

A BLACKFOOT ABORIGINAL AND A CHINESE NEWCOMER
JOURNEY ACROSS THEIR SHARED HOME.

ELDER IN THE MAKING

Elder In The Making provides a powerful beginning for educators on the path to developing or deepening their understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ways of knowing and diverse perspectives.

The film follows two young urban dwellers, one a Blackfoot aboriginal named Cowboy and the other a Chinese Canadian newcomer named Chris, as they embark on a spiritual journey across traditional Blackfoot territory. Through thousands of years of ancient history, guided by the wisdom of modern day elders, they discover the beginnings of the long road to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people. The 95-minute film is composed of six episodes:

Silent X – 18:20 minutes

Westward Trek – 11:47 minutes

Sacred Ground – 21:48 minutes

Apocalypse – 11:45 minutes

A New Treaty – 13:58 minutes

Death and Renewal – 16:39 minutes

The “Director’s Notes” (Elder In The Making Transcript) are provided for additional information on each of the episodes.

Learning Guides for each of the film’s six episodes contain:

- Key Understandings
- Questions for Discussions
- Links to the Teacher Quality Standards (draft)
- Links to the Leadership Quality Standards (draft)
- Additional suggestions for activities to deepen understanding



ELDER IN THE MAKING

EPISODE 1 LEARNING GUIDE - SILENT X

VIDEO GUIDE

Episode 1 introduces us to Cowboy Smithx and Chris Hsiung. We learn about stereotypes, powwows and golf!

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

The learning guides are designed for use by educational stakeholders to support exploration and reflection of the perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. It is recommended that after viewing and discussing the entire video, deeper knowledge will be built through episode reviews utilizing the learning guides to support discussion.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- All people have similarities, which can help us understand each other.
- The cultural practices of indigenous people were deemed illegal, making it difficult for young people to learn about powwows, Sun Dance ceremonies and their cultural practices. Many indigenous people adopted alternative cultural practices like rodeo and golf.
- A stereotype is a widely held but oversimplified idea of a person or thing, often used to make quick judgements.
- Powwows are an opportunity to reconnect with the past through sharing teachings, language, stories and cultural practices. Non-indigenous participants are welcome to participate in powwows and indigenous cultural practices.
- Indigenous people have faced (and continue to face) many discriminatory practices.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How do you support student understanding of the similarities we have with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people?
- What might be the impact of never being allowed to engage in your sacred cultural traditions, rituals and ceremonies?
eg. faith, language, rituals?
- Might an accurate understanding of history contribute to breaking down stereotypes? What else might we do?
- How might you help students recognize how stereotypes lead to misunderstandings of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people?
- One example of how we might help students to understand more about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture could be to add traditional powwow dances to Phys. Ed classes. What kinds of cultural practices might you infuse in your program of studies
eg Math, Drama, Language Arts?
- What is the role of an elder in society? Are all elders aboriginal?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

You may wish to divide the participants into smaller groups and have each group discuss one or two questions and write their ideas on chart paper. A Walking Carousel then allows participants to move around reading and discussing the charts. They could also have sticky notes titled *I like, I wonder* and *I have*, to make comments on the discussion posters. Small group or partner sharing with a new group might follow to consolidate learning.

Examining Myths and Stereotypes of Indigenous People

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Examining-Myths-and-Stereotypes-on-Indigenous-People-Sept-2017.pdf>

Truth and Reconciliation What is it about? Canadian Teachers' Federation Resource

<https://publications.ctf-fce.ca/en/product-category/indigenous-education/>

LINKS TO THE TEACHER QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

5) A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

LINKS TO THE LEADERSHIP QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

Fostering Effective Relationships

1) A school leader fosters positive working relationships within the school community

Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

5) A school leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, for the benefit of all students, and supports the process of reconciliation



EPISODE 2 LEARNING GUIDE - WESTWARD TREK

VIDEO GUIDE

Episode 2 takes us back in time to 1874 and we learn about the extinction of the buffalo, the transcontinental railway, the Northwest Mounted Police and the signing of Treaty 7.

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

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KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- Indigenous people contributed to the settlement of Canada in a variety of ways, supporting settlers, fur traders, soldiers and law enforcement officials as colonization took place.
- Cree, Plains Nations and Métis were also encroaching on the land of the 5 Nations looking for dwindling buffalo. (The 5 Nations included the three bands: Nakoda Stoney, Tsu T'ina and the Blackfoot Confederacy which consisted of the Pikani, Kaini and Siksika.)
- The railway was an important intercoastal link that required surrendering land to the Crown, resulting in several individual treaties being signed with the British.
- Facing so many challenges (whiskey traders, Métis, white settlers) Chief Crowfoot wanted to ensure his people were protected and requested a meeting with the British, for all 5 Nations.
- In exchange for traditional land, the 5 Nations would receive land reserves, hunting rights, yearly payments in perpetuity, farm implements and education support.
- Treaty 7 was considered an honourable peace treaty between two equal nations.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Reflect on Chris Hsiung's comment "History is more about how we want to be seen today rather than how it really was. It is like our memory. We burnish the triumphant moments and hide the ugly ones."
- In entering a treaty with a more dominant culture what might you want to ensure were the protections being offered?
- How might communication challenges have impact and understandings of the treaties?
- How might we ensure student understanding of treaties and agreements with first nations people?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

As you engage in dialogue regarding the questions take this opportunity to review the following resources.

Transcripts of Treaties

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370373165583/1370373202340>

[Alberta Treaties Road Trip – 7 videos of 7 students' experiences](#)

ATA Education Is Our Buffalo

<http://learning.arpdc.ab.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=7>

You might use this in your teaching:

ARPDC First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Moodle Courses for Grades 1-12

<http://learning.arpdc.ab.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=7>

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LINKS TO THE LEADERSHIP QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

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ELDER IN THE MAKING

EPISODE 3 LEARNING GUIDE - SACRED GROUND

VIDEO GUIDE

Episode 3 takes us back 5,000 years and introduces us to some of the archeological, cultural and ecological stories of the area. There were 1500 nations living in this vast and diverse eco system, each with their own way of adapting to the land. The people interviewed illustrate the connections between place, people, stories and ceremonies. The past is ever present and traditions are important. Regardless of the diversity of the nations, all loved their children and respected all aspects of nature ensuring sustainability for future generations.

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

The learning guides are designed for use by educational stakeholders to support exploration and reflection of the perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. It is recommended that after viewing and discussing the entire video, deeper knowledge will be built through episode reviews utilizing the learning guides to support discussion.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- The archeology and artifacts help us to understand the diversity and complexity of life on the prairies.
- Indigenous peoples hold beliefs of connection and relationships with the land which differs from "ownership" beliefs of Europeans.
- There may be mistaken beliefs, through stereotypes, that fail to represent the complexity, diversity and governance of the various tribal peoples.
- Sacred rituals and ceremonies (like the Sun Dance) and protocols continue today.
- The Grasslands is a complex eco-system upon which indigenous people survived self-sufficiently for thousands of years.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Given the diverse views of land ownership how might this have impacted the Treaty agreement?
- How do the variety of nations and customs which existed challenge the stereotypical notion of an "Indian"?
- Understanding the diversity of the eco system helped the indigenous people to survive in this harsh climate. How might those understandings help future generations?
- One ceremony performed at the Sun Dance involves the transfer of sacred bundles of wisdom and stories. Only those who have accepted the responsibility to their community may become an Elder or Elder in the Making. Share reflections about similar practices that have impacted your life.
- Given that the buffalo was the staff of life, share your understanding of the phrase, "Education is our buffalo"?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following websites may be investigated in groups then shared in large group.

Our Way is a Valid Way

<http://learning.arpdc.ab.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=170>

Our Words, Our Ways

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615876/our-words-our-ways.pdf>

Education Is Our Buffalo ATA Resource

<http://learning.arpdc.ab.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=7>

These sites in Treaty 7 territory could be explored virtually by teachers or students.

Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park

<http://www.blackfootcrossing.ca/>

Writing On Stone Provincial Park

<http://www.albertaparks.ca/writing-on-stone/information-facilities/natural-cultural-heritage/>

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LINKS TO THE LEADERSHIP QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

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EPISODE 4 LEARNING GUIDE - APOCALYPSE

VIDEO GUIDE

In Episode 4 we learn how life changed for the indigenous people in this area. We learn about the extinction of the buffalo, the introduction of European diseases and the history of treaties.

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

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KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- There were many factors that played into the demise of First Nations societies, such as ecocide, the industrial revolution in Europe and the spread of disease.
- Early relationships between First Nations and Europeans were based on mutual supports and exchange.
- As the First Nations way of life was disappearing, it seemed necessary to reach an agreement with the Dominion of Canada, otherwise known as a treaty.
- The understanding of what making treaty meant to each group differed significantly.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How did the industrial revolution in Europe impact the buffalo population? How did the loss of the buffalo impact First Nations lives?
- Reflect upon the negative impacts if 90% of your community were to succumb to a new infectious disease. (education, culture, basic needs, family structures, your view to the future, etc.)
- How might communication challenges have contributed to misunderstandings in the treaty? Have you ever had a similar miscommunication experience? (eg. Realty purchase)
- How does the First Nation idea of making treaty differ from the European idea of treaty?
eg. Land ownership, appropriate supports, etc.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

You may wish to divide into smaller groups to investigate and share past and current contributions of indigenous people in Canada.
eg. medicine, arts, science, sports, culture

First Nation, Métis and Inuit Historical and Contemporary Contributions
<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/First-Nation-Métis-and-Inuit-Historical-and-Contemporary-Contributions-Sept-2017.pdf>

The demise of the cod fishing industry was referred to as a similar ecocide. What currently threatens our ecosystems? How might lessons from the past encourage us to protect our resources?

LINKS TO THE TEACHER QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

- 2) A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning.
Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
- 5) A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

LINKS TO THE LEADERSHIP QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

- 5) A school leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, for the benefit of all students, and supports the process of reconciliation.



EPISODE 5 LEARNING GUIDE - A BROKEN TREATY

VIDEO GUIDE

In Episode 5 you will learn about the impact of government policies in the areas of education, religion, language and ceremony. Residential school survivors tell their stories.

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

The learning guides are designed for use by educational stakeholders to support exploration and reflection of the perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. It is recommended that after viewing and discussing the entire video, deeper knowledge will be built through episode reviews utilizing the learning guides to support discussion.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- The practice of Industrial and Reformatory Schools was already established in Europe. The Government of John A. MacDonald brought Residential Schools to Canada to assimilate indigenous youth.
- Many of the First Nations beliefs, customs and practices were driven underground as they were outlawed.
- The Indian Act (1876) controlled every aspect of Indigenous life. While it has undergone many changes, it is still in effect today.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- As a parent how might your relationship with your child change if he/she was removed from your home at an early age and sent away to learn a different language and culture?
- Share your understanding about intergenerational trauma. How might this affect First Nations, Métis and Inuit students today?
- What are some of the holistic First Nations beliefs about the world that we might help students understand?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Brain Architecture Game

A game about the powerful role of relationships on early brain development.
dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com

The Brain Story

A video of how early experiences get built into our brains and bodies.
albertafamilywellness.org/what-we-know/the-brain-story

40 Developmental Assets

Review the list to determine which assets could not have been fostered in a residential school setting.
greatkidsallencounty.org/resources/need-a-copy-of-the-40-developmental-assets/

Intergenerational Trauma

beta.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health-advisor/the-intergenerational-trauma-of-first-nations-still-runs-deep/article23013789/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&

Where else in the world are there examples of intergenerational trauma? (poverty, abuse, famine, holocaust survivors)

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EPISODE 6 LEARNING GUIDE - *DEATH & RENEWAL*

VIDEO GUIDE

Episode 6 provides the experience of witnessing the making of a treaty as indigenous and non-indigenous people honour the Buffalo treaty. We also reflect on the Making of an Elder and our shared responsibility to ensuring a future that honours, respects and protects our natural world for future generations.

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

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KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- Treaties historically brought together many nations with differing views.
- Treaties require revisiting and recommitment to agreements.
- In Blackfoot culture, becoming an elder is both a conscious choice and a sacred responsibility.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How has the information regarding making treaty impacted your understanding of treaties?
- Elders are recognized in their communities as holders of cultural knowledge, wisdom and oral tradition. They are essential in transferring, preserving and maintaining knowledge, cultures, languages and traditions. Discuss whether educators should be honoured as elders in society in our role of transferring knowledge to future generations.
- What kinds of “bundles” of wisdom and knowledge do you hope to share with your students?
- How might we help students understand the importance of accepting and respecting diverse beliefs and perspectives?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Moving Forward- Review the criteria and essential understandings outlined in the following resource in four groups. Share findings with large group. How might you use this tool to ensure fidelity when enhancing understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing and diverse perspectives?

Guiding Voices - A Curriculum Development Tool for Inclusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Perspectives Throughout Curriculum
<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmigv/index.html>

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LINKS TO THE LEADERSHIP QUALITY STANDARDS (draft)

5) A school leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, for the benefit of all students, and supports the process of reconciliation, by: