

TEACHER BLACK LINE MASTERS

Module 1

TBLMs in Module 1

TBLM M1.1#1: Traditional Teachings and Stories

TBLM M1.1#2: Aboriginal Elders

TBLM M1.2#1: Manitoba Populations (Sample Graphs)

TBLM M1.1#1: Traditional Teachings and Stories*

Aboriginal traditional teachings or stories are often called *legends*. These traditional stories are considered by many to be Teachings of Life and give guidance to all aspects of life among Aboriginal peoples.

Many of the teachings are wintertime stories which, out of *respect*, are told only during winter, from the first permanent snowfall until Mother Earth's blanket of snow is again lifted in the spring. Today, Aboriginal people ask that the laws concerning Aboriginal cultures be respected and that *no* wintertime teachings be given from spring through fall of the year. There are other teachings given during these months.

According to the traditional beliefs, many of the teachings, especially the wintertime stories, involve the first Teacher who was sent by the Creator to give the instructions of Life to all of creation in this hemisphere.

He is called Nanabush by the Ojibway, and Wesakejak by the Cree.

On the surface, each teaching has a primary moral that is easily grasped. For instance, Wesakejak is often greedy and doesn't want to share his food with anyone. Somehow he will be tricked and end up with nothing. These stories are about one of the original laws given to the Aboriginal people of this land—*sharing*. Because this behaviour was expected, many teachings were given about it. The Aboriginal teaching is comparable to similar teachings from other cultures, which teach people to love one another, to be kind, to share, and to respect each other. For example,

- Love your neighbour as yourself . . .
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you . . .

In addition to this obvious teaching, there are other teachings that are more subtle. These teachings require the listeners to think and to reach an understanding on their own.

When the European people came in contact with these teachings, they mistakenly thought these teachings were stories old people tell children. Many of the stories were recorded at this stage and put into print. Others who published similar stories changed some aspects to suit their own purposes, often unaware that each component of a story had a purpose related to the level of understanding people at different stages of knowledge would possess. To change any of the components is to change the teachings intrinsically. As a result, many of the written accounts of the teachings narrated at a child's stage of understanding are not compatible with the richness of meaning passed on by recognized teachers in the oral tradition.

* Source of Adaptation: Manitoba Education and Training. *Native Studies: Early Years (K-4), A Teacher's Resource Book*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, 1995. 29-31.

TBLM M1.1#2: Aboriginal Elders

The Role of Elders

Elders are the archives of Aboriginal communities. They are the people who have knowledge of traditional ceremonies, medicines, stories, songs, history, genealogy, and life experiences. It is important to recognize that no single Elder has extensive knowledge in all these areas.

An Elder is “any person regarded or chosen by Aboriginal peoples to be the keeper and teacher of its oral tradition and knowledge. Elders, as individuals, are seen to have their own unique strengths and talents” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures* 129). Elders are generally respected by their family and community as people who have gained wisdom through their life experiences and who are able to teach by example. The criteria for recognition as an Elder may vary from community to community. Elders may be men or women, and they may be of differing ages, although it is rare to find a young person who is considered an Elder (Saskatchewan Education 5).

Inviting Elders to the Classroom

Inviting Elders to the classroom is a means of being inclusive of authentic Aboriginal voices and perspectives. A number of considerations are involved in planning to invite an Elder into a school setting. The first is choosing an Elder who has the knowledge that is appropriate to the students' learning needs. This means finding an Elder who is respected and acknowledged by the community. Once an Elder is chosen, it is important that the request be made of the Elder in a respectful and appropriate manner. The exact manner in which a request is made will vary; it would be a good idea for the school to contact a local Aboriginal organization to advise them about the correct protocol for making a request of an Elder within that particular community. Whether approaching a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit Elder, it is usually appropriate for the person making the request to go to the Elder directly. The request is usually made with a gift; the appropriate gift for a traditional First Nations Elder is often tobacco or sometimes cloth. Consideration should also be given to time and travel expenses the Elder will incur in coming to the school. While many Elders may decline, an honorarium could be offered in addition to the gift and reimbursement.

References

Manitoba Education and Youth. *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003. 12.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007. 129.

Saskatchewan Education. *Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools: A Guide for School Divisions and Their Partners*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education, 2001. 5.

Additional information may be obtained from the following websites:

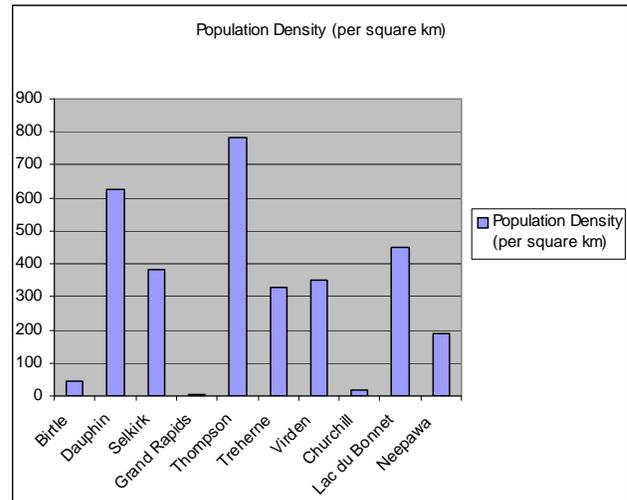
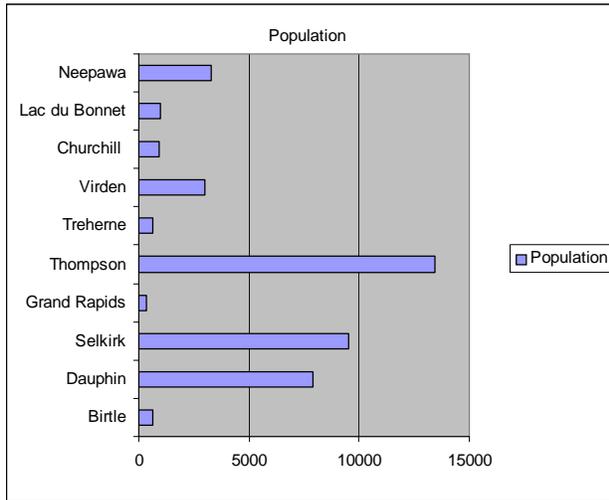
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “Elders—General Information.” *Culture*.

<www.manitobachiefs.com/amc/culture/culture.html>.

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. *About*. <www.mfnerc.org/>.

TBLM M1.2#1: Manitoba Populations* (Sample Graphs)

Manitoba Town/City	Population (in 2006)	Population Density (per square km)
Birtle	662	46.5
Dauphin	7 906	624.9
Selkirk	9 515	382.5
Grand Rapids	336	3.9
Thompson	13 446	482.8
Treherne	646	329.4
Virден	3 010	351.4
Churchill	923	17.1
Lac du Bonnet	1 009	448.9
Neepawa	3 298	187.7



* Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada. *2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.
<<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E>>
(accessed June 23, 2008).

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