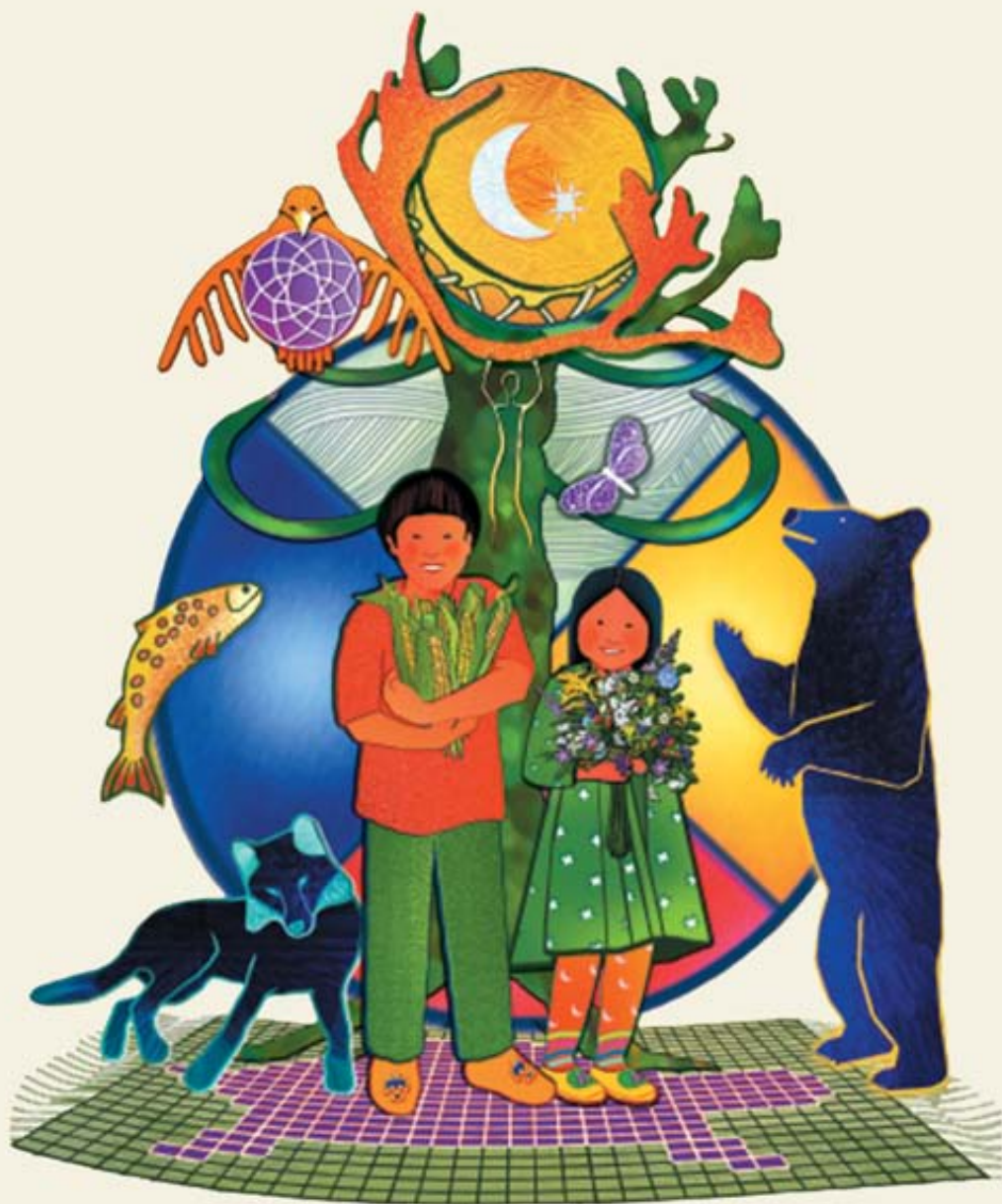


Mikinak

TEACHER AWARENESS GUIDE



www.mikinak.net

An Abenaki Legend

At the dawn of time, the Great Spirit looked around him and found nothing. Absolute nothingness! Not a glimpse of colour or beauty. Only silence and infinite darkness. Nothing to see, nothing to smell, nothing to feel. The Great Spirit decided then and there to fill this void with light and life.

From his great powers, he sparked the beginnings of Creation. The Great Spirit then asked Tolba, the Great Turtle, to rise from the waters. The Great Spirit shaped mountains and valleys on Tolba's gigantic shell, scattered clouds across the sky, covered the trees with leaves and made rivers flow between meadows and hills. When he was done, the Great Spirit exclaimed, "Here! Everything is set. Now, all that is left to do is to put life in this place." He thought for a long while about the various kinds of creatures he could make.

Where would they live? What would they do? He wanted a perfect plan with everything in perfect order! The Great Spirit thought so hard that soon a great tiredness overcame him and he drifted into a deep sleep.

In his sleep, the Great Spirit dreamt of his creation. He saw strange things on the shell of the Great Turtle — some animals walking on all fours and others on only two feet. Certain creatures had wings to fly high in the sky, other had fins and flippers to dive deep into the sparkling water. Lush vegetation in a variety of colours covered the ground, insects buzzed on flowers or swarmed over fields. Dogs barked, birds sang and humans shouted to each other in a great cacophony. It did not look very orderly. The Great Spirit awoke from what he thought was a terrible nightmare. Such imperfection! Such chaos!

But, when he opened his eyes, the Great Spirit saw a beaver gnawing on a branch and he knew that his dream had materialized. Everything single thing had taken shape. What a mess! The Great Spirit was distraught. But then he saw that the beaver had built a dam and, in the resulting pond where its little family could swim in safety, it was now building its lodge, branch by branch. The Great Spirit then knew that everything was in order.

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We particularly thank the First Nations teachers and all the other people who agreed to contribute and participate in this project by offering their comments and suggestions. The information we received from them enabled us to elaborate and broaden the content of this document. The work and expertise they shared was greatly appreciated.

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Preface

The word mikinak means “turtle” in Algonquian. We have chosen this title as the turtle is at the very heart of many of the myths of the First Nations in Quebec and the other Canadian provinces. For First Nations, the turtle evokes the creation of the world and, more specifically, that of the North American continent, which they also call “Turtle Island.” It was to honour this strong cultural symbol that we adopted the word mininak from one for the most widely represented First Nations languages in Quebec, Algonquin. This language and most of the First Nations languages in Quebec belong to the Algonquian language family and the pronunciations of the Atikamekw, Cree, Innu and Mi'kmaq words for turtle resemble mikinak.

Mikinak is the result of an agreement between the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). Alarmed by the difficulties that First Nations students experience in making the transition from First Nations schools to the provincial system and by the particularly high dropout rate among this student population, the FNEC, AANDC and MELS decided that measures were needed to raise awareness of the realities of First Nations children among public elementary school teaching staff in Quebec. Noting a lack of information for teaching staff about First Nations cultures and perspectives, and a lower graduation rate for First Nations students compared to that of other students in the Quebec school system, the FNEC, AANDC and MELS jointly decided to equip teachers with a tool to help them welcome, guide, supervise and support First Nations students more effectively along their academic path.

Originally, Mikinak was intended as a tool to raise awareness among elementary school teachers in the Quebec public school system. However, since a large number of non-natives teach in First Nations schools, Mikinak was re-oriented to reach a wider audience of elementary school staff in general and future teachers.

Mikinak is designed to be both didactical and practical — quite the challenge! This tool is user-friendly, intended to support teachers in their lesson planning and search for pertinent information. We have thus opted for a manual of pedagogical activities. The objective of these activities is, on the one hand, to increase the teachers' understanding of the realities

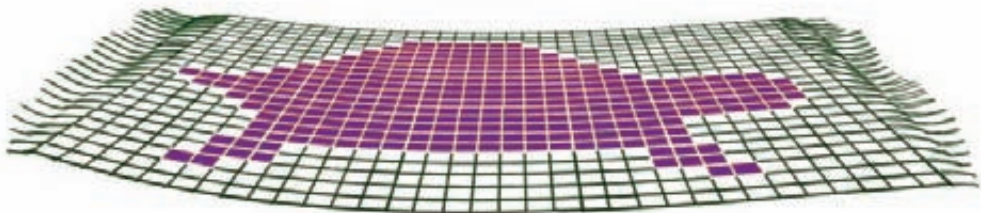
experienced by First Nations children and, on the other, to make classroom learning fun while developing the competencies identified in the MELS education program and taught in elementary schools.

The distinctive feature of these activities is that they use elements from the different cultures of the First Nations, whether practices, traditional objects or social aspects. The guide thus blends theory and practice. The theoretical part aims to provide a context for a concept that the teacher wishes to introduce in class in order to make it fun for students to acquire learning in a specific subject, in terms of developing the competencies targeted by the MELS elementary education program. The practical part gives form to the theoretical elements through entertaining activities that enable teachers and students to discover or reconnect with cultural elements. Most of the activities are designed to spark the interest of First Nations students by using techniques that appeal to the predominant types of intelligence in this student population, namely kinesthetic, visual and naturalistic, and a simultaneous nonverbal cognitive style.

Mikinak thus intends to go beyond mere informative material and aspires to facilitate the incorporation of First Nations cultural elements into activities involving the application of the concepts learned in class.

These cultural references should help teachers pique the interest of a First Nations student, regardless of the subject. Moreover, since many elements of Quebec culture have their roots in Native cultures, the tool will be helpful in giving the cultural heritage of the First Nations the recognition it deserves.

*Finally, this manual is supported by a Web page (**www.mikinak.net**) with additional information and a frequently updated database of activities. We invite you to visit it regularly.*



"Turtle" in 10 First Nations languages

Abenaki ➡ Tolba

Algonquin ➡ Mikinak

Atikamekw ➡ Mekinak

Cree ➡ Mikinaw

Huron-Wendat ➡ Yändia'wich

Innu ➡ Missinak

Maliseet ➡ Kakona

Mi'kmaq ➡ Migjug

Mohawk ➡ A'nowara


Naskapi ➡ Kaniikatiisiit


The First Nations of Quebec

First Nations are one of the three groups of Canadian Aboriginal people recognized by the Canadian Constitution. The Inuit and the Métis are the other two groups. First Nations were formerly referred to as “Indians.” Most First Nations individuals live in communities called reserves. They are subject to the *Indian Act*, a law that placed them under a different legal regime than that of other Canadian citizens and the other Aboriginal peoples. Though this law contains some so-called “privileges,” most of its provisions are restrictive and prejudicial to the individual and collective development of the First Nations (see the section on the *Indian Act*).


The First Nations are not a homogenous group. In Canada, there are 615 communities belonging to more than 50 distinct nations. The 2006 census estimates the number of members of Canadian First Nations at 1,172,790. In Quebec, roughly 70,000 people belong to 10 First Nations split into 43 communities, including two Innu communities in Labrador (AFNQL, 2010). Each First Nation community has its own culture, language and history.


Here is a short introduction to each of the First Nations of Quebec:

 The **ABENAKI** were originally from New England and belong to the Algonquian linguistic and cultural family. They arrived in Quebec in the 17th century. There are around 2,000 Abenaki, 500 of which live on the Odanak and Wôlinak reserves on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River, across from Trois-Rivières. Most Abenaki speak French and the Abenaki language is near extinction. The Abenaki museum in Odanak is one of the most important Native museums in Quebec.


 The **ALGONQUIN** call themselves the Anishinabeg or Anishinabek (“human beings sprung from this land”), depending on the community, and number over 9,000 in Quebec. Over 5,000 live on reserves in the Outaouais and Abitibi-Temiscamingue regions: Abitibiwinini,

Barriere Lake, Eagle Village-Kipawa, Kitcisakik, Kitigan Zibi, Lac Simon, Long Point, Timiskaming and Wolf Lake. The Algonquin language is spoken by more than 60% of the population. Reforestation, trapping and handicrafts are the main economic activities of the Algonquin.


 The **ATIKAMEKW**, whose name means “white fish,” almost disappeared in the second half of the 17th century. Today, there are roughly 6,000 Atikamekw, living mainly on the Manawan, Opitciwan and Wemotaci reserves in the Lanaudière and Haute-Mauricie regions. The Atikamekw language is spoken by the vast majority of the population. Forestry is the mainstay of this nation’s economy with handicrafts and tourism providing additional earnings.


 The **CREE** call themselves “the hunting people.” The Cree have lived in the James Bay region for some 5,000 years. Today, there are around 15,000 Cree, 13,000 of whom live in nine communities: Chisasibi, Eastmain, Mistissini, Nemiscau, Oujé-Bougoumou, Waskaganish, Waswanipi, Wemindji and Whapmagoostui. The Cree are part of the great Algonquian linguistic and cultural family. Most of them speak their ancestral language with English as their second language. French is third but it is not unusual to find Cree who speak all three languages.


In the 1970's, following the announcement of major power dam projects, the Cree established the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec to promote their rights. In 1975, they signed the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* with the Quebec government. This Agreement gave them greater administrative and political autonomy, compensation, and property, hunting, fishing and trapping rights in a territory that spans over 151,580 km². The Cree gained further autonomy through the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*, adopted by the Canadian government in 1984, that replaced the *Indian Act* for these two nations.

 The **HURON-WENDAT** have been in Quebec since 1650. Their only community in Canada, Wendake, lies next to the Loretteville borough of Quebec City. Some 1,300 Huron-Wendat live within the community and 1,700 outside.


The Huron-Wendat nation is one of the most urbanized First Nations of Quebec. Since 1982, Wendake has had its own elementary school, Ts8taïe. Courses are taught in French, the mother tongue of most of the population. The Huron language is considered extinct but there is a major revitalization project in progress aimed at its revival. In 1990, the free exercise of Huron religious practices and customs on Huron territory was recognized in a Supreme Court of Canada ruling ratifying the Murray Treaty of 1760.

 The **MALISEET**, long known as the Étchemins, have more than 700 members in Quebec. Deeply attached to their nomadic lifestyles, they refused to settle permanently on the reserves designated for them by the government in the 1870's. They were forced to settle in Whitworth and were then transferred to Viger (one-quarter hectare, the smallest reserve in Canada) in the 1890's. But the Maliseet never did settle there permanently. The community lived scattered around the place and, up until the mid-1980s, gradually lost its rights to these lands. Today, there are two Maliseet reserves in the Bas-du-Fleuve region (Gaspésie), Whitworth and Cacouna, which are inhabited on and off by only two families, as most of the Maliseet still live spread around the area. The Maliseet language is no longer spoken.

 The **MI'KMAQ** were one of the first Native peoples to come into contact with Europeans. They belong to the Algonquian cultural and linguistic family and are one of the few First Nations still living on their ancestral land. In Quebec, there are some 5,000 Mi'kmaq in southern Gaspésie. They live in three communities, Listuguj, Gespeg and Gesgapegiag. The Elders continue to use the Mi'kmaq language, which is also taught at school. English is the second language. A true nation of the sea, the Mi'kmaq are economically active, particularly in the salmon fishery in the rivers and the aquaculture of various marine species in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

 The **MOHAWK** are the largest First Nation of Quebec with a population of 17,000. They live mostly in Kahnawake (9,275), Akwesasne (4,924) and Kanesatake (2,012). The Mohawk speak their ancestral language, Kanien'kéha. In general they also speak English, or, in some cases, French on a daily basis. The Mohawk provide many community services on their reserves in sectors such as health (e.g. the construction and management of the Kateri hospital in Kahnawake), policing, education and the administration of justice. They are recognized around the world for their expertise in steel structure assembly for bridges and buildings, and have also made a name for themselves in the industrial and technological sectors as well as in the applied arts.

 The **INNU** (formerly known as the Montagnais) have 16,000 members and are the second most populous First Nation in Quebec. Some 11,000 Innu live on reserves in the Côte-Nord and Saint-Jean Lake regions: Pessamit, Essipit, La Romaine, Mashteuiatsh, Mingan, Natashquan, Matimekush-Lac-John, Pakua Shipi and Uashat mak Mani-Utenam. The ancestral language of the Innu is spoken by more than 80% of the population. Innu communities enjoy very diverse economic activities, primarily business and tourism. They are extremely active in promoting and spreading their culture through cultural organizations, radio (SOCAM — Société de communication Atikamekw-Montagnais) and artists.

 The once-nomadic **NASKAPI** were relocated five times between 1831 and 1956 before moving to Schefferville where they coexisted with the Matimekush Innu until 1984. After signing the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*, the Naskapi received compensation for the loss of their lands, ancestral rights, and exclusive territories for hunting and fishing. In 1984, they moved to Kawawachikamach, north of Schefferville, near Labrador. During the same period, the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* freed them from the Indian Act and gave them a great opportunity for self-government. The Naskapi now number some 850 members, living mainly in Kawawachikamach, their sole community. The ancestral language is still spoken by all Naskapi, with English as their second language.

Here is a map of the Nations and their respective communities:

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC



Historical overview

Although relations between Aboriginal peoples and Quebeckers go back a long time, the general public knows little about First Nations history. It is a fascinating subject and certainly merits much more attention. The following is a brief overview.

PRE-COLOMBIAN HISTORY

According to mainstream theory, the First Peoples of America, commonly referred to as "Indians" or "Amerindians," crossed the Bering Strait between 20,000 to 40,000 years ago during the last ice age. Recent discoveries have led to other migration hypotheses that suggest that the First Peoples of America crossed the oceans by boat, or walked across the frozen area of the Atlantic Ocean during the Ice Age. Similarities between certain pre-Indo-European languages (Basque, for example) and some Native languages, such as Algonquin, tend to support this theory. First Nations people gradually spread over the continent and settled in Quebec some 10,000 years ago.

The vast territory that would later become Canada was occupied by several hundred tribes spread across the land well before the arrival of Europeans. Each Nation was independent and had its own customs, rituals and traditions. The Nations also maintained relations with each other. Wars occurred frequently and there were many, often complex, diplomatic protocols.



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THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Around 1000 A.D., the Viking explorer, Leif Erikson, became the first European to reach North America. For some years, he explored the shores of the continent and set up a permanent settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland. The earliest known contacts in North America thus took place with Viking sailors, who were used to harsh winters and who left few traces of their presence. The archaeological site of L'Anse aux Meadows is a National Historic site that presents some evidence of their stay. It is likely that there were other contacts with Europeans over the centuries because, when Jacques Cartier dropped anchor in the Baie des Chaleurs in 1534, he was greeted

by Mi'kmaq who had had regular contact with Europeans, routinely traded with them and were very much aware of the Europeans' interest in obtaining furs. Cartier also encountered the Iroquois near the village of Stadacona (now Quebec City) and was very impressed by their chief, Donnacona, whom he took to France to meet King Francis I.

Cartier and his crew passed a very difficult first winter in North America. Without the help of First Nations, who provided them with herbal medicine, Cartier and his crew would probably have succumbed to the harsh conditions.

Samuel de Champlain arrived in 1603 as part of an expedition to negotiate a fur trade treaty. He met the Algonquin, Innu and Maliseet and began to trade with them all. The first peace treaty and alliance was thus concluded between the First Nations and the Europeans in 1603. This enabled Champlain to return and settle permanently in New France, founding Quebec City.

Unfortunately, the first European settlers brought diseases that decimated the First Nations. It is estimated that almost 93% of the Native population was decimated by epidemics during the first 50 years following Samuel de Champlain's arrival.

WAR AND PEACE

The relations between the different Nations in North America were not always peaceful. The French set up a policy of strategic alliances and negotiated peace agreements with First Nations. These agreements fostered commerce and trade and guaranteed military support from First Nations against the English.

New France, at that time, extended from Newfoundland to Mississippi, through the valley of the Saint Lawrence River and the Great Lakes.

The situation changed dramatically when the English also began negotiating military alliances with Native nations. Initially, alliances were made with enemies of Natives already allied with the French. This strategy was followed by the negotiation of neutrality pacts with the Native groups who had been, up to then, allies of the French. Between 1725 and 1761, the English concluded several peace and friendship agreements with various Native peoples such as the Mi'kmaq, the Mohawk and other nations in what is now the United States.

A FIRST NATIONS "BILL OF RIGHTS"

After the conquest of New France by the English, King George III feared that the fragile relationships between the settlers and First Nations would lead to further conflicts. In October 1763, he issued the Royal Proclamation, which is still in effect today and which recognizes the rights of First Nations, especially on their ancestral lands (known as "Indian lands").

"Whereas We have taken into Our Royal Consideration the extensive and valuable Acquisitions in America, secured to our Crown by the late Definitive Treaty of Peace, concluded at Paris the 10th Day of February last; and being desirous that all Our loving Subjects, as well of our Kingdom as of our Colonies in America, may avail themselves with all convenient Speed, of the great Benefits and Advantages which must accrue therefrom to their Commerce, Manufactures, and Navigation, We have thought fit, with the Advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation, hereby to publish and declare to all our loving Subjects, that we have, with the Advice of our Said Privy Council, granted our Letters Patent, under our Great Seal of Great Britain, to erect, within the Countries and Islands ceded and confirmed to Us by the said Treaty, Four distinct and separate Governments, styled and called by the names of Quebec, East Florida, West Florida and Grenada, and limited and bounded as follows, viz." (ROYAL PROCLAMATION, 1763)

This was followed by the negotiation and signing of numerous treaties in several regions of Canada, with the exception of Quebec where everyone had long thought, erroneously as it turned out, that the French Régime had extinguished all the rights of the Native peoples.



ASSIMILATION POLICY

Since the middle of the 19th century, successive colonial and federal governments have followed a policy of assimilation whose cornerstone was the Indian Act, first enacted in 1876 and still in force.

Since then, First Nations have been treated as an aggregate of individuals rather than as entities in and of themselves. Their collective rights, such as the right to lands, are not respected. Not only were First Nations deprived of their identity as distinct peoples, but there was also an attempt to dispossess them of their lands and territorial rights.

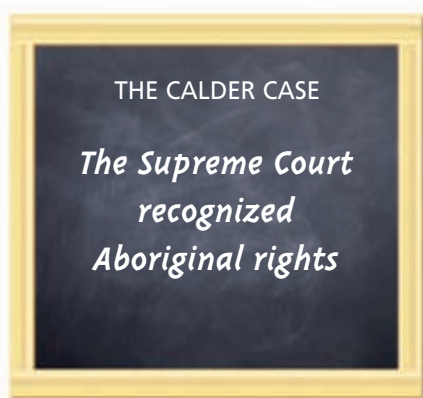
After the First World War, a major shift started to take place on the international scene regarding relations with Native peoples, a shift that was to continue throughout the 20th century. First Nations began making claims and taking legal recourse to obtain self-determination and their right to freely choose their political status.

In 1969, the Canadian government put forward its new Indian policy in a White Paper that proposed abolishing the Indian Act and eliminating Indian status. The government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau wanted to eliminate the distinctive status of Indians and put them on the same footing as the rest of the citizens of Canada. The response of First Nations was to force the government to reverse its decision and re-establish a policy of negotiating treaties, the *Comprehensive Land Claims Policy*. This policy may be perceived as the first attempt at reconciliation.

This policy was also a response to the 1973 Supreme Court of Canada judgment in the Calder case, one of the most famous judgments in Aboriginal Law. In its ruling, the Supreme Court recognized Aboriginal rights and also that Native peoples who had never signed a treaty could legitimately claim ownership of their “aboriginal titles,” i.e. their territorial rights to ancestral lands which they had never ceded.

In the 1970s in Quebec, the issue of Aboriginal rights slowed down the James Bay hydroelectric dam project. Denounced by the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi, this project was halted by a court injunction (the Malouf ruling). This forced the Quebec government into the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*.

This complex agreement created a special legal regime covering a vast expanse of Quebec — Nunavik, the James Bay area, and the Naskapi territories. It also established mechanisms for financial compensation and land division, a framework for the political autonomy of local and regional governments, measures for economic and community-based development, and special structures for managing policing, justice and environmental protection.



This agreement, hailed as a “modern treaty,” grants the rights it recognizes the same constitutional protection as that accorded to the rights included in the historic treaties signed in the 19th century.

The Innu and Atikamekw also embarked on a process of treaty negotiation. Although these negotiations began more than 30 years ago, no agreement has been reached. Only four Innu communities have recently concluded an agreement-in-principle, the “Common Approach.” It is, however, important to note that certain First Nations strongly object to the current formula for treaty negotiation as it requires them to renounce important territorial rights.

NATION TO NATION

The legal and political decisions of the last 400 years have hinged on two important facts, whether well-known by the population of Quebec or not. Firstly, we must remember that the Native peoples, who were here long before Jacques Cartier arrived, were the ones who allowed and enabled the colony of New France to be established. The very name, “Quebec,” comes from an Algonquin word meaning “where the passage is narrow.”

In fact, the relationship between Native peoples and the French was so close that the French immigrants adopted the Native words for a number of everyday items such as means of transportation, food and medicinal plants. The settlers also adopted the Native toponyms for a number of places. Indeed, in addition to Kebec, there are many other geographical names directly borrowed from various Native languages: Kanata (Canada), Outaouais, Chicoutimi, Chibougamau, Gaspé, Rimouski, Yamaska, Coaticook, Tadoussac and Natashquan, to name just a few.

It is equally important to remember that the reason that First Nations have particular rights is because they are true nations in the full sense of the word. The successive regimes of Nouvelle-France to present-day Canada have never extinguished or questioned in any way the territorial and political rights of these nations. Today, it is on the basis of the principle of “nation to nation” that political authorities try to create and maintain peaceful coexistence on the territory. It was this principle that guided the negotiations that led to the signing of the *La Paix des Braves* agreement between the Quebec government and the Cree nation in 2002.

The Indian Act and its impact on the education of First Nations children

It is impossible to understand the situation of First Nations children and how they relate to education without understanding certain historical facts. Let's go back to Canada's early days. With the *Constitution Act, 1867*, First Nations and their lands came under the responsibility (exclusive jurisdiction) of the federal government. A series of measures were implemented, including those defining Indian status.

The *Indian Act*, adopted in 1876, was the first law. Under this act, an "Indian" is a person whose name is, or is entitled to be, recorded in the Indian Register of the department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Following the long-established British policy of paternalistic protection, assimilation and Christianization of First Nations, the ultimate goal of this act was to "free" First Nations from their "primitive condition" so that they could become "civilized" and autonomous. Traditional practices and rituals were outlawed and Indians had to renounce their Indian status (forced emancipation) to have the right to vote, pursue higher education or work in a liberal profession, for example.

The *Indian Act* regulated all aspects of Indian life on reserves, including the management of land and membership in a First Nation or in a local government. The *Indian Act* also defined the services and "privileges" granted by Indian Status (housing, tax exemptions, etc.). Despite the amendments passed in 1951 and 1985, the *Indian Act*

remains virtually unchanged. These amendments have partially corrected the discrimination against Indian women contained in the rules for granting and handing down Indian status, have eliminated the concept of "emancipation," lifted the ban on certain traditional practices, allowed "Indians" to speak their languages at school and gave them the right to vote without having to renounce their status.

In matters of education, the *Indian Act* of 1876 granted the federal government full responsibility for the education of First Nations members living on reserve. In 1892, the federal government established a partnership with certain churches to run residential or boarding schools, the central mechanism of the federal government's assimilation policy.



In 1920, an amendment to the *Indian Act* introduced compulsory boarding school education for children aged 7-15, with penalties for parents who did not comply. In Quebec, six residential schools were established, one in Amos, Pointe-Bleue, Sept-Iles and La Tuque, and two in Fort George. The children were forcibly removed from their families and raised in an environment that strove to erase all traces of their "Indian condition." Native languages were forbidden in schools and students were severely reprimanded, even beaten, when they spoke their language. The severe psychological and unspeakable physical abuses suffered by First Nations children in residential schools still have serious social repercussions today, as seen in the cases of residential school survivors who, as adults, replicate the abusive behaviours to which they were subjected. The avowed goal of this policy was to "kill the Indian in the child."

Education was a central element in the assimilation policy. Until 1951, every Indian who obtained a university degree was automatically stripped of his or her Indian status (emancipated). This applied not only to that individual but also to his or her family and descendants. In 1969, the federal government ended its partnership with the churches and laicized the education offered to First Nations. Most of the residential

schools were shut down but it was not until 1996 that the last one, located in Saskatchewan, closed its doors. As indicated in the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, residential schools were nothing less than an attempt to put an end to the "Indian problem" by assimilating thousands of Native children into "White" culture. It took until June 2008 before the federal government agreed to make an official apology and offer financial compensation to the victims.

Under the *Indian Act*, the federal government holds absolute power over education, from the funding to the standards for teaching and discipline in First Nations schools, from the development of rules and regulations to the adoption same. Even though, in 1973, the government of Canada had to back down and officially recognize *Indian Control of Indian Education*, the policy document drafted by First Nations following their country-wide mobilization against the White Paper of 1969, First Nations still do not have complete control over their education or full authority to adopt their own rules and regulations in that field. A funding formula for First Nations schools was set up by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1988. However, First Nations across Canada consider this formula, still in effect,

to be inadequate in providing for the education needs of First Nations, thus depriving their students of services equivalent to those provided to students in provincial schools.



The report, *A Study of Educational Cost Drivers to First Nations Education*, prepared in 2006 for the Joint Assembly of First Nations (AFN)/Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Band Operated Formula Funding (BOFF) Working Group clearly demonstrated, among other things, that the funding formula for band-operated schools ignores certain costs associated with developments in education and certain indexation factors that are generally taken into account by modern formulae.

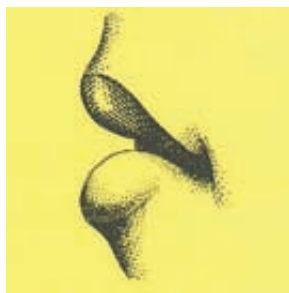
First Nations education

To teach is not merely to convey information, but also to create a place for learning, itself inextricably linked to the place for teaching since teaching and learning are intrinsically interwoven. Nowadays, teachers are required to manage and organize learning situations, and coordinate activities to meet clearly defined objectives.

We also know that learning is not something confined to school. We learn how to swim and to read a musical score just like we learn how to forgive, relax, and so forth, and it is often what we learn from our experiences that guides our lives. One of the goals of learning is to build harmonious relationships with others and with our environment or to give meaning to life. Nevertheless, we find that schools focus almost exclusively on the goal of academic success.

This is exactly the point raised by several First Nations education representatives who will tell you that, for many First Nations parents, especially those living in remote communities, academic success is not necessarily the first priority for the growth and development of their children. It is important to remember that the education models to which these parents were exposed were those of the residential school era and, for many, the outcomes of this education are social failure and psychological distress. Education also means assimilation, something the First Nations categorically reject.

Numerous studies on learning conditions indicate that, in terms of didactic effectiveness, learning must be based on the meaningfulness principle. Learning must be meaningful to the learner, that is, it must have a connection to the frames of reference, affiliations and experiences of the learner. However, for the vast majority of First Nations students transiting from a First Nations school to a school in the Quebec public education system, there is little or no evidence of the meaningfulness principle.



A series of consultations with Quebec First Nations Communities (school principals, teachers, parents and students) and certain representatives from the Quebec education system (education directors, teachers, liaison officers)

indicated that many students in transition experienced difficulties in adapting. In addition to not identifying with the values conveyed by the Quebec school system, these students have difficulty with French as the language of instruction, and, as a result, difficulties with mathematics, science, reading comprehension, history and music. These difficulties are exacerbated by differences between the school programs. Certain subjects are, in fact, completely new to these students.

It has been observed that the later a student makes the transition, the more difficulties he or she will have understanding these subjects. In addition, these students are not always well prepared to satisfy the requirements of Quebec's school system.

For some students, the difficulty lies in their mastery of the language of instruction. Indeed, people in remote communities usually speak their own language; French and English are second or third languages and are more often than not modified by the syntax and pronunciation of the language spoken by the community. When the language of instruction is not their mother tongue, students can fall behind in school.

Certain community schools teach in their own language only; consequently, students in transition have serious problems adapting to the

language of instruction in their new school because it was never taught to them as a second language.

Lastly, it is crucial to bear in mind that the diversity of First Nations communities, especially with respect to their education programs, school organization, language and culture implies that the pedagogical approaches of teachers in the Quebec public system must also be diversified. In general, these approaches are already diversified because not all students have the same learning profile, whether they share the same ethnicity or not. However, First Nations students demonstrate a marked propensity for a particular cognitive learning style — predominantly simultaneous nonverbal. In order to help you fully understand the specific characteristics of this learning style, we present the cognitive theories that appear to be the most helpful in grasping the particular ways in which First Nations children comprehend, perceive and develop. This will provide teachers with helpful recommendations for using a differentiated approach based on the particular learning style.

First Nations children in the Quebec provincial school system: realities and challenges

GEOGRAPHIC REMOTENESS

First Nations communities are not the only ones that are geographically remote. From a social point of view, however, when First Nations children have to leave their community to go study in a vastly different cultural environment, far from home, they are exposed to values which are different from those of their own communities. When they return home, the competencies and ideas acquired in the provincial schools create cultural barriers, even within families. In some cases, children have to stay with host families outside their community during the week to attend school. This makes parental involvement in their studies particularly difficult.

DISADVANTAGED SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

Geographical remoteness also means that finding a job is difficult and this leads to socioeconomic problems. First Nations are not the only ones in this situation but they are the most affected by it. Government of Canada statistics show that most Natives live on or below the poverty line. So much for the “rich Indian” myth! First Nations children, often from disadvantaged areas, do not have the same advantages as other children to achieve school success and, when they

look at the situation of the people around them, they see nothing but a bleak future for themselves. Under these circumstances, motivating them to study is a huge challenge in itself.

A DIFFERENT CULTURE OF EDUCATION AND A CERTAIN DISTRUST OF INSTITUTIONALIZED EDUCATION

From a cultural perspective, education is approached in a way that encourages the child to become autonomous. This implies that parents are less involved in monitoring and helping with their children’s schooling. Today, however, parents are becoming increasingly cognizant of the important role played by institutional education in the social success of their children. We must not forget, however, that the spectres of the residential schools and the cultural assimilation policy continue to haunt many parents and, as a result, there is a widespread distrust of the provincial education system. In addition, even among children who live with their parents and benefit from their support, there are many who cannot rely on their parents or grandparents for help with homework because these adults never reached that level in school.



LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION DIFFERENT FROM MOTHER TONGUE

The question of language in the education of First Nations children is a crucial issue. Many students report that they manage to grasp the teacher's instructions but that their degree of comprehension varies depending on the subject. They experience more difficulty with mathematics, science, English, history and music, and even greater difficulty with French, whether the latter is their first, second or third language. Unlike children from the cultural communities and immigrant children

who often attend welcoming classes prior to entering the regular program, First Nations children transit directly from one system to another without any preparatory classes in the language of instruction. Many education representatives from First Nations communities point out the need to train teachers in teaching French as a second language so that First Nations students can improve, not only in French, but in all the other subjects as well.

The cognitive learning style of First Nations children

Article 14 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states that:

- Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
- Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
- States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Creating an ideal learning environment for students is also a major preoccupation for teachers. The Quebec school system and MELS programs recommend a sequential learning approach, which corresponds more to an analytical cognitive learning style (Roy-ICEM 2007). Several studies have shown the existence of different cognitive styles (Bruner, 1956; Pack, 1972, Witkin, 1969; Koenig, 1981) and multiple intelligences. Howard Gardner, originator of the multiple intelligences theory, bases his vision of school on two hypotheses: (1) Individuals have different abilities and interests. (2) We do not all learn the same way (Gardner, 1996).

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Gardner defined eight types of intelligences: linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, logical-mathematical and musical. Numerous studies,



including one of Innu children by the Tshakapesh Institute, formerly the ICEM (*Institut Cultural et Éducatif Montagnais*), have demonstrated that Native children tend towards bodily-kinesthetic, spatial and naturalistic intelligences (Kaulbach, 1984; Roy ICEM, 2007). Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence involves the skilful control of bodily movements to communicate, carry out tasks and learn by handling objects. Spatial intelligence deals with spatial judgement. Visual intelligence is the ability to visualize with the mind's eye. Naturalistic intelligence is characterized by excellence in observing nature and a heightened perception of one's environment.

COGNITIVE LEARNING STYLE

Cognitive style refers to a pervasive psychological characteristic that cuts across intellectual, perceptive and interpersonal functioning. It governs the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, competencies, skills and comprehension (Keefe, 1979; Witkin and al., 1977). Cognitive style enables one to react to new information by developing different modes of perception, comprehension and memorization through various sensory means, primarily sight, hearing and, in the case of children, touch (More, 1987). The dominant cognitive style is determined during early childhood even though the ability to learn is inborn in children (Lazear, 2008).

Cognitive styles emerge from two differentiated processes — the sequential or the simultaneous treatment of information. This leads to the definition of four styles: sequential verbal, sequential nonverbal, simultaneous verbal and simultaneous nonverbal (Luria, 1973; De La Garanderie, 1989; Flessas and Lussier, 1995).

In his article "Native Indian Learning Styles: A Review for Researchers and Teachers," Arthur J. More identifies four areas of research which demonstrate important differences in the learning styles of Native and non-Native students, namely cognitive style and characteristics of the learner, external or environmental conditions, teaching and communication styles, and traditional styles (More, 1987). Although More and other authors (Karlebach, 1984; Williams, 1986) identified differences in the learning styles of Native and non-Native students, they conclude that there is no uniquely Native learning style. Other studies have clearly demonstrated that, in Native children, the predominant cognitive style is simultaneous nonverbal (Krywaniuk, 1974; Roy-ICEM, 2007). This statement is corroborated by the ICEM study of Innu children.

The simultaneous nonverbal cognitive style can be defined as a learning process based on a perceptual synthesis that is essential visual

and spatial. This style is closely related to the culture, beliefs and values of First Nations, which is not surprising as cultural context is one of the primary factors that determine cognitive learning style (Berry, 1976; Koenig, 1981). "People who share a common cultural background will also share, to a certain extent, common patterns of intellectual abilities, thinking styles and interests." (Lesser, 1976) This theory was confirmed by J.W. Keefe who, in 1987, led a study on how the concept of learning is applied in various cultures and confirmed that there is a link between culture and learning styles. Keefe (1989, 1996) also proposed a model for using learning styles in a multicultural environment, particularly with First Nations students in North America. Vernon (1969), Berry (1976, 1980) and Weitz (1971), who all studied the intercultural cognitive style, also established undeniable link between the cognitive learning style and the traditional learning style.

TRADITIONAL FIRST NATIONS LEARNING STYLE

The concept of learning is approached in a wholly different way in First Nations communities. The traditional learning style focuses on allowing the child to develop self-discipline and become a responsible person on his or her own. The objectives are

"People who share a common cultural background will also share, to a certain extent, common patterns of intellectual abilities, thinking styles and interests."

to provide the child with the skills, knowledge and values necessary to survive as an individual and to contribute to the community. To do so, First Nations take into consideration all the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual facets of the child. This traditional approach is still very much in evidence in oral traditions and cultural practices.

One of the main characteristics of traditional education among First Nations is that the children are allowed to explore and act independently as soon as they are able to do so. Based on the complete autonomy of the child, the educational approach of the First Nations allows the child to develop his or her own learning abilities.

This method favours learning by trying and testing out, not in a sequential way but in an intuitive and simultaneous manner (Scollon & Scollon, 1983), relying on the observation and imitation of one's elders, and, to a lesser degree, on verbal instruction. Children are encouraged to learn from their experiences and adults do not intervene unless there is danger. There is no such thing as error or failure in this approach, as one learns from one's experience. Observing and imitating is the principal method by which the First Nations child acquires competencies within the community (Cornel, 2002).

In this approach, learning is not structured and takes place in the real world with real life activities rather than in an artificial context (Council for Yukon Indians, 1991). This derives from the close relationship between First Nations and the environment. From early childhood, First Nations children develop the ability to interpret information in their environment as a whole (Stellern, Collins, Gutierrez, & Patterson, 1986; Swisher, 1991, 1987, 1989; More, 1990, 1993; Tharp & Yamauchi, 1994; Collier, 2002). The traditional way of life of First Nations communities, the nomadic tribes in particular, fostered

a simultaneous cognitive style because it enabled their members to perceive their environment holistically and, ultimately, to increase their chances of survival.

Oral tradition and legends are another important teaching tool, especially for transmitting values and beliefs (John, 1972; Tafoya, 1982; Scollon & Scollon, 1983). Densely packed with symbolic content, legends use complex images, anthropomorphism and animism to construct particularly striking metaphors. The use of these different elements of discourse and

communication greatly influences the language acquisition, reading and writing skills of First Nations children (Dunn, 2001; Ball, Bernhardt and Deby, 2001). Observation and legends allow the First Nations child to perceive the world and understand it at

his or her level of cognitive and emotional development. When a child remembers a legend, it evokes a deep meaning couched in strong symbolic images. Studies by Bryant (1986), Karlebach (1986), Plus (1984), and Greenbaum (1983) have demonstrated that First Nations students tend to use the image to code information while non-Natives use verbal coding.

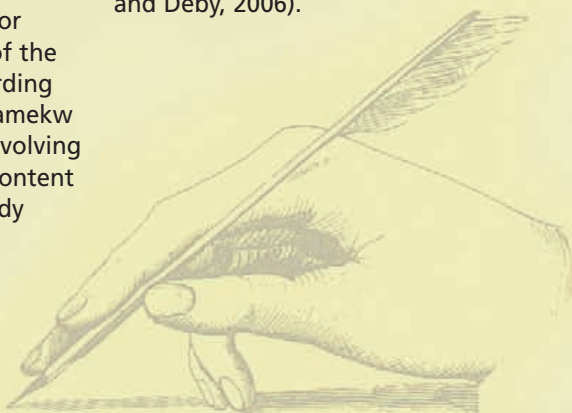


Understanding communication styles is important for understanding the cognitive learning style of First Nations individuals. Silence, eye contact and nonverbal signs are important disciplinary and communication methods for First Nations. Children are encouraged to listen rather than to talk. This greatly differs from the approach taken in the preschools and schools the Quebec education system where children are strongly encouraged to talk and to answer questions.

Native children may sometimes have trouble answering questions directly, but this is not always due to learning difficulties but often to the fact that they are not used to this form of communication (Ball, Bernhardt and Deby, 2006; Epstein and Xu, 2003). When Native children are asked what a word or image makes them think of, instead of interpreting their silence as difficulty or reluctance, teachers should consider that the student might be questioning himself or herself about the pertinence of the exercise (Sarrasin, 1998). According to Robert Sarrasin of the Atikamekw Nation Council, the exercise involving the verbal description of the content of an illustration that everybody understands completely is a routine teaching activity in which student names the things, knowing that



the teacher will then use these words in sentences, relate them to concepts, employ them in instructions, and so forth. This does not, however, make the exercise relevant to First Nations students as this way of using language to build an abstract reality is foreign to them and, in their eyes, does not represent a true act of communication (Sarrasin, 1998). Lack of knowledge or sensitivity to these cultural differences on the part of educators is why Native children are often mistakenly evaluated for learning difficulties (Ball, Bernhardt and Deby, 2006).



A UNIQUE COGNITIVE STYLE?

Traditional learning among First Nations generally consists of three methods: *watch and do* (learning by observing), *listen and do* (learning by visualizing legends) or *think and do* (preparing one's answer before speaking).

As we have pointed out, studies and practice demonstrate that there are consistent similarities in learning style among First Nations, without necessarily implying the existence of a unique cognitive style for all First Nations and Aboriginal communities (More, 1987). Even though the dominant intelligences are kinesthetic, visual-spatial and naturalistic with a simultaneous nonverbal cognitive style, the proportions vary according to the community and how the student was educated in early childhood.

Thus, if the child comes from a community where learning is generally passed down through oral tradition and includes the regular use of images (metaphors, dreams, etc.), the child will be more apt to develop visual-spatial intelligence. If, however, the child has acquired his or her learning more through observing nature and experimenting, then his or her naturalistic kinesthetic intelligence will tend to be more developed. What both types of intelligences will undoubtedly have in common is a simultaneous nonverbal cognitive style.

A word of caution is necessary lest an overemphasis on dominant learning style lead to labelling and stereotyping. The most effective application of the multiple intelligences theory and cognitive styles theory is, first and foremost, to identify the individual style of the child and how to adapt to it. In fact, when the teaching style corresponds to the cognitive style of the student, learning is generally more fruitful (Smith and Renzulli,



1984; Tenascon, 2000; Ball, 2007). Knowing that most teachers are logical-mathematical and linguistic and that school programs are generally oriented to a sequential verbal cognitive style, makes it even more essential to identify each student's cognitive style and build in a certain flexibility so that each child can feel at ease (Roy-ICEM, 2007).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS: 4 KEY STEPS

Identify
your own
cognitive
style

Identify
the learning
styles of
students

Match
teaching style
to students'
learning style

Adapt to
the specific
cognitive
styles

Identify your own cognitive style

It is crucial for teachers to identify their own teaching and learning styles. A better knowledge of their own cognitive style will enable teachers to put their habits into perspective and be more attentive to the different cognitive styles of their students.

Identify learning styles

Identifying individual learning styles is not easy. Tests do not yield reliable results (for more information, refer to Leonard Davidman's article "Learning Style: The Myth, the Panacea, the Wisdom," published in the May 1981 issue of *The Phi Delta Kappan*).

The systematic observation of student behaviour in the classroom remains the most efficient method to identify the different cognitive styles. As most teachers already know about the different learning styles and have identified their own style, observation will render a more accurate result than tests.

Match teaching styles to learning styles

Teachers generally have a logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence and a sequential verbal cognitive style. It is essential that teachers recognize the differences between their cognitive styles and those of their students, First Nations students in particular. It is also strongly recommended that the content of the curriculum and educational activities be adapted to create a better fit between the teacher's teaching style and the students' learning styles.

This is even more essential when students are learning difficult tasks. The activities must also include room for children who are less sequential and more spontaneous, such as First Nations children, to find a certain freedom in the activities.

Adapt to the specific cognitive learning styles of First Nations students

Simultaneous cognitive style:

The differences between the simultaneous and sequential cognitive styles have important implications for the teacher. A mismatch between learning and teaching styles can lead to a significant decline in learning among students who have a simultaneous learning style. Very often, the teaching method is sequential. As the subject is presented in steps, this method does not allow for an overview of the matter at the

beginning of the exercise. However, for children, including First Nations children, who have a simultaneous cognitive style, a more effective method would be to present the objective and structure as a whole before embarking upon the analytical sequence. In addition to the difficulties in learning it creates, sequential teaching can result in a loss of motivation and interest in children who have a simultaneous learning style.

Learning through movement:

Often intuitive and impulsive, First Nations students like to manipulate, experiment, and construct to learn and understand. The freedom to move and physical activities are therefore central in encouraging these students to learn and are also good ways of holding their attention. Being more tolerant of kinesthetic learners in the class also results in having to spend less time disciplining them.

Visual and spatial perception:

First Nations students generally demonstrate strong aptitudes for the visual and spatial perception of information. They excel more in this type of representation than in the verbal type. Teachers, therefore need to adapt their teaching methods and present information by using visual media or within a spatial context instead of relying exclusively on verbal instructions. Teachers can also use the visual and spatial strengths of their students to improve the latter's speaking skills.

Coding with images:

First Nations students make frequent and effective use of mental images to memorize, understand and learn. Using metaphors and symbolism, they build complex and abstract images to learn words, concepts, and even complex scientific theories.

FIGURE 1: HOW DO FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN LEARN?



Adapted from "Aboriginal Ways of Learning and Learning Styles", Paul Hughes and Arthur J. More, a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, December 4, 1997.

FIGURE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS THAT WARRANT TEACHERS' ATTENTION

QUESTIONS- AND ANSWERS

In the classroom, children are expected to ask and answer questions; however,

- First Nations children may be from communities where children do not ask adults direct questions.
- First Nations children may hesitate to answer questions for several reasons:
 - Silence is culturally acceptable.
 - They are inclined to take their time and think before answering.
 - The answer is obvious and the purpose of questions is to obtain new information.
 - Second-language comprehension difficulties.

VERBAL PARTICIPATION

The following situations may cause particular discomfort or uneasiness for First Nations children:

- Speaking in front of a large group.
- Speaking in the presence of adults.
- Showing what they know.

First Nations children are generally more comfortable:

- Speaking to one person or in small groups.
- Speaking to people of the same age.
- Deciding for themselves when to talk about what they know.

LISTENING

Listening norms vary from culture to culture. In the predominant culture of Quebec, these are:

- Being comfortable conversing in public.
- Looking the person you are speaking to in the eye.
- Standing relatively close but respecting the other's personal space.
- Demonstrating active listening ("Really!" "That's great!").

Certain First Nations view these behaviours as inappropriate, particularly when the conversation is between an adult and a child.

LANGUAGE

In addition to learning the subject matter, First Nations children have to learn a language that is not their mother tongue and presents difficulties: :

- Different language structure (pronouns, adjectives, verbs).
- Different morphosyntax.
- Pronouncing sounds that do not exist in the mother tongue.
- Different prosody.
- Imperfect bilingualism.
- Auditory discrimination.

These aspects directly affect behaviour.

DISCIPLINE

Used to exploring and being autonomous from an early age, First Nations children learn to observe and do things on their own. They are therefore:

- More accustomed to moving around.
- Less inclined to ask adults for permission to touch, test, etc.
- Used to moving to observe better.
- Accustomed to sharing.

As First Nations educational methods do not place the same emphasis on errors, children are not accustomed to:

- Disciplinary measures.
- A rigid authoritarian environment.

**FIGURE 3: SIMULTANEOUS-NON-VERBAL COGNITIVE STYLE:
SOME TIPS TO FACILITATE LEARNING**



Andragogical activities

DRAW ME A?

Objective: to understand the situation of children for whom the language of instruction is their second or third language.

Material: a blank sheet of paper and a pencil.

A language of instruction that is not my first language

School principals, teachers, parents and students from First Nations collectively agree that fluency in the language of instruction is one of the most important factors to consider when a First Nations student integrates into the Quebec school system. This applies whether French is the first, second or third language, and also applies to English when it comes to First Nations students integrating into English schools in Quebec.

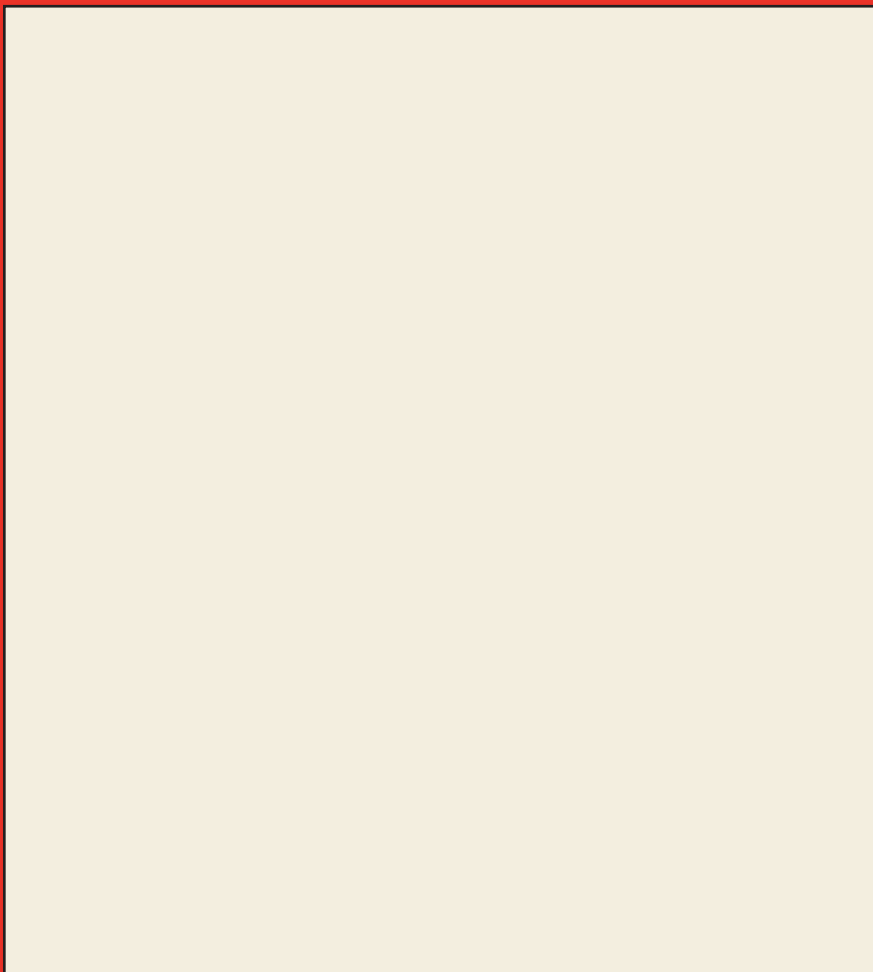
For most First Nations in Quebec, French is not the first language. The same First Nations language also has a whole host of subtle differences, depending on the region, community, culture, family environment and styles of communication. Thus, the Algonquin spoken in Barrière Lake is not identical to the Algonquin spoken in Kitigan Zibi.

Several communities offer immersion programs in their language, which is the language of instruction. Students transiting to the Quebec school system therefore have to cope with a new language of instruction and the difficulties that entails.

In the case of English-speaking communities, French is the third language. The time and resources allocated are insufficient to allow for proper education in three languages. Moreover, school is the only place that offers the opportunity to use French as it is not spoken in the community and most parents have no knowledge of the language.

To help these students whose difficulty in understanding the language of instruction is an additional obstacle to academic success, we recommend that teachers integrate French-as-a-second-language teaching methods into their pedagogical routine.

See what it's like to be a student for whom the language of instruction is their second language. Draw a memengwe (mama3u) in the box below. You have 1 minute!



What's a memengwe?*

**See page 112.*

JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY...

Objective: to know the cultural traits of the First Nations students who may be in my class.

A highly diverse population

In Quebec there are ten First Nations. The differences between these Nations can be as obvious as the differences between a Quebecer and a Spaniard. There are, for instance, two different linguistic and cultural families. The Mohawks and Huron-Wendat belong to the Iroquoian family while the remaining eight Nations are part of the Algonquian family. Iroquoians were traditionally sedentary while Algonquians were nomadic. Further differences can be found in language, traditions, ways of life, beliefs, and so forth, which have resulted in specific identities that define each of the First Nations.

Even within the same First Nation, communities show stunning diversity. Some are more urbanized while others are completely isolated. Some are English-speaking, while others are French-speaking. There are even significant variations in the traditional language from one place to another!

We hope that this questionnaire will pique your curiosity and inspire you to learn more about the First Nations to which some of your students belong. A map of the First Nations communities is available on page 9.

Which First Nations community is closest to the school where I teach?

To which First Nation does this community belong?

What languages do the members of this First Nation speak?

Is there a school in this community?

Can students complete all their education in the community school?

Do First Nations students attend the school where I teach?

Are there any First Nations students in my class?

If yes, do they live within or outside a First Nations community?

What is their mother tongue?

SHOW ME HOW YOU LEARN

Objective: to identify the cognitive learning styles of students.

Everyone has his or her own style...

There are many indicators to help you identify the different cognitive styles. You can observe the organization and work methods of your students in class for indications. A glance at a student's notes is sure to reveal learning habits. In theory, learning is done in a sequential or simultaneous way, verbally or nonverbally. This results in four possible combinations: sequential verbal, sequential nonverbal, simultaneous verbal, simultaneous nonverbal.

For example, students who organize information chronologically or by using a classification or numbering system, are most likely to be sequential learners. If their notebooks are full of images and sketches, they are most likely to be nonverbal learners.

Behaviour in class can also be an indicator. Simultaneous verbal learners tend to relate the concept being studied to their personal experience and their next step is to generalize it in writing. Simultaneous nonverbal learners also draw on their own experience, but their next step is demonstration and action.


Some detective work!

What is the cognitive style of the respective authors of each of the little works shown below?


1

1. I become a nice big turtle.
2. I live in a body of water.
3. I run during the day and I sleep at night.
4. I am very kind to others.
5. I enjoy running.
6. I don't bite.
7. The kids like to play with me.


2



3



4



Source:
Lise Goulet, conseillère pédagogique
en adaptation scolaire, Commission
scolaire des Bois-Francs

- 1. Sequential verbal
- 2. Sequential nonverbal
- 3. Simultaneous verbal
- 4. Simultaneous nonverbal

Pedagogical activities

List of activities by subject and competency

Subject	Competency
French, second language Basic program	<i>To interact in French by becoming familiar with the Francophone world</i> <i>To write different kinds of texts</i>
French, second language Immersion program	<i>To interact in French by discovering the Francophone world through texts and subject areas</i> <i>To write different kinds of texts</i>
English language arts	<i>To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts</i> <i>To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts</i> <i>To represent her/his literacy in different media</i> <i>To use language to communicate and learn</i>
Mathematics	<i>To solve a situational problem related to mathematics</i> <i>To reason using mathematical concepts and processes</i> <i>To communicate by using mathematical language</i>
Science and technology	<i>To explore the world of science and technology (Cycle 1)</i> <i>To propose explanations for or solutions to scientific or technological problems (Cycles 2 and 3)</i> <i>To make the most of scientific and technological tools, objects and procedures (Cycles 2 and 3)</i> <i>To communicate in the languages used in science and technology (Cycles 2 and 3)</i>
History, geography and citizenship education	<i>To construct his/her representation of space, time and society (Cycle 1)</i> <i>To understand the organization of a society in its territory (Cycles 2 and 3)</i> <i>To interpret change in a society and its territory (Cycles 2 and 3)</i> <i>To be open to the diversity of societies and their territories (Cycles 2 and 3)</i>

Activities

Lil' Trappers - Windigo

Around the Campfire - SOS Mother Earth

Around the Campfire

Around the Campfire - SOS Mother Earth

Around the Campfire - Lil' Trappers

Words - Trickster's Trick - Around the Campfire

Lil' Trappers

Around the Campfire

Catching Fish!

Dismantle the Wigwam!

Peach Pit Game - The Chief's Bannock

The Mystery of Maple Syrup – Medicinal Plants

The Medicine Wheel

A Day out in the Forest

The Chief's Bannock

Kebec – Ancestral Tree

What is Your Way of Life? - In New France

What is Your Way of Life? - In New France

The First Nations of Quebec - SOS Mother Earth

List of activities by subject and competency (cont'd)

Subject	Competency
Drama	<i>To invent short scenes To interpret short scenes To appreciate dramatic works, personal productions, and those of classmates</i>
Visual arts	<i>To produce individual works in the visual arts To produce media works in the visual arts To appreciate works of art, traditional artistic objects, media images, personal productions and those of classmates</i>
Music	<i>To invent vocal or instrumental pieces To interpret musical pieces To appreciate musical works, personal productions and those of classmates</i>
Physical education and health	<i>To perform movement skills in different physical activity settings To interact with others in different physical activity settings To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle</i>
Ethics and religious culture	<i>Reflects on ethical questions Engages in dialogue</i>
Review*	<i>To construct his/her representation of space,</i>

* Not a subject in the MELS program.

Activities

On the Wings of the Canada Goose - Trickster's Trick
On the Wings of the Canada Goose - Trickster's Trick
On the Wings of the Canada Goose - Trickster's Trick

As the Seasons Change – Trickster's Mask
As the Seasons Change – Trickster's Mask
Trickster's Mask

The Music of Nature
The Music of Nature
The Music of Nature - Keeping Time to the Drumbeat

Pentathlon

Shawl Dance

Health Mascots

Last Night I Dreamt
June 21st

Talking Stick

WORDS

Subject: English Language Arts

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competency:

- To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts

Materials: paper, pencils, a poem or an excerpt from a song.

The poetic soul of First Nations

Part of an oral tradition, First Nations poetry has only recently started being published in Quebec. For example, Rita Mestokosho's collection of poems in Innu entitled *Eshi uapataman Nukum* (How I See Life, Grandmother) was published in 1995.

Since then, several other authors, composers and poets have taken their places on the literary scene in Quebec; among them, Joséphine Bacon, another Innu poet, and singer/songwriter Samian.

These authors' works are inspired by the social and political context surrounding First Nations, their history and especially the loss of their territory and culture.

This activity aims to help teachers and students discover various First Nations authors, composers and poets, and introduce students to the poetic style.

What follows are some stanzas of Duke Redbird's poem "I am a Canadian," presented to the Queen in 1977:

*I'm a clown in Quebec during carnival
I'm a mass in the Cathedral of St. Paul
I'm a hockey game in the Forum,
I'm Rocket Richard and Jean Beliveau*

*I'm a coach for little league Expos
I'm a babysitter for sleep-defying rascals
I'm a canoe trip down the Ottawa
I'm a holiday on the Trent
I'm a mortgage, I'm a loan
I'm last week's unpaid rent*

*I'm a ferry boat ride to the Island
I'm the Yukon
I'm the Northwest Territories
I'm the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort Sea
I'm the Prairies, I'm the Great Lakes
I'm the Rockies, I'm the Laurentians*

*I am French
I am English
And I'm Métis
But more than this
Above all this
I am Canadian and proud to be free.*

Using Duke Redbird's poem as a model, ask students to write some verses, beginning with the same word and ending in a rhyme, e.g. "Travelling to many shores, travelling opens doors, travelling brings me more."

The length of poems may vary depending on the level of the student.

Students may choose to read their poem aloud.

ON THE WINGS OF THE CANADA GOOSE

Subjects: Drama, English

Language Arts

Level: Cycle 3

Competencies:

- To invent short scenes
- To interpret short scenes
- To appreciate dramatic works, personal productions and those of classmates
- To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts

Materials: white, grey and brown feathers, white and black face paint, cardboard and accessories (plastic hunting rifles, nests, branches, leaves, goose calls, etc.).

Goose break

The Canada goose continues to hold a special place in the lives of most First Nations peoples, both traditionally and economically. This is especially true for the Cree, for whom goose hunting provides nearly one quarter of the game eaten. Cree youth accompany their parents to ancestral hunting camps and learn at an early age how to “speak to the goose.”

Spring is a particularly important hunting season for First Nations since, unlike the fall season, it is open to Native hunters only. This traditional hunting season starts around the third week of April and runs until sometime in mid-May. In some communities, especially among the Cree, schools are closed during “goose break” to allow everyone take part in this traditional activity.

The “goose chief” who leads the hunting party, is generally an older man with proven hunting skills. The goose chief guides the other hunters and the novices by showing them how to hunt skilfully.

Even though goose calls are not used as much nowadays, certain communities use them to lure geese towards the hunter. The calls are made using traditional techniques and materials such as lichens, marsh reeds and pieces of cloth.

Using the behavioural model of geese and other migratory birds; discuss the social behaviours of these birds with students, emphasizing mutual help and cooperation, which are key to their survival.

Students must first think of behaviours relating to mutual help and cooperation and then, in groups of two to five, create a two-minute playlet.

Cooperation, solidarity, mutual aid, trust, sharing, equality, dialogue, listening, partnership, participation, altruism and encouragement are some themes that can be used.

Allow one hour for students to create their playlet, write the dialogue and assign the roles that they will perform for the class when you ask them to do so.



TRICKSTER'S TRICK

Subjects: English Language Arts,
Drama

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts
- To invent short scenes
- To interpret short scenes
- To appreciate dramatic works, personal productions and those of classmates

Materials: masks created during the "Trickster's Mask" activity, or a variety of materials and accessories that let students create their Trickster character (pieces of cloth, cardboard, paint, natural or recycled objects), face paint, feathers, etc.

A recurrent character in tales and folklore

Present in all Native cultures of North America, the Trickster is a cunning character who is neither good nor evil. Both creator and destroyer, the Trickster is ruled by its impulses and its passions. Without morals or values, it both gives and steals, tricks others and is tricked in return. The Trickster, sometimes a clever character, plays tricks on humans, and steals light, fire or food from them. It can take the form of a human or an animal. The Trickster is often depicted as a wolf, wolverine, hare or raccoon in the tales of the First Nations of Quebec.

In Innu folklore, for example, *Kuekuatsheu* is a wolverine who discovers that he turns into a demon under the full moon.

An Algonquin legend tells how the Trickster Glooskap escaped Winter's spell and went to find Summer. She returned with him to Winter's tipi and put an end to the extreme cold that was causing famine and death among the people. From that time on, Winter and Summer alternated their rule over the land.



Glooskap

The Trickster mask has the power to transform students into cunning characters who have been endowed with a trick, a skill or a special ability, just like the mask of the False Faces Society in Iroquois tradition confers magical and healing powers.

Students must write 15 lines or more, depending on their level, in which they put themselves in the shoes of a Trickster with a special ability, trick or quality. The objective is to present and perform the trick in front of the class.

Helpful guidelines:

- Find a name for the Trickster.
- Find a special ability or an original and clever trick.
- Write a text of 15 sentences or more, that start with being verbs such as I am, I look like.
- Describe the habitat.
- Describe the trick using action verbs, such as I dance, I jump, I run.
- Perform or mime the trick or special ability.

Students can prepare their texts at home as homework.

Students can wear the costumes and masks prepared in the visual arts activity, "Trickster's Mask". If not, plan for the activity to take place over two periods, devoting one to creating masks and costumes.

Students dress in their costumes and masks to present their texts in turn.

The student performing his/her text must interact with the class and, when asked, answer the following questions:

- Who are you?
- Where do you live?
- What is your trick?

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

Subjects: English Language Arts, French second language (basic program); French second language (immersion program)

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competencies:

- To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts
- To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts
- To use language to communicate and learn
- To interact in French by discovering the Francophone world through texts and subject areas
- To write different kinds of texts

Materials: copies of a tale, one per student, with each copy being numbered and identifying a different passage to read; a talking stick or a feather.

The oral tradition

It is important to understand the oral tradition of the First Nations in order to fully understand their cultural heritage. Oral tradition is defined as the knowledge, beliefs and history transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Tales are part of this tradition. They transmit the attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge and the history of the peoples of the First Nations. They are transmitted by elders, who are not necessarily elderly, but stand out because of their spiritual and cultural leadership.

Often told around a winter campfire, Aboriginal tales are a way of teaching morals to children. These tales, usually short and simple, employ a minimum of anecdotes to clothe their moral message. Like Quebec folktales, Aboriginal tales are stories that are sacred, supernatural or linked to a collective experience.



Give each student a copy of a tale from the collection of First Nations' tales. For tales translated into English, go to **www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/Legends-AB.html** and click on the First Nation of your choice. Number the copies and mark a different passage in each copy.

Ask the students to read the tale silently and have each one work on the passage marked in his or her copy in preparation for retelling the story aloud in their own words and in the style determined by the teacher (formal, semi-formal, informal). This preparation can be

done as homework. The students can use dictionaries, images and drawings for help or they can ask the teacher for assistance in understanding the text and memorizing their versions.

Have the students sit in a circle. Ask them to listen carefully and silently to the "elder" who is holding the talking stick.

Each student speaks in turn, the order determined by the number on his or her copy of the text. When it is his or her turn to speak, the student asks for the talking stick by raising a hand.

Using their own words and the style selected by the teacher, students retell the passage marked in their copy.

LIL' TRAPPERS

Subjects: English Language Arts,
French second language

Materials: pieces of paper and
a container.

Level: Cycle 1

Competencies :

- To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts
 - To interact in French by becoming familiar with the Francophone world
-

Trapping

Once a vital economic activity, trapping is no longer sufficient to support First Nations families. Today Elders and a small number of Natives are the only ones who trap, usually from September to May, on Native hunting grounds.

This is often an opportunity for children to learn firsthand the age-old traditions of their ancestors, such as setting snares, gathering fruit or identifying plants, and for parents to hand the cultural heritage of their Nation down to their children.

Trapping is thus an ideal opportunity to transmit ancestral knowledge and educate children. It is also a time for them to learn about values that are not often prioritized outside of their community, such as respecting Mother Earth and the environment of which all living things are part. So let's go to the hunting ground.

WINDIGO

Subject: French second language

Level: Cycle 1

Competencies:

- To interact in French by becoming familiar with the Francophone world (basic program)
- To interact in French by discovering the Francophone world through texts and subject areas (immersion program)

Materials: a sheet of paper with a grid of 40 boxes (5 boxes x 8 boxes), an acetate, pencils and coloured pencils, as needed.

A ghastly monster

The Windigo is an evil creature recurrently appearing in First Nations legends, particularly those of the Algonquin tribes from where the myth is said to originate. Like the ogre in European tales, the Windigo feeds on human flesh and the more it eats, the bigger it gets!

The Windigo is associated with the winter, when food is scarce. Many tales

say that the Windigo appears when the icy winds of winter blow the strongest. It is also said that the howls of the wind are actually the howls of the scary monster that roams our forests.

Don't get lost in the woods in the winter, or you could end up inside the Windigo's tummy!

The aim of the game is to avoid the Windigo and reach your destination safe and sound!

The teacher prepares the 40-box grid beforehand. The following Web site may be helpful www.mikinak.net. Photocopies are made for the students and a copy is made on an acetate.

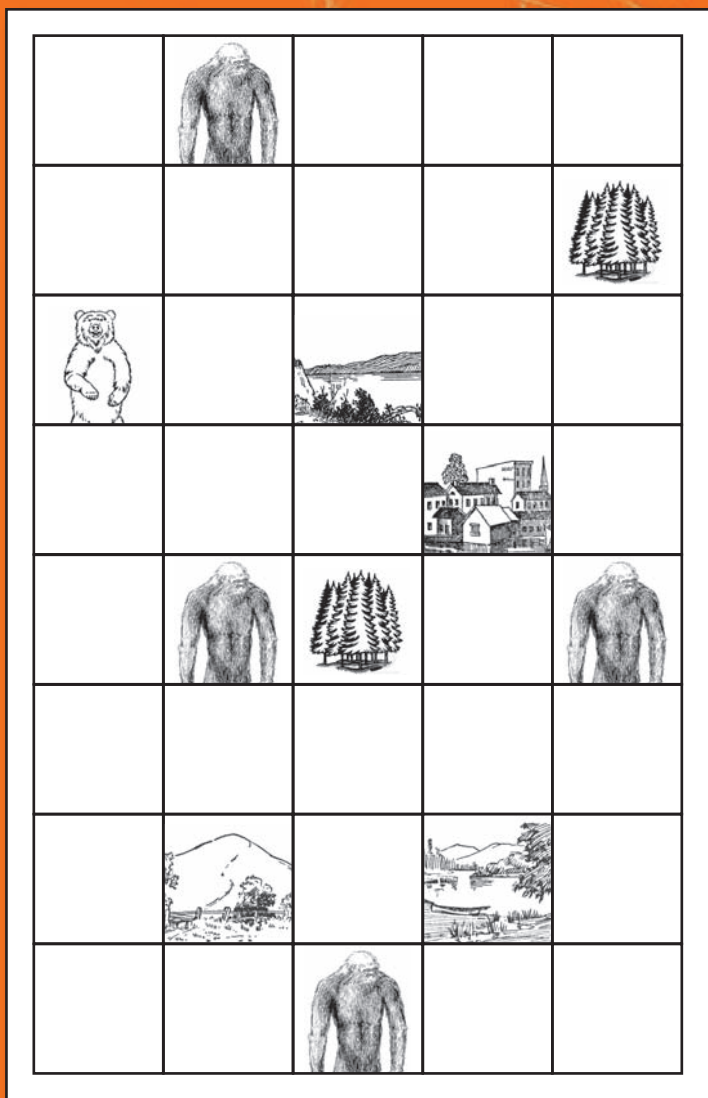
The grid has four boxes with Windigos, two boxes with forests, a box with a mountain, one with a bear, one with a river, one with a lake and one with a village. The village is the destination. The remaining boxes are left empty.

The teacher explains the concepts of right, left, above, below, diagonal, etc. for this activity.

Using a pencil and following the teacher's directions, each student has to draw the path to the village. Those who stray off the path be warned! If a student's careless pencil leads him or her away from the empty boxes, there's a risk of being devoured by the Windigo or a bear, spending the night in the forest or getting blocked by impassable mountains, rivers or lakes.

To make the activity more fun, the teacher can invent a Windigo tale with a hunter or trapper lost in the woods. At the end of the activity, the teacher reveals the path by showing the acetate.

Alternatively, the teacher can form teams of two players and distribute the grid with all the elements, except the village. One child will place the village on his/her grid and guide his/her teammate through the latter's grid to arrive at the destination safe and sound.



SOS MOTHER EARTH

Subjects: French second language, Geography, History and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competencies:

- To write different kinds of texts
- To be open to the diversity of societies and their territories

Materials: paper, pencils, erasers, coloured pencils and markers.

Ecological values as old as the hills

Early European settlers were greatly influenced by First Nations peoples, and soon adopted many of their ways in order to face the harsh winters, while living in harmony with their environment.

As the European settlers grew in numbers, the First Nations became a minority and were very often forced to adopt the European way of life.

However, in recent decades there has been a growing interest in the cultural heritage of First Nations, particularly in the values of respect for the environment and gratitude for nature's gifts expressed in their culture, beliefs and rituals.

In today's post-industrial era, First Nations values help us rethink our relationship with Mother Earth which is based on domination and overexploitation. According to Native values, instead of acting

like we rule nature, humans should consider themselves as guests and only take what we need, being careful not to cause permanent damage to the environment.

We should now be asking ourselves how these Native values can be integrated into today's society.



Ask students to draw a comic strip showing how we can modify our current lifestyle and change our daily habits and activities to better protect and preserve Mother Nature, based on First Nation values such as respect for nature.

The comic strips have to have nine frames. To do so, three rows of three sequences each are drawn on the blank sheet of paper.

Then, follow the five steps below:

1. Prepare a text plan: subject, message carried by the comic strip.
2. Select and describe the main and secondary characters.

Each student chooses a hero, real or fictional, to save the Earth.

The student can decide that he or she is the hero of the story.

3. Structure the comic strip using dialogue.
4. Determine the dialogue and content for each sequence in accordance with the teacher's instructions (text length, total number of sentences, tense, grammar and style).
5. Draw with pencils, coloured pencils and markers.



The students are to focus more on the dialogue than on the drawing or artistic quality.

After the comic strip is completed, the teacher makes the necessary corrections and comments.

Next, the students redraw the comic strip, making the necessary corrections and improvements and paying more attention to artistic detail. Students should not forget to sign their final comic strip.

The teacher gathers all the comic strips together in a collection entitled "SOS Mother Earth." Each student gets a complete copy.

CATCHING FISH!

Subject: Mathematics

Materials: paper and pencils.

Level: Cycle 1

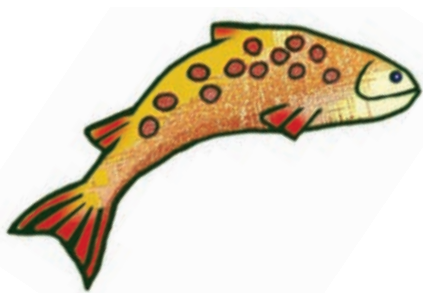
Competencies:

- To solve a situational problem related to mathematics

An ancestral activity

Rivers and lakes are more than plentiful in Canada. Indeed, Canada has the largest fresh water supply in the world. Traditionally, these bodies of water provided most of the fish for the First Nations of Quebec. The various methods that are still used by First Nations include spear fishing, harpooning and net fishing. The latter is the most efficient and, above all, the easiest technique and can be used all year-round, including under the ice in the winter.

An ingenious technique used in the past consisted of damming a small stream leaving only a narrow passage-way to let the fish swim through, right into the fisherman's net!



Fishing at sea is another kettle of fish! In this case, little dams aren't enough to catch big fish! The Innu, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet are renowned fishermen and, in addition to catching fish and shellfish, their ancestors were respected for their unmatched skill in hunting walruses, seals, belugas and other whales.

The aim of the game is to capture six geometrical shapes from the opponent.

This activity is inspired by spear fishing. The objective is to develop the students' ability to pinpoint an object in space and develop strategies for searching. Furthermore, by getting them to visualize the symmetrical position of the geometrical shape drawn, the students will gradually become familiar with the properties of symmetry.

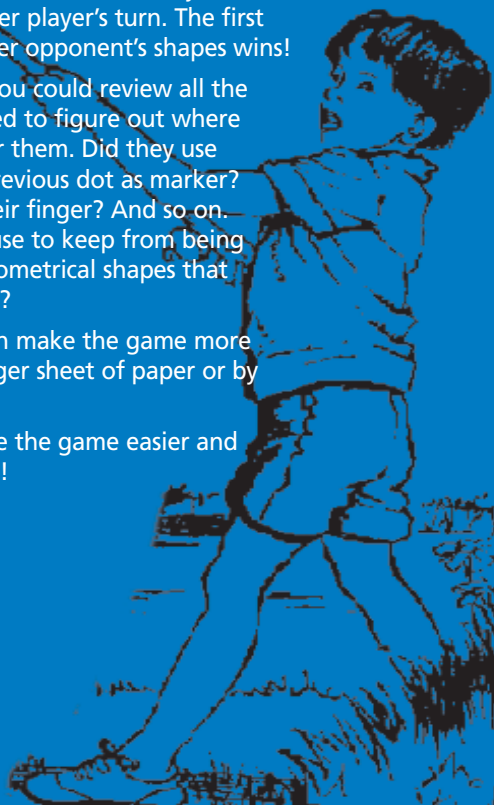
Each student folds a white sheet of paper in half and draws a line along the fold. Then on one side of the paper, he or she draws six geometrical shapes (e.g. rhombus, triangle, square).

The starting player makes a dot on the blank half of the opponent's paper. The paper is folded back and if the point is found within a geometrical shape, then that shape has been successfully speared! Now it is the other player's turn. The first player to spear all his or her opponent's shapes wins!

At the end of the game, you could review all the strategies the students used to figure out where the shapes were and spear them. Did they use the axis? Did they use a previous dot as marker? Did they measure with their finger? And so on. What strategies did they use to keep from being speared? Did they use geometrical shapes that are more difficult to spear?

For older students, you can make the game more challenging by using a larger sheet of paper or by folding it obliquely.

Using grid paper will make the game easier and not using it, more difficult!



DISMANTLE THE WIGWAM!

Subject: Mathematics

Materials: decks of cards.

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competency:

- To reason using mathematical concepts and processes

Dwellings suited to a way of life

When Europeans arrived on the North American continent, they saw First Nations living in dwellings which were thoroughly adapted to the climate, geography and surrounding ecosystem. Whether nomadic, semi-nomadic or sedentary, these First Nations populations had developed building structures that were perfectly in tune with the natural materials available to them, their own basic needs and social ways of life.

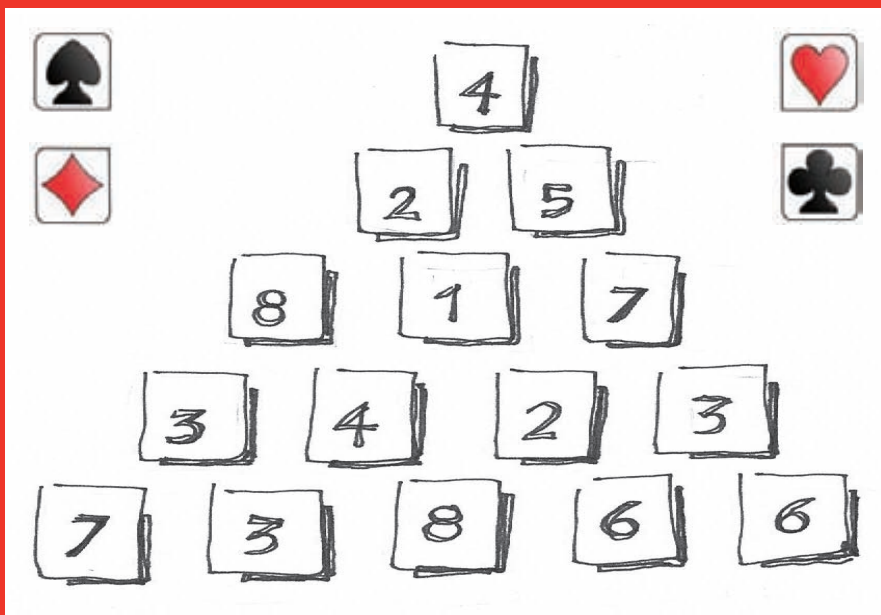
In what is now Quebec, the Algonquian nations lived in wigwams, more suited to their nomadic way of life as they followed the seasons, hunting and gathering, while the Iroquoian nations lived in longhouses, more suited to their semi-nomadic or sedentary lifestyles.

Depending on which nation built it, a wigwam can have a conical or a dome shape and can house one or two families. Its basic structure is formed of small tree trunks with the lower ends arranged in a circle and the upper ends meeting at the top.

This structure is covered with bark, branches, leaves and animal fur. When they move on to another place, the nomadic nations only bring the wigwam coverings with them, leaving the basic structure behind for the use of other passing tribes.

The Iroquoian nations call themselves the *Haudenosaunee* or People of the Longhouse, their typical dwelling which can accommodate several families. Each nation considers their dwelling to be closely linked to their spirituality and beliefs. Metaphorically, the Iroquoian nations see themselves as a bark longhouse with five fires where everyone is a member of the same family. One of these nations, the Mohawks are the guardians and defenders of the eastern portal of that longhouse and are thus known as the “Keepers of the Eastern Door.”





The aim of the game is to be the first to “dismantle the wigwam” by picking up the cards that add up to a certain number.

Remove the kings, queens and jacks from each deck of cards. Then, pick a number from 6 to 10 and remove all four cards with the chosen number from the deck.

The teacher then places the students in twos. Each twosome shuffles its deck and lays five cards horizontally to form the base of the wigwam. Above that, they lay a line of four cards, then one of three cards, one of two cards and finally one card at the top. The remaining cards make up the draw pile.

Players take turns. If it is decided that combinations must total 6, for example, each player must try to combine two cards from the wigwam to make a 6. Cards removed this way are picked up and put on that player’s side. If the player cannot make a combination with the wigwam

cards, he or she draws a card is drawn from the pile to do so. If the player still cannot make a combination, he or she discards that card and the opposing player takes his or her turn. The first player to dismantle the wigwam wins. If, however, the game ends because neither student can make a play, the student who picked up the most cards wins.

Variations: Use three cards in any mathematical combination to obtain the required number. The numbers on the three cards can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided to get the required number. For example, if 10 is the number and we have cards 8, 8 and 6, we can add the two 8s to make 16 and then subtract the 6 to make 10 and clear all three cards.

The game makes the student think about the various possibilities available to obtain a result.

PEACH PIT GAME

Subject: Mathematics

Level: Cycles 1 and 2

Competency:

- To communicate by using mathematical language

Materials: (per team), six peach pits (one side coloured black and the other left its natural colour) or two-tone counters (a light colour on one side and black on the other), a tray or a big wooden bowl and 101 dried beans.

A ceremonial game

The peach pit game comes from the six Iroquois nations. It is played during ceremonies or community and social gatherings. Its history dates back to the dawn of time, when the Creator and his twin brother, an evil being who punished people, were playing the game to decide who would make the world and its creatures.

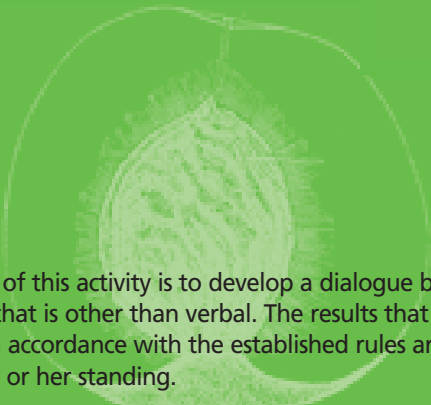
Nowadays, the peach pit game is played during certain ceremonies to celebrate seed time, harvest time and midwinter.

This game is somewhat like dice. The six peach pits are placed in the wooden bowl, a player throws them and scores as follows: when all six faces are identical, the player scores five points; when five faces are identical, one point; otherwise, no points. When the player scores points, he or she gets another turn.

At midwinter, the bear and turtle clans form one team and play against the wolf clan.

During the seeding ceremony, women play against men. The winning team doesn't have to seed the garden for the whole season!

Games may last from thirty minutes to five days!



The objective of this activity is to develop a dialogue between the students that is other than verbal. The results that he or she obtains in accordance with the established rules are what determine his or her standing.

Form groups of two or four students to play against each other individually or in teams of two.

Give each group six two-toned peach pits or counters and a wooden bowl or tray.

Give 101 dried beans to each group to count points. Symbolically, the 101st dried bean is that of the Creator, as it is awarded to the winner.

At the start of the game, each team or player takes five beans.

The teacher will choose the way to decide who will start first.

The starting player shakes the peach pits in the wooden bowl or tosses them on the tray before placing the bowl or tray down again. If five peach pits are turned the same face up, then the player takes a bean from the opponent and plays again. If six peach pits are turned the same face up, the player collects all five beans from the opponent. Otherwise no points are scored and it is the opponent's turn to play. Turns are taken until all five beans have been collected from one player or team. These beans are then put aside by the winning player or team and five new beans are distributed to the two sides. The player or team with the most beans wins.

THE MYSTERY OF MAPLE SYRUP

Subject: Science and Technology

Level: Cycle 1

Competency:

- To explore the world of science and technology

Materials: simple syrup, water, small plastic containers, wooden Popsicle sticks, plastic straws, droppers, pieces of maple bark with a hole pierced through the middle, maple leaves, paper towels and maple syrup.

The stuff of legends

Long before the Europeans arrived, Aboriginal peoples in eastern Canada and the north-eastern United States collected sap from maple trees and transformed it into syrup. Each of these peoples had its own legend to explain the origin of maple syrup. The most famous is the legend of Nokomis (the Earth), who was the grandmother of Manabush, a hero of many First Nations legends.

According to this legend, Nokomis was the first person to tap maple trees and collect the sap. Manabush, realizing that the sap was syrup ready to use, said to Nokomis:

“Grandmother, it’s not a good thing that trees produce sugar so easily. If humans can collect sugar with no effort, they will become lazy. They must work to obtain it. Before tasting this exquisite syrup, they should have to chop wood, collect sap for many nights, and watch the syrup while it slowly cooks.”

Manabush then took a bucket of water, climbed to the top of a maple tree and poured it in the tree, dissolving the sugar that was inside. Since then, maple sap is very watery, and it takes a lot of work and patience to obtain thick sweet syrup.

Ask students if they know where maple syrup comes from. How is it made? What is the origin of syrup and who invented it? Then tell students the legend of Nokomis and ask them if they know another one.

Show students the maple's characteristics by letting them observe and handle the bark and leaves

Give each student:

- a small plastic container filled with 15 ml of water
- a small plastic container filled with 15 ml of maple syrup
- a dropper containing 15 ml of simple syrup (syrup made from sugar and water)
- a wooden Popsicle stick
- a plastic straw

If materials are limited, the activity can be carried out by teams of two or three students.

Students need to follow the following four steps to properly understand the concepts of physics and natural science involved in making maple syrup:

Step 1: students put the straw through the hole in the bark.

Step 2: ask students to drop two drops of simple syrup into the end of the straw on the inner side of the bark. Have them note how fast the syrup is flowing. Students collect the drops on a paper towel.

Step 3: just like Manabush, have students dilute the simple syrup with water by pouring the simple syrup in the dropper into the plastic container filled with water.

Step 4: repeat step 2. Using the dropper, students draw two drops of diluted syrup and drop them into the end of the straw on the outer side of the bark. Students need to observe the difference in flow in comparison with the first experiment.

Have students note three differences between the diluted syrup and the maple syrup. Students need to pay particular attention to the physical and material characteristics (colour, consistency, smell, and so on).



MEDICINAL PLANTS

Subject: Science and Technology

Level: Cycle 1

Competency:

- To explore the world of science and technology

Materials: water, dried sage leaves, cider vinegar, small plastic containers, cups, strainers, two large kettles, stir sticks and specimens of various medicinal plants (cedar, spruce and pine buds, leaves and twigs, wintergreen, common bracken ferns, dandelion leaves and flowers, plantain leaves and seeds, etc.).

How about some herbal medicine?

For First Nations people, traditional lore includes the vast knowledge and use of many plant species.

From evergreen trees to flowering plants, lichens to seaweed, plants have a symbolic importance in First Nations languages, rituals, and legends, and are sources of food, medicinal remedies, and material.

In fact, Aboriginal peoples have been using medicinal plants to successfully treat diseases for centuries. When Champlain landed in America, he was welcomed by First Nations peoples. Weakened by their long sea voyage, Champlain and his crew recovered thanks to the good care they received

from the Aboriginal people and the latter's knowledge of wild medicinal plants. In 1535, an infusion of Eastern White Cedar needles made by the Aboriginal peoples saved the lives of Jacques Cartier's crew.

According to Health Canada, First Nations peoples in eastern Canada alone have registered more than 400 species of medicinal plants with over 2 000 uses, notably plants that have key roles in fighting diabetes. There are numerous species of plants that still hold important places in Aboriginal cultures.

Join your students in discovering the various medicinal plants used by First Nations. Give each student a specimen of the plant you have chosen to study. Depending on the season, you could use cedar, spruce, pine, wintergreen, sage, thyme, common bracken fern (fiddlehead fern), dandelion, plantain, and so forth.

Have students write up a plant data sheet for the selected plant that includes its scientific (Latin) name, common name, characteristics, parts and uses.

If the plant is edible, have students taste it and note down its flavour characteristics. Have the students hand in their completed plant data sheets. Correct or complete the information.

Once they have completed their plant data sheet, have students prepare a sage-based cough remedy.

Divide the class into teams of three and give each team 15 ml of dried sage leaves, a plastic container containing 15 ml of cider vinegar, a small tea pot, a strainer, a cup, and a stir stick. The tea pots, strainers and cups can be brought to class by the students.

1. Have students carefully crumble the dried sage leaves into their tea pot.

2. Pour 250 ml of hot water into each team's tea pot. The mixture has to steep for ten minutes. During this time, read the ingredients and the steps for making the remedy aloud and have the students write them down.

3. Once the mixture has steeped for ten minutes, have students use the stir stick to slowly mix in the cider vinegar.

4. Have students strain the liquid into their cup.

Tell students that the infusion can be used in two different ways; either as a compress or a gargle.



THE MEDICINE WHEEL

Subject: Science and Technology

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competency:

- To propose explanations for or solutions to scientific or technological problems

Materials: discs 30 cm in diameter and 2 cm thick made of cardboard, particle board or cork, rods 1 cm thick and 76 cm long (three for each disc) made of soft wood, plastic or other flexible material, big yellow beads (three for each disc) that can be threaded onto the rods, black, yellow, red and white felt, various natural decorations representing the four seasons and the four elements found in nature, paper punches, staplers, push pins, liquid glue, scissors and black markers.

A representation of the universe

For the First Nations, the medicine wheel is a representation of the world and the harmony between its different animate and inanimate elements.

The wheel represents the circle of life and all the cycles of nature. It is divided into four quadrants representing the four cardinal directions — north, south, east and west. Each quadrant has its particular colour, associated with various symbols, which differs from Native group to Native group:

North:



white – air – associated with animals – winter – the mind – night – guiding animal is the moose – wisdom or old age or death.

East:



yellow – fire – associated with humans – spring – the spirit – sunrise – sun – guiding animal is the eagle – birth.

South:

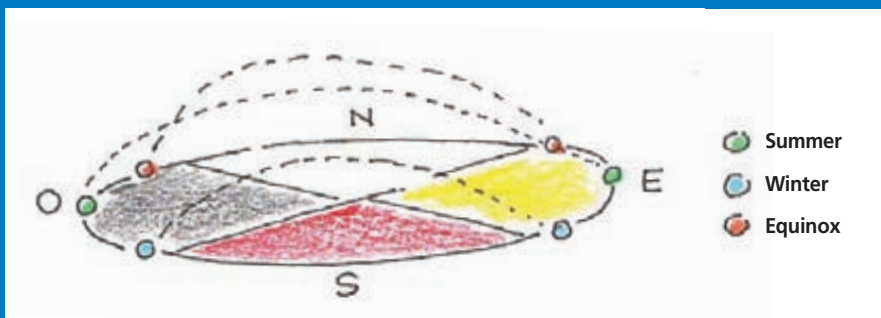


red – water – associated with plants and vegetation – emotions – noon sun and full moon – guiding animal is the frog or the wolf – childhood or innocence.

West:



black – earth – associated with minerals – the body – sunset – guiding animals are the turtle and the bear – adulthood.



Explain the symbolism of the medicine wheel for First Nations and its use to explain and understand natural phenomena and interpret the cycles of nature, life, the seasons, the stars, the elements and so forth.

The activity is also a way to explain the earth's position in relation to the sun, the solstices and equinoxes, the seasons and length of days.

Form teams of four students. The amounts of materials required will depend on the number of teams. Each team receives a disc representing the medicine wheel and has to:

- Divide the disc by an X to obtain 4 quadrants.
- Use the marker to indicate the cardinal points (N, E, S, W).
- Cover each quadrant with the appropriately coloured felt.

The rods represent the summer and winter solstices and the equinoxes.

The summer solstice rod is longest, as it represents the longest day. One end is inserted at the northeast point, where the sun rises, and the other end is inserted at the northwest point, where the sun sets.

The winter solstice rod is the shortest. One end is inserted at the southeast point, where the sun rises, and the other end is inserted at southwest point, where the sun sets.

The equinox rod, of medium length, runs from east to west and is inserted at both points.

Guide students in marking the six directional points where the rods will be placed (N, S, E, W, NW and SW). Place the rods in parallel, determine the correct lengths by checking with the markings and cut off the extra bits but leave 1.27 cm at each end. In the disc, perforate holes that are 1.27 cm from each marking and wide enough to fit the rods.

Ask the students to decorate each quadrant (they can bring in decorative materials or you can provide them). The goal is illustrate the cycle of nature, the seasons and other natural elements relating to each cardinal point.

Ask the students to fix the sun (yellow bead) on the rods and insert the rods in the corresponding holes.

The sun's positions on the rods will show sunrise, zenith and sunset.

A DAY OUT IN THE FOREST

Subject: Science and Technology

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competency:

- To make the most of scientific and technological tools, objects and procedures

Materials: scarves, notebooks, a map of Quebec, a regional map, magnifying glasses, insect boxes, disposable rubber gloves, pencils, coloured pencils, books about the forest and a digital camera.

A complete ecosystem...

First Nations are deeply attached to the forest and constantly strive for ecological balance. First Nations view Earth as a legacy from past generations to future generations. Natives, especially those living in rural areas, draw on that legacy — herbs for healing and purification purposes, and plants, birds, animals and fish for food.

For First Nations, humans are part and parcel of nature like every other living being. Any change to the fragile and intricate balance of nature has an impact on the ecosystem and therefore on ourselves.

The forest is both a place to live and a place to grow. It nourishes, protects, heals, strengthens and teaches us. It is a source of inspiration and a sacred place of worship. The forest is also the resting place of our ancestors.

From this perspective, we can see that this fragile ecosystem is much more than a mere economic resource or a place to relax.

We hope that this educational activity will help both you and the children experience the sense of balance which is one of the gifts of these natural places.

Discovering the ecosystem of a forest is the goal of this activity. It involves a day out in the forest followed by classroom activities on the next day.

The objective is to experience, first-hand, the relation between living things and their habitat to help construct the concept of ecosystem.

To prepare for the outing, have the students tell you what they already know. Arrange the outing in accordance with the season and plan the different observations that will be made.

On the day of the outing, when you near the observation site, ask the students to cover their eyes with their scarves. If the area is safe enough and the weather permits, you could even ask them to remove their shoes. Line them up in single file and have them place their hands on the shoulders of the classmate in front of them. Ask them to be quiet and lead them to the observation site. The teacher heads up this line of students, silently wending its way through the forest like a caterpillar. At the observation site, choose somewhere that is flat and safe and let the children discover the place by feeling their way around for no more than 15 minutes. Gather the

students together, still blindfolded, and ask them to describe their surroundings. When they have completed this exercise, ask them to remove their scarves and compare what they felt with what they see.



Start the observation phase and ask the students to make notes and drawings in the notebook, take pictures, gather samples of plants and insects, make recordings, and so forth.

In the classroom, explain the general organization of the forest and identify the animals and plants that live there. Depending on the year the students are in, you could ask them to identify the different diets of the forest animals based on a study of their jaws and thus introduce the concept of the food chain.

THE CHIEF'S BANNOCK

Subject: Science and Technology,
Mathematics

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To communicate in the languages used in science and technology
- Communicate by using mathematical language

Materials: (per student) 250 ml of flour, 5 ml of baking powder, 2 ml of salt, 20 ml of butter and 125 ml of warm water, a bowl and some plastic wrap. Students can bring this material from home.

Native bread...

If you talk about bannock with First Nations members, you will see their eyes light up. Bannock is a delicious round bread, compact and thick, eaten by most of Quebec's First Nations. It can be baked outdoors, over a wood fire or in hot coals.



Bannock accompanies meals and can be served plain or with butter. If meals are served at a First Nations gathering, you can be sure to find bannock.

This activity involves several areas of learning. You can choose to focus mainly on mathematics with the conversion of measures, or on sciences with the chemical changes or on the five senses — hearing, sight, smell, touch and, above all, taste!

You may begin the activity by asking the children if they know what bannock is, if they like to bake cakes and if they know that cooking involves some chemistry.

Depending on their level, you may need to help them measure the ingredients, weigh them, or ask them find the correct measures using conversions. For example, you may ask them to use 0.02L of butter and 22.5 centigrams of flour to prepare their bannock.

Preferably in the afternoon, help the students turn their hands to baking! Ask them to mix the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. Then have them add the warm water gradually until the mixture has a doughy consistency. Finally, ask the students to knead the dough into a ball (approximately 10 minutes) and wrap it in plastic wrap to bring home.

At home, the students continue their preparations in the family kitchen, where, under parental guidance, they follow the written instructions you have given them: Put the butter in a deep frying pan with a thick bottom, spread the bannock dough flat in the pan and cover. Cook for 20 to 30 minutes on very low heat, then turn the bannock over and leave it cook for another twenty minutes. The bannock should be golden brown on both sides.

Students are to write down what they observe using their five senses: what do they see, smell, and hear? Does the bannock taste sweet? And so forth...

The next day, ask the students to share their observations.

KEBEK

Subject: History, Geography and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycle 1

Competency:

- To construct his/her representation of space, time and society

Materials: a map of Quebec (different types depending on the learning objective), copies of the list of Native geographic names found in the annex, paper, red dot stickers, small cards and dice.

Native geographic names

Just as the word “Canada” comes from the Huron word Kanata, meaning “settlement” or “village,” the names of numerous geographical sites in Quebec have a Native origin.

The First Nations of Quebec gave names to various geographical sites that were meaningful or important to them. In most cases, these names described the natural characteristics of the site or recalled important historical facts. Europeans used these names as well when they first settled in Quebec. We still use these names today although their pronunciation and spelling may differ a little from the original.

Step 1: distribute the list of towns, municipalities, First Nation communities, rivers and lakes in Quebec that have names of Native origin. You can limit the list to one or two categories, depending on the subject you want to cover, such as the towns and communities or the lakes and rivers.

Read the list with the students to make sure they understand. Show the locations of these sites on a map of Quebec. Choose the appropriate map for each type of site (towns, hydrography, etc.).

In teams of four, students propose a simple symbol to express the Native meaning of each name. They draw the symbol on a blank sheet of paper and present it to the class. At the end of this exercise, the students must hand in their sheets to you. Step 1 can be skipped if the teacher provides the symbols for the names on the list.

Step 2: The list is used for homework. Students have to memorize the name, origin, and meaning of the geographic names provided and the position on the map of Quebec.

For each Native meaning, make one small card bearing the most representative symbol produced by the students. Put the red dot stickers on the map to indicate the geographical sites that you have chosen and that the students will have to identify.

In class, the students will be asked to play a game that involves consulting a map of Quebec. This will not only help them to build their perception of space but also to know meaning and origin of the names of several places in Quebec.

Form teams with an equal number of members. Distribute the same number of cards to all the teams. In order to be able to discard a card, the students have to name the corresponding place and locate it on the map. When they give a correct answer, the name is written on the corresponding red dot sticker on the map.

Playing order is determined by rolling a die. The team with the highest throw gets to play first. Teams have a maximum of two tries per card to get the right answer and then it is the next team's turn.

Native geographic names

Abitibi: lake; an Algonquin word meaning “where the waters separate.” This word is also part of the administrative region’s name (Abitibi-Témiscamingue).

Chibougamau: municipality; a Cree word meaning “where the waters narrow”.

Chicoutimi: river; derived from the Innu word shkoutimeou meaning “the end of deep waters”.

Gaspé: town; derived from the Mi'kmaq word for “end” or “tip” to indicate the borders of Mi'kmaq territory.

Harricana: river; derived from the Algonquin word nanikana meaning “the main way”.

Kahnawake: First Nation community; meaning “along the rapids”.

Listuguj: First Nation community; derived from the Mi'kmaq word lustagooch meaning “river with five branches” or “do not disobey your father”.

Matane: town; derived from the Mi'kmaq word meaning “beaver pond” or from the Algonquin word mattawa meaning “meeting of the waters”.

Manicouagan: river, reservoir and region; an Innu word meaning “where there is drink”.

Mashteuiatsh: First Nation community; an Innu word meaning “where there is a point of land”.

Maskinongé: river and regional county municipality; an Algonquin word meaning “northern pike” or “pickerel”.

Matagani: town; a Cree word meaning “meeting of the waters”.

Maniwaki: ville - dérivé des mots algonquins mani, Marie et aki, terre, d'où Maniwaki « terre de Marie ».

Mistassini (lake) and **Mistissini** (First Nation community): derived from the Cree word mista-assini, meaning “big rock” designating the imposing three-meter rock at the place where the Mistassini River meets the Rupert River.

Natashquan: municipality; an Innu word meaning “where we hunt bear” or “bear country”.

Odanak: First Nation community; an Abenaki word meaning “village”.

Péribonka: river and municipality; derived from the Innu word pelipaukau meaning “river digging through the sand” or “where the sand moves”.

Québec: province and city; derived from the Algonquin word kebek meaning “narrowing of the waters,” referring to the narrowing of the river at Cap-Diamant.

Rimouski: town; of Mi'kmaq or Maliseet origin meaning “land of moose”.

Saguenay: river, fjord and town; of Algonquin origin meaning “where the water flows out”.

Shawinigan: town; of Atikamekw origin meaning “portage on the ridge,” referring to the ridge the First Nations had to cross to portage around the falls.

Tadoussac: municipality; derived from the Innu word Totouskak meaning “breasts,” referring to the two round hills west of the village.

Témiscamingue: lake; derived from the Algonquin word timiskaming meaning “deep lake”.

Wapizagonke: lake; of Innu origin and could mean “where sharpening stones can be found” or “rare species of duck”.

Waskaganish: First Nation community; derived from the Cree word Waaskaahiikanish meaning “small house,” referring to the trading posts of the James Bay Company.

Waswanipi: First Nation community; of Cree origin meaning “light over water” referring to the pine-resin torches used in night-time fishing on the river.

ANCESTRAL TREE

Subject: History, Geography and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycle 1

Competency:

- To construct his/her representation of space, time and society

Materials: one sheet of drawing paper per student.

The sacred tree of Natives

The tree is a significant symbol in many cultures. For many, it bridges the celestial and terrestrial worlds.

For the First Nations of Quebec, the Tree of Life embodies harmony. Its roots go deep down in the Earth and its crown touches the sky. On its branches grow many fruits, representing virtues such as respect, courage, justice, sharing, and so on.

The Tree plays a key role in the lives of the human beings who grow under its protective shade and are nourished by its delicious fruits. If humans stray from the Tree and its shade, they are no longer nourished by its fruits, the virtues, and lose

their sense of direction and their connection with the earth, their environment, and with the sky, their spirituality.

There are a variety of activities for children based on tree symbolism and designed to help them construct their representation of time and society. The tree is a major symbol in First Nations culture, used to represent the universe. The tree is also very present in Western culture, and one of its representations, the Family Tree, will be of interest to Native students. They are sure to have impressive family trees!

This activity requires a few days of preparation and the creation of a short questionnaire.

Explain the concept of the family tree in class. Ask students to ask their parents about their genealogy. Who were their ancestors? What were their names? Where did their grandparents live? How about their great-grandparents? What were their jobs? How many children did they have? Did they come from another country? Did they speak another language? Prepare a short simple questionnaire for students to fill with their parents' help. Ask parents to talk about their own childhood, how they lived, the kinds of toys they had, and so forth.

Back in class, ask the students to draw a big tree on a large sheet of drawing paper and decorate it with leaves, bark, images, photos, etc.

Have the students use the questionnaire to complete the family tree with the names and birthdates of their ancestors (can be approximate) on the trunk and branches.

Ask the students to choose an ancestor who was the subject of one of more of the stories told by their parents and make a short presentation about that person to the class.

Encourage the children to imagine how life was in the past and to think about all the changes that have happened since then.



WHAT IS YOUR WAY OF LIFE?

Subject: Geography, History and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competencies:

- To understand the organization of a society in its territory
- To interpret change in a society and its territory

Material: fact sheets.

A way of life specific to each First Nation

The First Nations' way of life underwent great upheaval with the arrival of the Europeans. The Aboriginal peoples had always been divided into three groups: nomadic, semi-sedentary, and sedentary. Most of the Algonquian people, such as the Cree, the Innu, the Naskapi and the Atikamekw, were nomadic. Hunters, fishers and gatherers, they followed the migration of game animals and lived in temporary dwellings like wigwams. The semi-sedentary peoples, such as the Abenaki, the Mi'kmaq and the Maliseet, grew some crops, hunted and fished. They would establish a village for two years, where they lived in longhouses. The Iroquois peoples, the Huron-Wendat and the Mohawk for example, were sedentary. Their way of life allowed them to grow crops (corn, beans, squash and pumpkins) in large gardens. They lived in longhouses that could accommodate 10 to 25 families.

From the 17th century to the 19th century, the nomadic and semi-sedentary Aboriginal peoples gradually became more and more sedentary. Their entire way of life changed—housing, food, customs, clothing, tools, transportation methods, health, education and beliefs. These changes affected even the sedentary peoples. The First Nations became more and more dependent on trade and thus moved about their territories to follow the development of trading centres.



Step 1:

The first part of this activity involves reading about the organization of a society on its territory and can be carried out independently from step 2.

Divide the class into 3 groups (teams): sedentary, semi-sedentary and nomadic. Tell the students they must guess which group they belong to and which group the other students belong to.

Give each team a fact sheet about its group (one copy per student). This sheet gives the key characteristics of the group's way of life. The students on each team talk together to determine what group they belong to. Each team stays well out of earshot of the others in order to keep their identity secret.

The students come back together as a class but stay with their own teams. The three groups speak with one another and ask questions to determine what groups the other teams belong to. The teacher can assist them in formulating their questions. Examples of questions include: What do you eat? Why do you move about your territory? What do you do in the winter? What crops do you grow? Where do you live? What do you wear? What animals do you hunt? What language do you speak?

When one team thinks they know what group another team belongs to, they ask the teacher for permission to speak. The team then explains why it thinks a team belongs to a certain group. The activity continues until all the groups are identified.

Step 2:

Give each team an information sheet about the group it represents (one copy per student). This sheet presents the characteristics of the group's way of life today, with the emphasis on activities specific to that way of life. The members of the team talk together to guess what group they belong to (sedentary, semi-sedentary or nomadic). Each team stays well out of earshot of the others in order to keep their identity secret.

The students come back together as a class but stay with their own teams. They explain their contemporary way of life to the other students. They must also state four major changes that occurred in their way of life and explain what those changes involved.

The students will see that all groups have become sedentary and that the way of life today of Aboriginal people is similar to that of the non-Aboriginal population even though each First Nation remains profoundly imbued with its own culture and traditions.

IN NEW FRANCE

Subject: Geography, History and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competencies :

- To understand the organization of a society in its territory
- To interpret change in a society and its territory

Material: fact sheets.

From yesterday to today

When Champlain and the European settlers reached Quebec, they were greeted by Native peoples who offered them shelter and advice on how to fare in this new environment.

Without this, these early French settlers would have never survived their first winters. At first, they tried to live like they were still in France, but soon came to the realization that they had to adopt Native ways of life, more attuned to the climate and environmental conditions of the place they called Nouvelle-France (New France). They learned to hunt, fish and trap, adopted Native dress and boats, and learned how to make moccasins, snowshoes and canoes. They also acquired some knowledge of Native medicine which helped them develop an important trade in plant products such as pine resin

and ginseng, and derived products such as maple syrup. The fur trade with Native peoples was also one of the greatest sources of income for the colony.

In 1759, New France fell to the English. The Native lifestyle was gradually abandoned for a more European way of life, erroneously thought to be more civilized. As the population of European descent grew, Natives became a minority and were, in most cases, forced to adopt the ways of the white majority.

The following role play will give students a better understanding of the changes that contributed to the evolution of the way of life of Quebec society.

Assign each student a role as a father, mother, daughter or son living in New France. Each role should have the same number of students playing it. If that is not the case, reduce the number of child roles. You will make up European settler families and Native families.

Ask each student to become their character and take half an hour to jot down or draw the following aspects of his or her life:

- Work and responsibilities (e.g. a father who is a *coureur des bois*)
- Chores or work inside and outside the home
- What he or she learnt from Native peoples
- What he or she does for entertainment
- Other details like work tools, food, clothing, etc.

When the allotted time is up, ask the students with the same roles to gather together and share information on their lifestyle in New France. Beginning with the fathers, a student designated by their group stands up in front of the class and describes that role.

Students then have to form families with a father, mother, son and daughter (or one child). The families now live in our time. Each student must think about what has changed in his or her character's way of life.

The role play then begins. One after the other, the families will introduce themselves and give an account of the changes they've experienced since the New-France era. The presentation is to take the form of casual conversations between family members during an everyday activity, such as preparing a meal or getting ready for work or school.

At the end of this activity, ask students if they found it hard to imagine how people used to live in those days, and how they interpret these changes in the way of life. Also ask them how they picture the way of life 50 years from now.



THE FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC

Subject: Geography, History and Citizenship Education

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competencies:

- To understand the organization of a society in its territory
- To be open to the diversity of societies and their territories

Materials: a large laminated relief map of Quebec, 10 red stickers, 10 label stickers with the name of a First Nation on each one, a paper headband for each student, quiz questions written on index cards, coloured markers and dice.

Meet the neighbours

First Nations greatly contribute to the rich cultural diversity of Quebec. Whether in Quebec or in Canada, First Nations do not constitute a homogenous group; they each have their own culture, history and distinct language. The 10 First Nations of Quebec are: the Abenaki, whose communities, Odanak and Wôlinak, are on the southern banks of the St. Lawrence River; the Algonquin, whose communities are in the Outaouais and Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions; the Atikamekw, whose communities, Manawan, Opitciwan and Wemotaci, are in Lanaudière and Haute-Mauricie; the Cree, with nine communities in the James Bay region; the Huron-Wendat, whose only community in Canada is Wendake, near Quebec City; the Maliseet, who live in northern Gaspésie; the Mi'kmaq, spread over southern Gaspésie in the communities of Listuguj, Gespeg and Gesgapegiag; the Mohawk, the largest First Nation in Quebec in terms of population, with the communities of Kahnawake, Akwesasne and Kanesatake; the Innu, living in communities in the Côte-Nord and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean regions; and the Naskapi, living in Kawawachikamach in Nunavik.

Hang up the laminated map of Quebec. The map must show relief, vegetation and hydrography and, if possible, having nothing else on it but the 10 red stickers representing the First Nations (positions may be approximate for Nations with more communities and spread over vast territories).

Make 10 teams and give each one a label sticker bearing the name of the First Nation it represents. Give each team member a headband. Ask the students to use the markers to decorate their headbands with the colours of the First Nation they represent. Team members may decide to use a common drawing or symbol, e.g.: a caribou for the Innu nation or a turtle for the Mohawk nation. Give students 15 minutes to carry out this step.

Students must place the label sticker with the First Nation name on the map of Quebec next to a red sticker. Proceed from north to south and west to east.

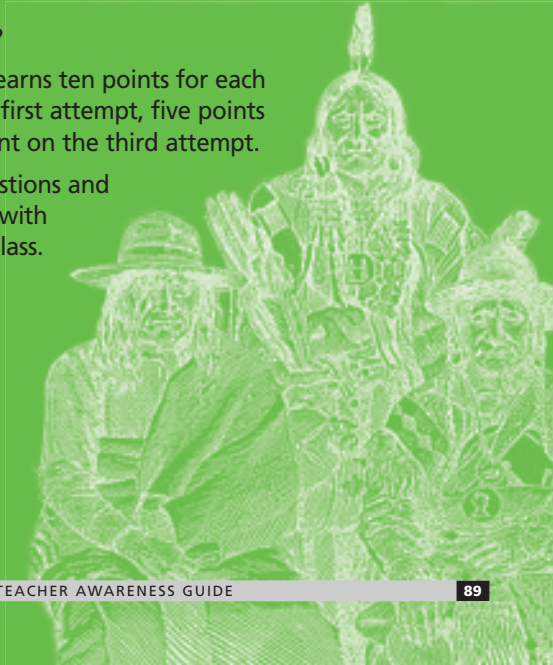
When all the First Nations have been correctly identified on the map, each member of each team must answer at least one question on the characteristics of the First Nation represented. Other teams ask the questions. Team turn can be decided by having a representative of each throw the dice.

Examples of questions:

- To which cultural group does your First Nation belong?
- How many people are there in your First Nation?
- What are the names of your First Nation's communities?
 - In what administrative region(s) are these communities found?
- What is your ancestral language?
- What are the economic resources?

The scoring is as follows. The team earns ten points for each question answered correctly on the first attempt, five points on the second attempt and one point on the third attempt.

The teacher sets the number of questions and the level of difficulty in accordance with what the students have learned in class.



AS THE SEASONS CHANGE

Subject: Visual Arts

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To produce individual works in the visual arts
- To produce media works in the visual arts

Materials: markers, coloured pencils or crayons, pastels, poster paint, drawing paper.

In harmony with nature

First Nations see the cycle of the seasons, like all natural cycles, as a four-part circular movement. The cycle of the seasons is divided into four periods, each with its own symbol. Each season has its own colour—green for spring, yellow for summer, red for fall and blue for winter. Spring, which corresponds to childhood, symbolizes rebirth and the bursting forth of new life. Summer, a time for growth and action, corresponds to adulthood. Fall symbolizes maturity and reaping the harvest of one's efforts. Winter, when nature rests, is a time to pause in order to better prepare for rebirth.

For the Algonquin people, there are six seasons. The two additional ones are *sigôn*, which is pre-spring, and *tagwâwin*, which is the season between summer and the falling of the autumn leaves.

The vernal and autumn equinoxes signal the beginning of spring and fall, while the summer and winter solstices mark the beginning of their respective seasons. These are authentic moments of transformation for human beings who, in keeping with Aboriginal beliefs, must harmonize their lives with the cycles of nature.

Traditionally, the First Nations' way of life moved in harmony with nature and the cycle of the seasons. As the season changed, so did their dwellings, clothing, food and everyday objects. Some traditional First Nations activities, including hunting, fishing and trapping, still follow the rhythm of the seasons.



On the board, draw a wheel divided into four equal parts. Beginning with the top right quadrant, write down the names of the seasons in First Nations' order: spring, summer, fall and winter. Explain the meaning and symbolism of the seasons for the First Nations.

This exercise can also be carried out using the six Algonquin seasons: sigôn (running of the maple syrup in late March), minokamin (spring), nibîn (summer), tagwâwin (before the leaves change colour), pitici pibôn (after the falling of the leaves), pibôn (winter).

Ask the students to suggest characteristics, activities and objects for each season.

Give each student a sheet of paper and ask them to divide it into four equal parts.

You can ask students in Cycles 2 and 3 to draw a wheel divided into four equal parts.

In each quadrant of the sheet or wheel, have the students draw a scene, object or activity related to the particular season. They must follow the order given above (spring, summer, fall, winter).

Ask the students to use shades of the particular season's colour for their drawings: green for spring, yellow for summer, red for fall and blue for winter. They could also use white, red, yellow and black, the colours of the medicine wheel.

The students could use different types of media to do their drawings, depending on the year they are in. The students have 45 minutes to do their drawings.

TRICKSTER'S MASK

Subject: Visual Arts

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To produce individual works in the visual arts
- To produce media works in the visual arts
- To appreciate works of art, traditional artistic objects, media images, personal productions and those of classmates

Materials: cardboard, feathers, different colours of felt, fake fur, natural, decorative items (leaves, lichen, branches, flowers, etc.), recycled objects and other decorative elements, glue, scissors, adhesive tape, poster paint, paint brushes, water, long rubber bands and paper.

On your mask, get set, go!

Among First Nations, masks have a particular symbolic significance in traditional rituals. The most famous masks in Quebec are those of the False Face Society of the Iroquois, known for their power to transform the wearer into a medicine man or shaman. Only those who were called by a spirit in a dream were allowed to wear these masks.

Carved into a specially chosen living tree, the masks were painted and decorated with objects, including locks of hair. The masks sometimes looked funny or terrifying because of their characteristically deformed and exaggerated facial features. Their tortured expressions represented in some way the death of the tree in

which they had been carved. These masks were considered powerful and were treated with respect. They were fed corn porridge, and tobacco was burned in their honour.

The masks of the False Face Society are genuine works of art that are the inspiration for this creative, in-class activity. However, their sacred nature requires that the activity be adapted by having students make masks that resemble clever and mischievous pranksters known as "Tricksters" among First Nations peoples. These pranksters play tricks on humans, and appear in the form of people or animals such as the coyote, crow, wolverine, deer or racoon.

Explain that the goal of the activity is to create a Trickster's mask, either a person or an animal, inspired by the False Faces.

Explain what the "Trickster" is in Aboriginal culture. The Trickster's mask has the power to transform them into pranksters, like the masks of the False Face society have the power to transform the wearer into a medicine man or shaman.

Have each student take a piece of paper and, by jotting down notes or making drawings, decide:

- If their Trickster is human or an animal. If it is an animal, which one?
- Why is it a Trickster? What trick does it play on humans?
- What is the shape of its nose, the expression in its eyes, of its mouth?

Remind students that the facial features must be deformed and exaggerated.

To make their mask, the students must follow these steps:

- On a piece of cardboard, draw a large oval shape for the face and then cut it out.
- Make two 2-cm slits at the top and two more at the bottom of the face, this creates tabs that, when folded back, will give volume to the mask. Tape the tabs together.
- Make two holes, 6 mm from the edge of each side of the mask.
- Draw the eyes and cut them out so that the person wearing the mask can see through them properly.
- Draw the nose and the mouth.
- Paste different decorative elements on the face to accentuate the exaggerated shape of the nose and mouth.
- Use leaves, fake fur and felt to simulate the Trickster's fur or hair.
- Finish decorating with paint and other materials to accentuate the Trickster's expression.
- Let the face dry.
- Thread the rubber band through the holes on the sides and make knots to hold it in place.



Ask the students to wear their mask and present it to the class by explaining which Trickster their mask represents. This activity is also one of the preparatory steps for the drama activity "Trickster's Trick."

HOOP DANCE

Subject: Dance

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To invent dances
- To interpret dances
- To appreciate choreographic works, personal productions and those of classmates

Materials: at least three hoops per student.

Understanding the spirit of the pow wow

The hoop dance is originally from the Lakota Nation in Arizona. It was a traditional method of asking the Spirits for healing. In Quebec, hoop dances can be seen mainly at pow wows and in conjunction with other First Nations cultural events such as drum chants, craft exhibitions and traditional meals.

A dancer can use up to twelve hoops in one dance, creating figures representing animals, plants and the Great Spirit, the *Manitou*. In the olden days, only shamans had the power to perform this dance during which they made contact with the spirits of the figures created by their hoops, eagle, hummingbird, bear, snake, caterpillar, flower, etc., and usually ending with the Great Spirit. They danced to the rhythm of drums, echoing the heartbeats of Mother Earth.

With colonization, this ritual was associated with witchcraft, banned and gradually forgotten. Although shamanism continued to be demonized, the hoop dance reappeared as a folkloric element, tolerated by government. From that time on, women and children were allowed to perform the hoop dance and, today, it is a major attraction at Native festivals and cultural events.



Before beginning this activity, watch some videos of this very special dance. They can be easily found on the Internet.

Tell the students the story behind the dance and the symbolism of the animal and plant figures created by the dancer, using the hoops. For example, the eagle is a messenger of freedom, as it flies the highest; the bear represents strength and wisdom; the butterfly is a symbol of hope and change; and the hummingbird represents beauty.

You can show students what a hoop dance looks like, to give them a general idea. Ask them to choose an animal to create with the hoops. The eagle and the hummingbird are the two easiest figures to make.

Choose a piece of background music to which students can practice their chosen figures in their own way.

The main thing is for them to have fun while discovering all the figures they can make with the hoops.

The only proviso is that they have to keep the beat!

Variation: Have the students work in pairs or teams to invent choreographies.

Ask students to watch the dances performed by their classmates and call out the animal or plant figure they think the dancer is making.

THE MUSIC OF NATURE

Subject: Music

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competencies:

- To invent vocal or instrumental pieces
- To interpret musical pieces
- To appreciate musical works, personal productions and those of classmates

Materials: sheets of paper with the names and/or photos of Aboriginal musical instruments on them, the names and photos of objects from nature (or the objects themselves) used to make Native musical instruments, Native musical instruments.

Nature as a source of inspiration

Traditional Native musical instruments are made from materials found in nature.

Frame drums are traditionally made with deer hide and a wooden (birch) frame. They are often ornamented with wood, bone or metal bells. The drum sticks are also made from wood and rawhide. Porcupine quills may be used to give different sounds to the drum. Some percussion instruments, the clapper for instance, are made from birch bark or ash bark.

Rattles are made using antlers, turtle shells or dried squash filled with seeds, corn grains or pebbles.

Bells can be made of animal hooves, but are now more and more often made of copper and tin.

Wind instruments such as flutes and whistles are made from wood, reeds, clay or bone.

Give each student a sheet with the names and/or photos of 10 Aboriginal musical instruments arranged in a column. The information can vary in form, depending on the cycle. For Cycle 1 students, it is very important to have a photo of the instrument.

The sheet provides space beside the name of each instrument where the students can write down the names of several objects from nature that can be used to make the instrument.

For Cycle 1 students, you can adapt the exercise by providing, on the same sheet, the name and photo of the instrument in one column and the names and photos of objects from nature in another. The students can then match the object(s) with the right instrument(s).

Real objects from nature can also be put on a table at the front of the classroom to guide the students in

giving their answers. These objects can include, without being limited to, pieces of wood, branches, dried bones, animal hides, dried squash, corn grains and tree bark.

You can decide how much time the students will have to carry out this activity. When the time is up, the students can, after raising their hands or being asked by the teacher, say what objects from nature they think are used to make each of these instruments.



As a follow-up activity, have the students play a piece using conventional musical

instruments along with some of these natural objects or Aboriginal musical instruments. Give each student an opportunity to experience, first-hand, the musical sounds created by these objects from nature and to invent musical pieces.

KEEPING TIME TO THE DRUMBEAT

Subject: Music

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competency:

- To appreciate musical works, personal productions and those of classmates

Materials: photos of various First Nations musical instruments including drums, rattles, and flutes, stringed instruments and audio recordings of the instruments being played (if available), sheets of paper and pencils.

A specific style of music

Although Aboriginal languages do not have a word for “music,” the First Nations have different cultural traditions which are reflected in their variety of musical instruments and genres.

Contrary to what we see in non-Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal people do not consider music as a separate activity but rather as one that forms an integral part of the daily life, beliefs and spiritual practices of their communities.

Traditional Aboriginal music is often divided into two categories: social music and ceremonial music.

Social music consists mainly of songs, accompanied by drums and rattles, which are performed in conjunction with dances at celebrations or gatherings.

Ceremonial music is also primarily vocal, accompanied by percussion instruments.

Aboriginal musical instruments are generally classified as follows: membranophones (drums), idiophones (instruments made of wood, metal, stone and plants, rattles for instance, that produce sound by the vibration of their own primary material), and to a lesser extent, aerophones (flutes, whistles and flageolets) and chordophones (violins).

Knowing what distinguishes each category of musical instrument is the prerequisite for this exercise. If the students have not learnt this yet, introduce the exercise by explaining, with the help of pictures and sound, the following categories: membranophones, idiophones, aerophones and chordophones.

Have each student take a sheet of paper and write down the four categories of musical instruments — membranophones, idiophones, aerophones and chordophones. On the classroom screen, project the photos of various First Nations musical instruments. The photos should include the names of the instruments and they should be accompanied by an audio recording. Show each photo for no more than 20 seconds and have the students write the name of the instrument under its category.

After the exercise is completed, show a new series of photos.

Ask the students to tell you the category under which they classified each instrument shown and explain why (e.g., the drum is a membranophone because it is made from stretched animal hide).



PENTATHLON

Subject: *Physical Education and Health*

Level: *Cycles 1 to 3*

Competency:

- *To perform movement skills in different physical activity settings*

Materials: *a bench, balls, hoops and skipping ropes.*

Demanding physical activities

There aren't many First Nations board games but, if you're looking for outdoor games and games that require dexterity, agility, strength and speed, there's a wealth of choice! Many First Nations games help to develop certain skills, primarily those required for hunting and fishing. These games are generally both competitive and recreational.

The First Nations have given us a plethora of games such as snowsnake, lacrosse, bone and toggle, shinny, cup and ball, doubleball, and archery, just to name a few. In short, games that keep you physically fit!



For this activity, you need to set up a general strength training circuit. The five exercises are designed to build up muscles!

In the gym, set up five exercise stations, slightly apart, and divide the students into equal-sized groups, one at each station.

Exercise station 1: Jumping over the bench. The student jumps from one side of the bench to the other, using his or her hands as support on the bench. Twenty seconds for each student.

Exercise station 2: Wheelbarrow game. One student supports himself or herself on his or her hands while a teammate holds his or her legs. They go ten metres and then switch positions to return.

Exercise station 3: Skipping rope. Students skip as fast as possible for 20 seconds.

Exercise station 4: Jumping inside hoops. A series of hoops is laid out on the ground and students must jump, both feet together, from one hoop to the next. The series of hoops could also be laid out to form a path.

Exercise station 5: Throwing and catching the ball. Throw chest passes to teammates.

Give the start signal. After 20 to 30 seconds at each exercise station, depending on the student's physical condition, allow some time for the student to move on to the next station. Continue until all the students have completed the circuit. Allow five minutes of rest and start again. Depending on the general physical fitness level of your students, you could have them complete three or four circuits.

Variation: Ask the students to create new exercise stations. They could also set goals for themselves. Ask them to name the parts of the body targeted by each exercise.

SHAWL DANCE

Subject: *Physical Education and Health*

Materials: *two sheets and a ball.*

Level: *Cycles 1 to 3*

Competency:

- *To interact with others in different physical activity settings*
-

The fancy shawl dance

The lively fancy shawl dance is a favourite at pow-wows. It demonstrates feminine grace, endurance and athletic skills.

The regalia for this dance include a shawl, a ceremonial dress down to the knees, leggings, beaded moccasins and various pieces of jewellery.

During a performance, the dancer kicks in the air, spins and executes a series of rapid movements. Then, she unfolds her shawl and holds it by its two ends, imitating a butterfly.

The aim of this activity is to develop coordination and cooperation among students.

Form two teams. The members of each team position themselves at equal distances around their sheet and open it to the maximum.

The students have to bounce the ball from one sheet to another. Players must cooperate with their own teammates and with the other team and make as many passes as possible.

If the class is large, increase the number of teams and sets of materials.

Explain to the students that this game encourages moving in unison, using physical, visual and verbal communication strategies.



HEALTH MASCOTS

Subject: *Physical Education and Health*

Materials: *coloured pencils and paper.*

Level: *Cycles 1 to 3*

Competency:

- *To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle*

Health, our most precious possession

Changes in the ways of life of the First Nations over the past decades have had a dramatic impact on their communities. Health problems abound. Although the incidence of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis has remained stable since the 1980s, First Nations now suffer extensively from the ills of modern society — addiction, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity — and high suicide rates.

While the situation in certain communities is improving, in others, it is worsening, aggravated by the

lack of resources and health care services. While certain communities have taken steps, primarily preventive, to alleviate health problems, the fact is that living conditions in many First Nations communities remain well below the national standard due to their remoteness and lower income the consequences of which are poorer housing, lack of access to medical care, less promotion of healthy lifestyles and, ultimately, lower life expectancy.

The objective of this activity is to encourage students to find their own source of inspiration to develop healthy habits.

Ask each student to imagine a mascot that represents healthiness. It may be an animal, vegetable, fruit or imaginary character. What is important here is that the mascot has characteristics that the student believes are representative of good health.

For example, the mascot could have well-developed muscles, pockets full of fruit, be dressed in sports clothing, have a smile on its face, and so forth.

Ask students to produce a 6-frame comic strip based on their normal routine and showing the challenges that their mascots must face, during even during the most mundane moments of the day.

For example, the mascot wakes up five minutes earlier to do stretching exercises before breakfast, tries to eat at least five different fruits and vegetables during the day, and decides to walk more

and to take part in a physical activity rather than sit watching television.

While the students are drawing their comic strips, walk around and help those who are struggling to find inspiration.

Drawing the comic strip could also be assigned as homework. Once all have finished their comic strips, ask the students to stick them up on the wall. Then ask each one to choose the physical exercise or healthy habit practiced by their own mascot that they are sure they can incorporate into their routines every day.

All you have left to do is encourage each student to emulate his or her mascot in meeting that challenge.



LAST NIGHT I DREAMT

Subject: Ethics and Religious Culture

Level: Cycles 2 and 3

Competency:

- To reflect on ethical questions

Materials: markers, coloured pencils or crayons, pastels, poster paint, feathers, card stock, scissors, small hoops, crepe paper, and so forth.

The dream catcher

The dream catcher is a well-known Aboriginal work of art. It consists of a web stretched inside a ring decorated with feathers and stones. People hang it in their bedrooms, in a place where it can catch the first rays of the morning light. The dream catcher filters their dreams, holding nightmares prisoner like insects in a spider's web. Good dreams find their way to the stone in the centre of the net; when night comes, they slide over the web and are freed by the feathers that decorate the ring. In some dream catchers, the stones are ornamental and the good dreams are released from the opening in the middle of the web.

There are several legends that recount the origin of the dream catcher, but they all share a common element, the weaving of a spider web.

For this dream catcher activity, we were inspired by human rights, and two international instruments in particular — the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Each of these instruments identifies fundamental rights:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Survival rights
- Protection rights
- Development rights
- Participation rights

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

- Right to the land and its resources
- Right to a healthy environment
- Right to education, culture and language
- Right to economic, social and cultural development
- Right to dignity, freedom from war and poverty, respect; consent and consultation

The objective of this activity is to get students to reflect on the issue of rights and to see parallels between the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Child-friendly versions of these can be easily found on the Internet.

After having identified, explored and, above all, explained the rights enshrined in these two international instruments, ask the students if they feel that all the children in the world should have the same rights. Get them to focus on the situation in Canada and then in Quebec.

Pair the students up and explain that each team will make a dream catcher that has at its centre a right which the students would like to see applied to a greater extent.

The teacher helps the students find two articles in the UNCRC and the UNDRIP that refer to the same right and asks them reflect on and then draw what this right represents and means to them.



The students then create a mobile representing a dream catcher. They substitute their drawings for the spider web.

The students then present their creations to their classmates and explain why they chose this particular right and the drawing they made to represent it. The students then hang their dream catchers in a prominent place in the classroom.

JUNE 21ST

Subject: Ethics and Religious Culture

Materials: a lively imagination!

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competency:

- To engage in dialogue
-

National Aboriginal Day

Since 1996, June 21st has been set aside to honour the Native peoples of Canada and highlight their invaluable contribution to Canadian society. This date was specifically chosen because it is the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, a sacred day on which a large number of Native celebrations and cultural gatherings takes place. It is therefore an ideal moment to discover cultural aspects of the First Nations of Quebec that are still not well known.

In 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood, now known as the Assembly of First Nations, first launched the campaign to have June 21 recognized as a day of solidarity with Native peoples. It took fourteen years for this effort to bear fruit.

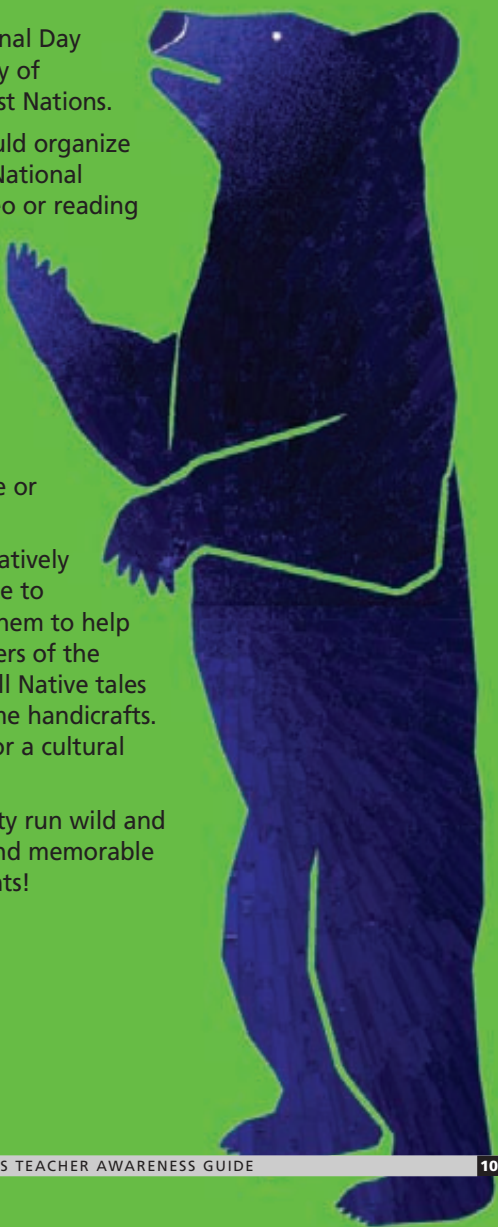
Today, National Aboriginal Day has taken its place among the great celebrations like Saint-Jean-Baptiste (June 24), Canadian Multiculturalism Day (June 27) and Canada Day (July 1).

The objective of National Aboriginal Day activities is to present the diversity of Native cultures and meet with First Nations.

You have several options. You could organize a classroom activity to celebrate National Aboriginal Day by showing a video or reading a tale. You could also invite a First Nations representative or Elder to present a cultural aspect of his or her community. You could, along with another teacher, organize an "Olympiad" in which students participate and compete in Native games (often outdoor activities) such as lacrosse or snowsnake.

If there is a Native community relatively close to your school, don't hesitate to contact the Band Council to ask them to help organize a meeting with the Elders of the community who would love to tell Native tales to the children or teach them some handicrafts. If the community has a museum or a cultural centre, you could all pay a visit.

Let your imagination and creativity run wild and make this a wonderfully happy and memorable day for both you and your students!



TALKING STICK

Subject: All (review)

Level: Cycles 1 to 3

Competency:

- To use information
- To communicate appropriately in all subjects

Materials: a talking stick, a feather, etc.

The speaker and the keepers of silence

The Elders used to use a talking stick or an eagle feather at decision circles where they discussed important issues in the community. The person holding the talking stick or eagle feather was the only person who had the right to speak and, when finished, had to pass the talking stick to the next person who wanted to speak. After all had expressed themselves, the Chief took the talking stick, asked another question and handed the talking stick or feather to someone, thus beginning a new round. Nowadays, the decision circles have been replaced by Band Councils but the tradition is still remembered.

The talking stick is usually made from a straight tree branch and decorated with beads, feathers, leather, fur, claws, and so on. It symbolizes harmony and sharing.

The ceremonial aspect of this activity teaches students to listen to their classmates and not interrupt. By respecting the speaking time of a classmate, the other students become the keepers of silence, another important role.

This activity can take place at the end of a lesson as a way to review.

Gather the students in a circle.

The teacher asks a question.

The first student to raise his or her hand takes the talking stick.

This student is now able to speak and answer the question. If the

answer is not correct, the student passes the talking stick to another

student who tries to answer the same question. If the answer

is correct, the student can ask another question and the first

person to raise his or her hand is given the talking stick. The process

is repeated if that person answers correctly. Otherwise the talking

stick is returned to the student who asked the question. That

student may choose to change the question or stay with the

same question. The only proviso is that the student must know the answer to his or her own question; otherwise the teacher may take the talking stick from that student and he or she will not be allowed to answer the next question.

The aim of the game is to get the talking stick as many times as possible and ask difficult questions to which you are sure you have the right answer!

Questions may be in multiple-choice, closed, open-ended, or true-or-false format.

Those who speak when they don't have the talking stick will not be allowed to answer the next question.

NOTES

Answer for activity on pages 36-37:

Memengwe. In Algonquin, memengwe means butterfly.



Mikinak

Mikinak is the result of an agreement between the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). Alarmed by the adjustment difficulties First Nations youth encounter when transitioning from the First Nations to the Quebec school system, and by the particularly high dropout rate among this student population, these three agencies have decided to implement measures to raise awareness among public elementary school teachers to the realities of First Nations children in Quebec. Indeed, in realizing the lack of information for school staff about the culture and worldview of First Nations, and noting an academic success rate generally lower than that of other students in the Quebec school system, the FNEC, AANDC and the MELS jointly decided to give teachers a tool to better accommodate, accompany, guide and support these students in their educational experience.

