Embedding Indigenous Teachings in Lesson Planning

Our Journey

Medicine Hat College 3rd Year Education Students:
EDUC 3331 Aboriginal Cultural Dimensions & Classroom Applications.
EDUC 4305 Curriculum Instruction in Teaching Phys Ed.

Complete Lessons available at mhc.ab.ca/BFFLResources

Our Journey is rooted with acknowledgement for the collaborative relationship between ourselves and our Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and ways of knowing. This is our shared journey:

1. Identify an Inspiration

A resource, existing lesson, curricular outcome, subject area, grade level, etc. We selected the Be Fit for Life Network picture book As Big As The Sky, As Tall As The Trees.

2. Connect with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and References

Elders, Leaders, Existing Lessons, Online References. We consulted with the Indigenous Support Specialist at the Medicine Hat College who also connected us to Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in our area. You could use our Lessons as a reference.

3. Select Themes

Choose Indigenous Teachings identified through consultation and research. We identified 4 main themes, from Lakota/Dakota Teachings, inspired by the picture book As Big As the Sky, As Tall As The Trees:

**GRANDFATHER ROCKS** – Grandfather Rocks are those who give their life to us in ceremony. In Lakota ways of knowing, we honor the Grandfathers in their shared wisdom, honoring how old and how much they have witnessed in their time on Mother Earth. Grandfathers give their life to us in Sweat lodge Ceremony. They are put in a sacred fire for hours and then are moved to the Sweat Lodge, there the Grandfathers give their life so that we can be in harmony with Mother Earth and each other.

**COLORS** - Colors are used in many different aspects. There is an understanding of the 4 quadrant colors in the Lakota & Blackfoot Nations: Red, White, Yellow and Black. These colors represent many different aspects of one’s life. We honor the people of the Red Nation, the Black Nation, the Yellow Nation and White Nation. Each color has a story and can be used in different aspects.

**WATER** – Mini Winconi (Water is Life). Water is the most essential and important entity to Mother Earth and our survival. We connect with water in our everyday lives and on a broader level through science and spirituality. The make-up of a star consists of hydrogen/water, we as human beings consist of hydrogen/water. With this understanding of the molecular structure of the stars and us as the human nation, we are Star Nation people as well as Water people. Our life source is water (Mini Winconi).

**CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE...**
Sacred Tree / Tree of Life – The Tree of Life is one of a journey. We walk a good path as much as we can and this creates our trunk. Walking a good path means free from drugs/alcohol, it also means respecting ourselves, our bodies, our families, and our communities. When we walk a good path, we honour our Elders and we honour our inter-generational wisdom. Our trunk is our foundation. As we grow in our journey there are events, circumstances, opportunities or paths that we find ourselves faced with. These can be times in our lives which bring joy or bring contrast, both are equally important. As we learn what is needed from this extension of self or tree limb, we then turn back around and walk the good path again. When we reach the time of our older stage of life (or the top of our tree), we then look down at the beautiful Tree of Life we have created. The foundation and tree limbs we have created for our family and community. This is our legacy.

4. Examine Program of Study and Connect Themes to Outcomes

We developed Lesson Plans for a variety of Subjects and Outcomes across the 4 Divisions. We also developed Physical Education Lesson Plans focused on each theme (Indigenous Teaching) and included adaptations for each Division. Lesson Plans located at mhc.ab.ca/BFFLResources

5. Develop Lesson Plans

We included the following promising practices in the development of our Lessons:

- Consultation and connections with Elders, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Community Indigenous Resources.
- Embedded background Indigenous teachings to enhance level of understanding.
- Connected Indigenous ways of knowing into the lesson and connections to specific outcomes in the program of study.
- Identified cross-curricular links when established.
- Included a variety of facilitation and teaching techniques.
- Planned for opportunities for reflection to further reconciliation.

Acknowledgement of the Land:

Medicine Hat College honors and acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 7 and Treaty 4 territory, traditional lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney-Nakoda, and Tsuut’ina (Sarcee) as well as the Cree, Sioux, and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa peoples. We also honor and acknowledge that we are on the homelands of the Metis Nation within Region III.

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers:

Lakota Elder: Dave Ogle
Traditional Knowledge Keeper: Dave Restoule
Cultural Coordinator, Miywasin Friendship Centre: Sabrina Prince
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As Big As the Sky, As Tall As The Trees Author and Illustrator: Leah Yardley & Adam Blacksmith