

EDCP 333 – 301
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Indigenous Peoples and Worldviews in Social Studies Education

Overview

The curriculum resources that I have put together are intended for use for teaching about Indigenous peoples and worldviews in social studies education. In social studies, this can be a contentious topic and has posed some major issues for educators. For instance, in order to teach Indigenous histories, educators must acknowledge and teach the historical injustices Canada has carried out against Indigenous peoples. This goes against the traditional nation-building, good citizen building narrative that the social studies curriculum has historically operated within. For some educators, integrating Indigenous worldviews into their practice, such as through the First Peoples Principles of Learning, could disrupt the traditional content that they teach. Furthermore, this topic can be controversial for social studies educators, particularly white teachers, because it forces them to confront their own unconscious biases and prejudices about Indigenous peoples. Many people, teachers included, are uncomfortable with taking on this difficult process, and instead choose to avoid it altogether. Teaching about Indigenous topics can also be controversial for teachers because teachers can be fearful of misrepresenting Indigenous peoples or feel too unprepared to teach the material in an effective and meaningful way. For some teachers, it might feel safer to stick with what they are comfortable. However, this itself, is inherently problematic. It is crucial that teachers prioritize Indigenous peoples and worldviews in the social studies curriculum. In addition, I think that teachers should be actively engaged and involved with reconciliation and understand the responsibility of their role in education, which is such a crucial

component of this active process. I have compiled the resources below with this as a guiding philosophy to my own practice.

In the resources I selected, I tried to provide materials that I intend to use in my own teaching moving forward. I also tried to select a variety of mediums in order to allow for differences in lesson styles and to maximize student engagement. For instance, in my experience teaching so far, I found graphic novels to be an effective and accessible resource for students. Therefore, I included *7Generations*, which I had the opportunity to use in the classroom during my short practicum, and *Secret Path*. I also chose resources that I thought would be ideal for the realities of time constraints in the classroom. Visual mediums are great for maximizing content engagement with minimal time available. For example, I chose Kent Monkman's paintings and his short film *Sisters and Brothers* and Shane Koyczan's poem because they are all powerful resources for understanding residential schools and Canada's colonial legacy, but none of these resources would require multiple lessons to use effectively. I also chose some shorter books, such as *Indian Horse*, which could be used within the span of multiple lessons to a short unit. I wanted to provide resources that could realistically be used in the classroom, but that still engaged with the difficult realities of the Indigenous experience in Canada, such as the residential school system. Finally, I chose some aspirational documents to provide a contrast of hope to the future, as well as a way for students to consider what Indigenous peoples should be able to reasonably expect from Canada moving forward. For example, I chose the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the TRCC: Calls to Action documents. These are useful resources for teachers to use as a framework of purpose for teaching about Indigenous peoples and worldviews and also for students to engage critically with Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples in comparison to the expectations in these documents.

Curriculum Resources

Downie, G., & Lemire, J. (2016). *Secret Path*. Simon and Schuster.

This graphic novel and accompanying album from Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip follow the story of Chanie Wenjack, a twelve-year-old Anishinaabe boy who ran away from his residential school to try to get back home. He died a week later from hunger and exposure to the cold weather. The graphic novel is split into ten parts, with a song from the album accompanying each section of the novel. This multi-media project could be an engaging way for students to work with the difficult history and legacy of the residential school system. However, the graphic novel can also be used without the album if needed. This resource would be particularly useful in the grade 10 social studies curriculum. Teachers should consider amplifying Indigenous voices to tell Indigenous stories in addition to this source, given the fact that Gord Downie is not Indigenous.

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada. (2018). Retrieved December 10, 2020, from

<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/>

This website provides the online version of a series of atlases from Canadian Geographic. It is divided into four books – Truth and Reconciliation, First Nations, Inuit and Metis. The books are broken into sections that deal with a variety of topics around Indigenous culture and history. Each section is written by a different Indigenous author. This resource could be incredibly useful for teachers. A teacher could pick sections from the atlases for students to work with that supplement their lessons and fit within the grade level. Due to the variety of topics covered, these books could be used from grade 8 to 12 social studies classes.

Interactive Map | BC Treaty Commission. Retrieved December 10, 2020, from

<http://www.bctreaty.ca/map>

This website provides an interactive map that shows the various First Nations in British Columbia that are involved in the treaty process or have already signed a treaty. The map uses different coloured overlays to show the territory of the various nations. Furthermore, if you click on a specific nation, the website also provides information on what stage of the treaty process the nation is currently in. This is a useful resource for visual learners and allows students to explore and learn about the different territories in BC at their own pace. This could be used as a supplemental resource for students in a lesson on the treaty process, which would fit within the curriculum of social studies 10.

Joseph, B. (2018). *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality*. Indigenous Relations Press.

Bob Joseph is from the Gwawaenuk Nation. His book covers the Indian Act in a way that is designed to help people understand its damaging legacy to help guide readers forward as part of the reconciliation process. I think that this is an important book for teachers to read if they want to properly teach about Indigenous peoples and worldviews. Educators should be actively engaged with reconciliation if they intend to teach about Indigenous peoples and histories in a meaningful and impactful way. Understanding the Indian Act and its legacy is an important part of this process for teachers. This book could also be used for students to help them understand the Indian Act. The teacher could select specific passages for students to read to supplement lessons about the Indian Act in social studies 9 or 10.

Kent Monkman Painting. (2001-2020). Kent Monkman. Retrieved December 10, 2020, from <https://www.kentmonkman.com>

This website contains the works of the Cree artist Kent Monkman, ranging from 2001-2020. Monkman's work deals with topics such as the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, and

settler colonialism. They deconstruct the Canada's constructed national identity and position Indigenous peoples and worldviews as central. Monkman's paintings, such as "The Scoop" (2018), "The Scream" (2017), or "A Mother's Grief" (2017) could be used to allow students to explore Canada's role in the separation of Indigenous families through a powerful visual medium. Monkman deals with a variety of topics throughout Canadian and Indigenous history, so his paintings could be used from grade 9 to 12. However, teachers should be aware that the intense scenes in these paintings could be traumatic for some students.

King, T. (2012). *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. Doubleday Canada.

The Inconvenient Indian provides a critical history of Indigenous peoples in North America through Thomas King's distinctive humour. This book could provide students with an Indigenous perspective on historical events that are typically taught through the lens of government textbooks. Teachers could use the entire book or use selected chapters or excerpts to fit within specific topics, such as confederation in grade 9 or residential schools in grade 10 social studies. Furthermore, this book could be a beneficial source for students because it deals with difficult topics in a lighter tone than many other sources. If teachers are worried about using too much heavy material in class, this book provides a change in tone while still dealing critically with the difficult topics of Indigenous histories. There is also a discussion guide provided at the back of the book, which teachers could incorporate into their lessons. Thomas King is an American Canadian author of Cherokee descent.

Monkman, K. (2015). *Sisters & Brothers*. National Film Board. <https://www-nfb-ca.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/playlists/orange-shirt-day-edu/playback/#2>

This film from Kent Monkman uses editing and visuals to demonstrate the destructiveness of white settler colonialism on Indigenous peoples and their land. Monkman draws a comparison between the settlers' eradication of the plains bison to the destruction of Indigenous culture and families through the residential school system. At only three minutes long, this is an excellent film to use in class. In this short time, the film covers two important topics to Indigenous history – destruction of land and culture - and Canada's colonial past in a provocative way. This would fit particularly well within the curriculum of social studies 10 and one of its main themes - “historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada.”

Robertson, D. A., & Henderson, S. B. (2012). *7Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*. Portage and Main Press.

This graphic novel follows the story of Edwin and his journey to connect with his family's past. He is Plains Cree, and the book follows the various hardships his family have faced through the generations, such as warfare with the Blackfoot, the smallpox epidemic, residential schools, and depression and substance abuse. However, the book also focusses on the strength and healing that can be found for Indigenous peoples through reconnecting with their culture and family stories. This book is accessible for grade 9 and up and would be an engaging way to introduce students to some of the difficult events of Indigenous histories but also in an empowering way that focuses on the strength and resiliency of Indigenous peoples and culture.

David A. Robertson is a member of the Norway House Cree Nation.

Shane Koyczan. (2017, July 31). “*Inconvenient Skin*” by Shane Koyczan feat Tanya Tagaq and Kym Gouchie. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXTTTj1zYHQ&ab_channel=ShaneKoyczan

This poem was written for the 150th anniversary of Canada as a critique of Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples, current and historically. In this video, Shane Koyczan collaborated with Tanya Tagaq (an Inuk throat singer) and Kym Gouchie (a folk artist from the Lheidli T'enneh, Cree and Secwepemn Nations) and used artwork from the "Velvet Indians" exhibit at the Penticton Art Gallery. The combination of all these different mediums creates a powerful piece that deals with the legacy of cultural genocide and the inconsistency of Canada's inclusive identity when cast against its relationship to Indigenous peoples. This would be a great resource to use in the social studies classroom because it allows students to deal with these themes in a short but impactful video. *Inconvenient Skin* is a valuable resource for generating discussion around Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples through an engaging and unique combination of art forms.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. (2015).

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

These are the calls to action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015. It is divided into two main categories – legacy and reconciliation - and provides a large number of actions to take for dealing with each. The categories are broken into further sub-categories such as education, language and culture, and health. These calls to action are an important resource for teachers and for students. Teachers should read the TRC calls to action so that they can consider how to take meaningful action in the reconciliation process through their practice. Furthermore, this document could be used in higher level social studies classes as a way for students to contextualize what they have learned about Indigenous peoples and worldviews within the current reconciliation process. Students could examine different articles of the

document and assess why the TRC might have made this recommendation and to what extent that action would be impactful to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (2007). The United Nations.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

This document consists of 46 Articles pertaining to the rights of Indigenous peoples in any country on a variety of issues, such as land, culture and government relations. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2007 and by the BC provincial government in November 2019. This document could be used as a way for students to critically analyze Canada's relationship to Indigenous peoples. Students could be assigned different articles from the document and assess to what extent Canada is meeting the expected rights for Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, students could also analyze how Canada has historically taken these rights from Indigenous peoples. Also, since BC has adopted UNDRIP, students could also critically assess BC's relationship with Indigenous peoples and consider whether the provincial government is currently providing these rights. Given the legal language in the document, this resource would be best for students in grade 10 and above.

Vowel, C. (2016). *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis & Inuit Issues in Canada*.

Portage and Main Press.

Chelsea Vowel is a Metis teacher and scholar. Her book *Indigenous Writes* is a collection of essays divided into 5 sections around Indigenous issues in Canada – terminology of relationships, culture and identity, myth-busting, state violence and land, learning, law and treaties. This book is an excellent resource for teachers who want to engage with the reconciliation process and teach Indigenous material in a meaningful way. It is written based on

Vowel's own experiences as a teacher and in dealing with stereotypes and damaging viewpoints on Indigenous peoples. Teachers who want to confront their own unconscious biases and confront damaging beliefs about Indigenous peoples and worldviews should use this as a tool to improve their pedagogy on this topic.

Wagamese, R. (2012). *Indian Horse*. D & M Publishers.

Indian Horse follows the story of Saul Indian Horse, an Ojibway man, and his experiences in the residential school system in the 1960s and as a hockey player in a white-dominated sport. The novel deals with difficult themes, such as loss, racism and cultural genocide, but is written in language that is accessible to high school students. The novel is short enough (232 pages) that it could realistically be used in a longer unit that deals with residential schools and the Indigenous experience in Canada during the mid-20th century. This would be a great novel to use for grade 10 social studies because it explores the big idea that “historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.” Richard Wagamese was an Anishinaabe/Ojibwe author.