



Socially-based Curriculum Unit: Heightening Our Awareness of Canada's Native People

Unit Title: Heightening Our Awareness of Canada's Native People

Time Frame: 5 lessons

Unit Developer(s): Kim Driscoll

Developed for Course Name and Course Code: English, Grade 11, Workplace Preparation (ENG3E)

Strand(s) and Curriculum Learning Expectations Addressed:

Reading and Literature Studies Strand:

RLV.01E - Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of informational, graphic, and literary texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning

RL1.01E Read several different short, contemporary, student- and teacher-selected texts that come from diverse cultures and reflect a variety of perspectives on current issues, identifying specific purposes for reading

RL1.06E Analyse texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, or themes they explore, examining how various aspects of the texts contribute to the presentation or development of these elements

RL1.05E Extend understanding of both simple and complex texts by making connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights; other texts; and the world around them

RLV.02E - Recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning

RL2.03E Identify several different elements of style in both simple and complex texts and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance the effectiveness of the text

Writing Strand

WRV.01E Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience

WR1.02E Generate and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using several different strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate

WRV.02E Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, graphic, and literary forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience

WR2.02E Establish an identifiable voice in their writing, modifying language and tone to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing

WR2.05E Explain how their own beliefs, values, and experiences are revealed in their writing

WRV.03E 3. Use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively

Oral Communication Strand

OC1.07E Analyse both simple and complex oral texts, focusing on the ways in which they communicate information, ideas, issues, and themes and influence the listener's/viewer's response



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OC1.08E Identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in both simple and complex oral texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power

OC2.04E Use appropriate words, phrases, and terminology, and several different stylistic devices, to communicate their meaning and engage their intended audience

Media Studies Strand

MS1.02E Interpret simple and complex media texts, identifying and explaining the overt and implied messages they convey

MS1.03E Evaluate how effectively information, ideas, issues, and opinions are communicated in both simple and complex media texts and decide whether the texts achieve their intended purpose

MS1.04E Identify and explain different audience responses to selected media texts

MS1.05E Identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in both simple and complex media texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity

Desired Results

Unit Description:

This unit uses W.P. Kinsella's short story anthology *Dance Me Outside* for a comparison between story and film. Because of its very funny stories, written in an unconventional style, students engage quickly and like the characters immediately. Published in 1977, the literature lends itself not only to a study of the past and present treatment of Natives in Canada, but also to an understanding of the behaviour of non-Natives. As the topic of Natives is very rich, this unit may be expanded beyond this book and the 5 lessons provided here.

Enduring Understandings / Learning:

The big ideas that students will understand include: tolerance, awareness, and acceptance of Native culture.

The key knowledge concepts include:

- learning about different types of values and value systems as they apply to individuals and different cultures;
- learning more about the definitions of stereotypes, discrimination and racism as they apply to the stories studied;
- learning about standard and non-standard language usage and their place in different societies;
- differentiating between connotation and denotation.

Skills that the students will learn as a result of this unit include reading for meaning and analysis, and critical thinking skills.



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Assessment Tasks

Performance Tasks and Other Evidence That Will Demonstrate the Knowledge and Skills Acquired:

Students will write a personal essay on values. This should be assigned on the first day and then worked on each day over the course of the unit.

Students will answer questions, either orally or written, or a combination of the two, for at least 5 stories.

Students will discuss language effectiveness as it relates to themselves and the book.

Students will debate whether the movie is better than the book.

Assessment Criteria:

Rubrics and marking schemes are attached for the personal essay assignment and the debate assignment. The questions may be evaluated either orally, or written or a combination of the two. Similarly, parts of the Language Usage Worksheet (Appendix 5) may be evaluated in a variety of ways. It is reasonable to do a combination of each for a 5 day unit.

Unit Planning Notes

Prior Learning Necessary:

Students should have all the necessary prerequisites from at least English 2L.

Preparation Notes (if any):

The teacher and class will need copies of *Dance Me Outside* (Oberon, 1977).

The unit is self-contained, and while teachers who know a lot about Native culture will be able to enrich the discussion, the stories and their message will provide ample content for discussion and work. This unit is based only on the first 5 stories, but depending on the timing and the level of engagement by the students, this 16 story collection can easily be extended to a 4 week unit.



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Learning Plan

Lesson 1

Objective: To have students distinguish between different types of values and to identify those that matter to them

Format: This lesson should include either a teacher-led discussion, small group discussion or a Think/Pair/Share discussion based on the following questions:

- What are values?
- How do you get values?
- Can values change? Why? How?
- Are there different values for different cultures? Why? (e.g. why some cultures prefer male babies to female babies)

Students should spend some time brainstorming abstract values and concrete values.

Please see Appendix 1 - Values to have a better idea of the nature of the discussion and the direction in which it should or may go.

Following the discussion, a handout or board note of Appendix 1 should be given to students.

Finally, introduce the brief personal essay writing assignment which will have students focus on their own values. (Appendix 2 - Personal Essay Rubric)

Lesson 2

Review the previous lesson's discussion on values. Clarify any points.

Introduce the book by handing it out and having students "judge a book by its cover." Emphasize that it is a Canadian book written about Native Canadians. It is worthwhile to read the back of the book and to discuss some key statements such as, "Kinsella refuses to take a tragic (he would call it sentimental) view of Indian life, and "...it is the white man and his civilization that are seen to be absurd." Ask students if they have any preconceived notions of Natives or if they are aware of any stereotypes that exist about Natives. Once these two statements have been discussed and analyzed, the fact that Kinsella is a non-Native and the notion of *cultural appropriation* can be discussed.

Teacher reads aloud the first story in the *Dance Me Outside* anthology, "Illiana comes home"(15 pgs). Students work through questions.(Appendix 3 – Questions for Stories from *Dance Me Outside*)



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Students complete the Values Chart (Appendix 4). This chart identifies specific characters and requires the students to identify what each character values and why.

Lesson 3

Objective: To have students recognize the power of language in a variety of settings. Use Appendix 5 – Language Usage Worksheet for this lesson. Depending on the nature of the class, the discussion may be led by the teacher or the students may work in small groups or in pairs.

Teacher: In many ways this is a book that is not at all typical of books that you have more than likely read in your high school English classes so far. Why?

Students may make reference to the non-standard language usage. They might also make reference to the expletives and some of the sexual content.

The discussion should cover some of the following topics:

- the use of expletives and their effectiveness and/or offensiveness
- the appropriateness/inappropriateness of the sexual content
- Silas's effectiveness as a communicator
- the effectiveness of this book for grade 11s
- students' own language usage

Other aspects of language that may be discussed if deemed appropriate for the group include the following:

- Non-standard English is used by a lot of people.
- Everyone understands non-standard English; it's not necessarily bad. However, it doesn't follow the rules of grammar and sometimes listeners pass judgement on the speaker
- It's important to recognize that by using it, sometimes the speaker labels himself as uneducated or not caring about how he/she sounds.
- Typically, educated people do not use it especially when doing important political, societal, educational, religious, business and government work.

Other definitions that may be useful:

- Vernacular: the everyday language of people
- Dialect: the regional variety of language which is noted by pronunciation and grammar
Examples include: Canadian pronunciation of "about" which is distinct its American pronunciation, and Southern United States usage of "y'all".

Read second story in anthology, "Dance Me Outside" (8 pgs). Students complete the questions pertaining to



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that story in Appendices 3 and 4.

Lesson 4

Objective: To build on the lesson on language by making students recognize the power of individual words and short phrases, as well as behaviours and actions as they apply to particular groups of people.

*Because of the sensitive nature of this lesson, it is advisable to have a teacher-led discussion to avoid any conflict.

Teacher: What does it mean to be politically incorrect?
Hopefully, students are, to some extent, aware of what it means.

Definition of politically incorrect: Language or behaviour that is not offensive to particular racial, cultural or other identity groups.

Discuss other politically incorrect words, phrases and why they are unacceptable or not always the best choice of words to use. For example, squaw, retard, fag, etc. This discussion has the potential to lead into a solid conversation about stereotypes which are in *Dance Me Outside*.

Read third story in anthology "Horse Collars" (5 pgs). Students complete the questions pertaining to this story in Appendix 4 and then complete Appendix 6 - Examples of Political Incorrectness Worksheet.

Lesson 5

Dance Me Outside-The Movie

Introduce the 1995 movie (84 minutes) with the idea of showing half of the movie on one day, and the remaining half the next day. Let students know that the movie inspired the television series "The Rez".

Students should be given the Movie Analysis Worksheet (Appendix 7) and discuss the questions before viewing the movie.

After viewing, students should be prepared to answer how the movie "broke entirely new ground" (back cover of book).

Finally, students prepare for and debate whether the book is better than the movie. (Appendix 8)



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Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Values
- Appendix 2 - Personal Essay Rubric
- Appendix 3 - Question Sheet for Stories from *Dance Me Outside*
- Appendix 4 - Values Chart
- Appendix 5 - Language Usage Worksheet
- Appendix 6 - Examples of Political Incorrectness Worksheet
- Appendix 7 - Movie Analysis Worksheet
- Appendix 8 - Debate Assignment and Scoring Guide

Other Possible Course Applications

This unit is applicable to history courses that have a Native Studies component to them. It would need to be modified by giving even more of a social context and getting more specific about the different Native tribes that exist within Canada.