has 63 First Nations, 23 of which are not accessible by an all-weather road. This accounts for more than half of all Manitoba First Nations people who live on reserve. Geographic isolation has segregated Manitoba First Nations communities socially and economically from mainstream Manitoba and has created unique challenges in the region regarding economic development and delivery of services.

In this learning experience, students will study the geography and land inhabited by Manitoba First Nations.

#### Pre-Reading and Materials Required

- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: The First Nations Political Tribal Organizations and Educational Service Providers of Manitoba: A Brief History and Overview*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: First Nations of Manitoba*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: Manitoba Map of First Nations*
- *Community Map* by Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
- "List of place names in Canada of Indigenous origin" by Wikipedia

### LESSON PLAN

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

Distribute a list of First Nations of Manitoba and the Manitoba Map of First Nations. Ask students if any of them have travelled to these communities. If so, ask them what they saw and experienced. Have students mark the communities they have been to on the Manitoba Map of First Nations. Then, invite a knowledgeable expert—perhaps a hunter, fisher, or trapper—into the classroom to share her or his unique knowledge and firsthand experiences out on the land.

Discuss the different geographies, topographies, and environments of First Nations communities throughout Manitoba, and explore what would be necessary for survival in different areas in different seasons. Ask: "How does the location of a reserve affect the lives of the people? Consider diet, culture, ceremonies, transportation, access of resources, trade, and governance."

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

Tell students about the power of First Nations names. Provinces and territories whose official names are Indigenous in origin are Yukon, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut. The word *Canada* comes from the Iroquoian word *Kanien'keha* (Kanata), meaning “village” (in Ojibway, it means “a sacred place”). Next, for information about the First Nations origins of place names, see the following website: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_place\\_names\\_in\\_Canada\\_of\\_aboriginal\\_origin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_place_names_in_Canada_of_aboriginal_origin).

Have students consult with members of First Nations communities regarding the value and meaning of names (people and places). They can generate their own list and contribute additional and alternative suggested origins. Here are some examples from Manitoba:

- Grand Rapids: Translation of Cree word *misepawistik*, meaning “rushing rapids”
- Wapusk National Park: from *wâpask*, which is “polar bear” in Cree
- Winnipeg: “muddy water” from the word *win-nipi* in Cree

Check out the following interactive community map on the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) website: [www.mfnerc.org/community/interactive-map/](http://www.mfnerc.org/community/interactive-map/).

Use the interactive community map to explore the communities and schools MFNERC serves in Manitoba. You can discover traditional names and meanings, treaty boundaries, different language and cultural regions, and school information. If you would like to help contribute information to the map, please contact MFNERC at the following email address: [info@mfnerc.com](mailto:info@mfnerc.com).

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

Study the many distinctive aspects of the flora, fauna, and other characteristics of Manitoba and how these aspects influence and assist First Nations in their cultural, political, and philosophical practices. For example, look at beadwork, the clan system, and sacred sites such as in the Whiteshell or The Forks. Ask students to collect whatever information is available about Manitoba plants, animals, geology, etc., and connect one or more First Nations to these in a small project.

Have students contribute their own experiences of growing up in Manitoba alongside interviews with Elders in the community, comparing their knowledge and the changes they have observed over recent years. Create a small anthology for distribution in the community.

#### **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 4.2: First Nations Treaties in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.2.1: An Introduction to Treaties in Manitoba

#### Rationale

Manitoba has had many agreements between First Nations and Canada, also called treaties, over many years.

In this learning experience, students will learn briefly about treaties in Manitoba and how to access resources like the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba for more information.

#### 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 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*
- *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
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit: Kinikinik* by Ian Ross, published by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: Manitoba Treaty Map*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: Treaties DVD*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: First Nations of Manitoba*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: Manitoba Map of First Nations*

#### 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 they finish this brief exercise, have

them negotiate a simple task like sharing an apple. They may only speak in non-understandable vocables 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 take back some of the apple and refuse to share. Have them record their reflection on a piece of paper and hand it in.

Show students the treaties DVD from the Manitoba edition of the tool kit. It explores and explains the following Manitoba treaties:

- Treaty 4
- Sagkeeng Treaty 1
- Sayisi Dene Treaty 5
- Cross Lake Treaty 5
- Split Lake Treaty 5

Then, place a large sheet of white paper on the wall at the front of the classroom. Ask the students “What is a treaty?” Place all of the students’ responses on the piece of white paper located at the front of the room. Then, tape a second piece of white paper at the front of the room beside the students’ responses and write out the definition of “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 refusing to share the 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 things that have happened to First Nations during treaty time happened because of greed. Do you agree? Why?

Have student pairs present to other pairs about their experience. 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 with the Haudenosaunee (1613), the Royal Proclamation (1763), the numbered treaties (1871–1921), as well as the modern-day treaties (1975–2002) (all found in your pre-reading). Treaties can sometimes be a very abstract concept for students. It may be

helpful to use pictures. For example, the teacher could use a picture of the Two Row Wampum Belt when explaining this. Manitoba and Saskatchewan also have excellent resources for teaching about treaties (see Lesson 1.3.1).

### 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. The Canadian system is based on control and ownership. How can these two systems 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 the 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 honouring the treaty relationship.

Have students read the play *Kinikinik* by Ian Ross, published by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. Turn to National 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 4.2: First Nations Treaties in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.2.2: The 1817 Selkirk Treaty

#### Rationale

In 1811, British aristocrat Lord Selkirk wished to create a new colony, so he purchased land, mostly located in what is now lower Manitoba, from the fur trading company. This led to the creation of the Red River Settlement in 1812. This settlement only lasted for three years, as it was on and alongside land inhabited by the Métis, who were angered that they were not consulted. In June 1816, the Métis killed the governor-in-chief of Rupert's Land and 20 of his men in the Battle at Seven Oaks. Two months later, Selkirk and his men attacked Fort William.

In 1817, Selkirk decided to sign a treaty with the Cree and Ojibway (Anishinaabe) nations, among others, to share land stretching along the Red River. "The Selkirk Treaty" is a land agreement treaty signed by Chief Peguis and four other Aboriginal chiefs with Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, indicating a land transfer along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The chiefs signed using their totems, which indicated their community affiliations and the many ties they shared in that place. The images of bear, catfish, and other animals, therefore, also represent land claims, laws, and forms of government in the diverse communities they represented. Lord Selkirk, on the other hand, distributed this land to new settlers. He died in 1820. In 1836, Canada claimed that the land covered by this treaty reverted back to the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1869 was claimed by the new Dominion of Canada. This angered many First Nations, who felt that new European settlers coming into the region were violating their land rights and disrupting their way of life (a leading cause of the Red River Resistance of 1870).

In this learning experience, students will learn about First Nations writing in Manitoba and the history of the writing that went into the 1817 Selkirk Treaty. They will also examine how each side interpreted the term *treaty* differently.

#### 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 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 Manitoba User's Guide: Manitoba Treaty Map*
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide: Manitoba Map of First Nations*

## LESSON PLAN

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

Share with students the information about the Selkirk Treaty, which can be found on the *First People* website at [www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Treaties/The-Selkirk-Treaty-Land-Description.html](http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Treaties/The-Selkirk-Treaty-Land-Description.html). BLM 7 also includes a map of the original Selkirk settlement. Have students connect this map to modern-day Winnipeg and see if they can mark contemporary places onto this map (such as shopping centres, The Forks, downtown Winnipeg, Lake Winnipeg, Selkirk, the Canada/U.S. border, etc.).

Have students research the following online, sharing their findings at the end:

- Chief Peguis
- Lord Selkirk
- Hudson's Bay Company
- The Northwest Company
- Cuthbert Grant
- Battle at Seven Oaks

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

Examine the importance of signatures to agreements and what they mean, such as in the signatures of Lord Selkirk and his allies. Examine Chief Peguis' and his allies' signatures, which are clan or totem signatures. Ask students:

- What might these mean?
- Why didn't he sign using his name?
- What might these animal images mean?
- How might these signatures be different than Lord Selkirk's

Have students examine the difference between family and friends and how these two concepts are illustrated in treaty-making processes over time. Ask students to complete the following on a piece of paper or orally:

- How might family create relationships and how might friends?
- How might we see this in treaties that have been signed over time?
- How best might people share land equally and mutually?

- Are treaties relationship-making mechanisms or one-time land sales?
- How do you think Chief Peguis felt when Lord Selkirk never returned to give gifts?

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

Connect the signatures on the 1817 Selkirk Treaty to other histories of Indigenous writing in Manitoba. Explain to students that systems of writing have been used in Manitoba since time immemorial. Often employed alongside oral traditions, these texts record interactions among people and express connections to animals, spirit beings, and other creatures. Although they date from long ago, these writing systems have evolved over the generations as Aboriginal communities have changed and grown. Their intellectual and spiritual value is immense, and they provide a foundation on which all literature in Manitoba has been built. Explore some of these, including the following:

- rock paintings
- beadwork
- clothing (like moccasins or shirts)
- petroforms
- birchbark bitings
- syllabics

Have students create a small project on how Manitoba looks through the experiences of these writers.

Have students write a letter as Chief Peguis to the Queen of England, upset at Lord Selkirk's failure to return and fulfill the 1817 Selkirk Treaty. Compare this with BLM 8: Chief Peguis' 1857 Speech to the Queen.

### 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 4.3: First Nations Cultures in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.3.1: First Nations Teachings and Practices

#### Rationale

While the knowledge of the traditional teachings and practices of First Nations people has always existed, it has become increasingly important to seek it, learn it, and share it. In particular, the teachings and lessons must be shared with children and youth. As knowledge increases, so does the honour and respect we have for one another and for the practice of these ancestral ways.

In this cluster, students will explore the tools and knowledge in the *First Nations Teachings and Practices* booklet that provides the basic information needed to begin a journey to rediscover traditional ways that are still followed today. The lessons come from the Elders who carry the gifts of cultural knowledge, language, history, and ceremonies. The Elders also carry knowledge of the medicines that Mother Earth provides.

#### 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 Manitoba User's Guide: First Nations Teachings and Practices*
- *First Nations Teachings and Practices* by Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
- *Asishnaabeg Bimaadiziwin: An Ojibwe Peoples Resource* by Georgian College

#### LESSON PLAN

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

Ask the students “What are some examples of traditions?” Write down their responses on the board. After the students respond to this question, ask them “Why are those traditions important to you and your family or community?” After the students are finished with this brief whole-class discussion, separate them into pairs to discuss the question “What is your favourite family or community tradition? Explain why.” Have the person who is listening be the recorder and have the other answer. At the end of the exercise, have them hand in their responses.

Ask the students to share some of the roles and responsibilities they have in their household. As they share their responses, write them down at the front of the class. After this brief discussion, explain to the students that, like the

roles and responsibilities we have in our own homes, we also have roles and responsibilities in our communities. Explain that teachings taught through our ceremonies guide our roles and responsibilities. Communicate that, although all teachings are based on a foundation of respect, our roles and responsibilities vary depending on our gender, stage in life, our traditional name, clan, and colours. After this brief explanation, read pages 1-11 and 17-25 in the *First Nations Teaching and Practices* booklet by MFNERC. After completing your whole-class discussion, separate the female and male students into separate groups and invite both a female and male Elder to work with each group.

The Elder will facilitate a Talking Circle to teach the students about the traditional roles of men and women, ceremonial protocols, sacred medicines, and how individuals traditionally received gifts such as their name, clan, and colours. Have an Elder also explain how students can receive their name, colours, and clan. Information about this can be found on pages 5 and 15 of the *First Nations Teachings and Practices* booklet.

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

Have the students form pairs of one male and one female student and participate in an interview where they will ask each other questions about the traditional roles and responsibilities they learned about from the Elder. Students can use the following interview questions as a guide:

- What are some of your traditional roles and responsibilities as a woman/man?
- How is your role and responsibility important to maintain the family?
- How is your role and responsibility important to maintain the community?
- Do you think learning about our traditional roles and responsibilities will help generate more respectful relationships between men and women?

Using *Asishnaabeg Bimaadiziwin: An Ojibwe Peoples Resource* by Georgian College, found at <https://fner.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/anishnaabeg-bimaadiziwinan-ojibwe-peoples-resource-website/>, separate the students into groups of four and have them research clans. Student research should include a description of each clan animal and the roles and responsibilities for members who are a part of that clan. In addition to providing a basic description of the clans, have each group respond to the following reflection questions:

- Do you think people wanting to learn about their clan could understand their roles and responsibilities better by observing the behaviours of their clan animal? Why or why not?
- Do you think that the traditional clan system is an effective way to make sure everything runs smoothly in a community?

- Do you think that a clan system could be used today to organize a community? Why or why not?

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

Take the students out to the land to learn about picking traditional medicines. This will include teachings about the significance of tobacco offerings so that students understand the importance of always giving back when you take something from Mother Earth. An explanation about the significance of tobacco can be found on page 9 of the *First Nations Teachings and Practices* booklet. At the end of the medicine picking field trip, students can either bring the medicines home or leave them in the classroom to use at school.

Separate students into groups of two and have them create a poster displaying all the clans with a description of clan roles and responsibilities. Students can use the information in *Asishnaabeg Bimaadiziwin* at <https://fner.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/anishnaabeg-bimaadiziwinan-ojibwe-peoples-resource-website/>.

### 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 4.3: First Nations Cultures in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.3.2: The Making of a Star Blanket

#### Rationale

Making a star blanket provides an opportunity for students to work with paper and colour while integrating the concept of numbers into the learning and teaching process. Being able to manipulate and visualize different mathematical concepts before engaging in the actual activity of making a star blanket is a good learning experience. Students are often motivated to learn math when coordinating the task of folding paper into different shapes, patterns, and designs, and adding colour. There are many mathematical concepts that can be taught and assessed with the star blanket. These concepts build a foundation of ideas and skills for teachers and students.

In this cluster, students will use “The Star Blanket-Making Process From the Sewing Perspective” to learn a step-by-step progression of the assembly of a star blanket. This can be found in the MFNERC resource *The Making of a Star Blanket* in your tool kit (also available on the MFNERC website at <https://mfnerc.org/product/the-making-of-a-star-blanket-book/>). The skill of creating and sewing a star blanket is a desired outcome for all learners. Not only does it teach the manipulation of numbers, colours, and patterns, it also teaches patience and builds positive self-esteem within the learner.

#### 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 Manitoba User's Guide: First Nations Teachings and Practices*
- *First Nations Teachings and Practices* by Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
- *The Making of a Star Blanket* by MFNERC
- *The Story of the Star Blanket* by Norquest College
- “Star Blanket Making” by Sagkeeng Child and Family Services

## LESSON PLAN

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

Ask students if they have ever received an award or a gift for something they achieved or for an act of generosity. Read “The Story of The Star Blanket” by Norquest College at [www.norquest.ca/NorquestCollege/media/pdf/services/Story-of-the-Star-Blanket.pdf](http://www.norquest.ca/NorquestCollege/media/pdf/services/Story-of-the-Star-Blanket.pdf). After reading the story to students, say: “Star blankets have been used for centuries as a way to honour individuals who have achieved or contributed something significant. Receiving a star blanket is one of the highest honours among First Nations. It means that the person giving the blanket holds that individual in high regard for either his or her generosity or accomplishments. We are going to be making a community star blanket in class. This will require patience, commitment, and accuracy.”

Play the short video “Star Blanket Making with Sagkeeng Child and Family Services” at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cwRjP\\_NDeM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cwRjP_NDeM). After watching the video, ask the students what they learned about the star blanket that they didn’t know before.

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

Have the students choose the style of star they want to make for their community star blanket. Star blanket plates can be found on pages 23–27 of *The Making of a Star Blanket*. After the students select their star, tell them that measurement and geometry skills are important tools to have when making a star blanket. Ask them the following questions:

- What kinds of geometric patterns do you see on the star pattern? (isosceles triangle, rhombus)
- What do you think would happen if each rhombus was not cut the same size?

Say to the students: “Like the Elders indicated in the video, all the pieces of the star blanket need to be measured and cut out accurately or the star may not fit together properly.” Have the students practise making a rhombus by measuring, drawing, and cutting out rhombus shapes from two isosceles triangles using construction paper. Have students cut out enough rhombus pieces to make an eight-point star. Directions for constructing an eight-point star can be found in *The Making of a Star Blanket* (pp. 3–11).

Read page 21 of *The Making of a Star Blanket*, which discusses the significance and meaning in many First Nations cultures of the colours yellow, black, red, blue, white, and green. Have each of the students choose three of the colours and write a justification about why they think the colours they selected would be the most powerful to use for their community blanket. After completing this exercise, students will read their recommendations to the

whole class. Upon completion of the presentations, the class will vote on the three colours they would like to use for the blanket.

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

Separate the students into eight groups. Each group will be responsible to complete one of the points in the eight-point star. Following the directions outlined in *The Making of a Star Blanket* (pp. 1-11), slowly take the students through each step. Have students in each group appoint specific tasks to their group members. For example, one group member would be responsible to iron, sew, measure, or cut each rhombus. Say to the students: "It is important to work together as a team because it will take everyone together to make sure your piece of the eight-point star fits together." When all the groups have finished their point for the eight-point star, collect all the pieces and work with each group to sew one part of the quilt together.

Separate the students into eight groups and have them write a nomination letter for an individual they feel has earned the honour of receiving the star blanket. The nomination letter will describe the individual's achievement(s), act(s) of generosity, and contributions to the community. Each group will have an opportunity to review each nomination letter and will be required to pick two of the nominees. The nominee with the greatest amount of support will be awarded the star blanket.

Students will organize a giveaway and feast for the person being presented with the star blanket. The protocols and reasons for feasts and giveaways can be found on page 15 of the *First Nations: Teachings and Practices* booklet by MFNERC.

### 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 4.4: Extending Relationships with First Nations in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.4.1: Understanding and Adopting First Nations Values

#### Rationale

First Nations people in Manitoba exhibit First Nations values, which are generally unfamiliar to most Canadian students. The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre posters depicting Indigenous values included in your tool kit will help students understand that First Nations have positive and longstanding traditional teachings that share common and unique elements with other peoples throughout the country and world. The values posters can be used in both First Nations and non-First Nations schools to help students strengthen values through behaviour in the classroom and in their lives. Teachers can review and adapt their lessons to include teaching values to improve First Nations students' sense of identity and also to positively affect student attitudes and behaviours. The posters could be displayed in the classroom throughout the school year and revisited from time to time.

In this learning experience, students will be exposed to First Nations values and how they relate to their everyday lives.

#### 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 National Plain Talks:*  
Plain Talk 17: Role Models
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit National User's Guide:*  
Plain Talk 17: Role Models
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Manitoba User's Guide:*  
Values Posters

## LESSON PLAN

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

Ask students:

- What are values?
- Do you personally share the values highlighted in each of the posters?
- Are some values more important than others?
- How does holding a strong set of values help guide or shape your life?

Hang the values posters found in the tool kit around your classroom. Have students perform a gallery walk and reflect on the images and words they see. These posters are:

**Cree Values:**

Respect, Truth, Love, Courage, Kindness, Obedience, Sharing, Wisdom, Honesty

**Dakota Values:**

Generosity, Sharing, Respect, Courage, Bravery, Integrity/Truth, Wisdom, Listening Attentively

**Dene Values:**

Love, Respect, Honour, Honesty, Gentleness, Courage, Helpfulness

**Oji-Cree Values:**

Respect, Humility, Confidence, Sharing, Love, Prayerfulness, Caring, Kindness

**Ojibwe Values:**

Love, Wisdom, Honesty, Humility, Truth, Respect, Bravery, A Good Life

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

Have students write a personal story about when they have had to turn to their values and make a decision about a situation. For prompts, ask students about times when they felt their values were challenged and what they did to make a decision.

The values posters present a good opportunity to teach students about some important historical Indigenous figures. Role models could be chosen based on the values that are being discussed, or the posters could be used to showcase a series of First Nations role models. Turn back to National Plain Talk 17 and your pre-reading for more.

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

Invite a respected Elder to visit the classroom to discuss traditions, history, and culture and to speak about how traditional values are part of everyday living. Make the occasion a real celebration. Honour the individual with a plaque, a poem, or a testimonial. Along the way, students build pride and self-esteem, and gain experience brainstorming, decision making, event planning, working as a team, and building community.

Have students perform some of their stories in a short dramatic piece for their peers, illustrating the values they see on the values posters.

### 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 4.4: Extending Relationships with First Nations in Manitoba

### Lesson Plan 4.4.2: The Importance of First Nations Languages

#### Rationale

The current 50 languages of Canada's Indigenous peoples belong to 11 major language families: 10 First Nations and Inuktitut. Canada's Aboriginal languages are many and diverse, and their importance to Indigenous people is immense. Language is one of the most tangible symbols of culture and group identity. It is not only a means of communication; it is a link that connects people with their past and grounds their social, emotional, and spiritual vitality. Although loss of language does not necessarily lead to the death of a culture, it can severely handicap transmission of that culture. For Aboriginal peoples, great losses have already occurred. During the past 100 years or more, nearly 10 once flourishing languages have become extinct, and at least a dozen are on the brink of extinction. When these languages vanish, they take with them unique ways of looking at the world, explaining the unknown and making sense of life.

Some are thriving. The Cree, for example, have as many as 80,000 everyday speakers. British Columbia is home to 203 First Nations communities and an amazing diversity of Indigenous languages (approximately 60% of the First Nations languages of Canada are spoken here). Dozens of others, however, are in danger of disappearing. In 1998, the Assembly of First Nations declared a language state of emergency.

In this learning experience, students will learn the value of First Nations languages and their role in the cultural, political, and social life of First Nations.

#### 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:*  
Pocket-Sized Language Survival Booklets (*Dakota Wichoye, Ikidowinan,*  
and *Neyinawewina*)

## LESSON PLAN

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

Distribute to students the pocket-sized survival booklets in the tool kit. Have them look up common words and phrases they know and try to speak them. The booklets are:

- *Dakota Wichoye–Dakota Sayings*
- *Ikidowinan–Anishinabe Sayings*
- *Neyinawewina–Cree Sayings*

Ask students:

- Why is it important to protect and preserve languages?
- What does language do? What does it show us?
- What is lost when you translate words? What is gained? (give examples)

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

Invite a respected Elder to visit the classroom to tell stories in her or his language, to discuss traditions, history, and culture, and to speak about why preserving language preserves traditions and culture.

Spend 15 minutes of every class day working on a word or a phrase in a First Nations language. Review words regularly and keep an ongoing list (visible to all students) that you can regularly refer to.

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

Have students try to translate short phrases in First Nations languages—first, using their phrase books and then without them.

Incorporate First Nations languages into the day-to-day life of a classroom, such as beginning each day with a greeting and one also at the end of the day. Grade and give encouragement using a First Nations language. Teach a song a week.

### 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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