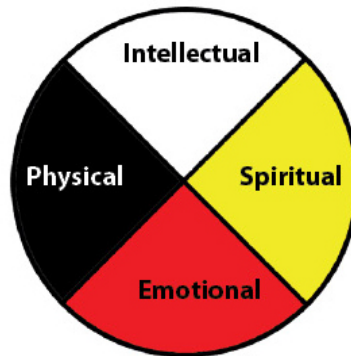




Native Teachings – Seven Grandfather Teachings



LESSON NO. 1

Essential Questions for this Lesson

- How can we consider our actions and choices in relation to the Seven Grandfather Teachings?

Vocabulary Introduced in this Lesson:

- Teachings
- Medicine Wheel
- Talking Feather
- Seven Grandfather Teachings

Prior Knowledge they need for this Lesson:

- Some comfort with computer usage

Resources:

- Handout on talking circles
- Rubric/ Performance Task handout
- Adobe Photoshop Elements Tool Sheet or Comic Life Help sheet
- Handout on Seven Grandfather teachings
- Anishinabeg website with teachings
- <http://www.thealgonquinway.ca/lessons/plan-lesson-4-e.pdf>
- Anishinaabe Website: With each word in Anishinaabemowin
- <http://www.anishinaabemdaa.com/grandfathers.htm>
- <http://rabbitandbearpaws.com/aboutus.php>
- Publisher of graphic novels based on the Seven Grandfather Teachings

Materials, supplies needed:

- Construction paper and markers
- Access to a lab with Adobe Photoshop Elements or Comic Life
- Digital cameras, memory sticks, batteries
- Black and White printer

Access:

- Colour printer access
- Laminator access

Lesson 1: Minds on Activities (Feeling, Thinking, Questioning, Knowing, Experimenting, Planning)

The teacher will have stones in a bag that each has one of the seven Grandfather teachings on them. These grandfather stones will be in sufficient number so that there will be one for each student and one for the teacher. The word will be written in sharpie. The students will sit in a circle and the teacher will first pass the bag to the left (in keeping with Algonquin teachings). Students will be asked to spend some times contemplating what the word on the stone means to them. The teacher will explain the guidelines for the talking circle. Then the teacher will model speaking about the teaching by holding the stone up, saying the word and giving an anecdote about what the word means to him/her. Then the students to the teacher's left will be given the opportunity to speak to the word on his or her stone. Each student can opt out if he/she is not ready to speak to that teaching.

Next consider, having an elder visit to provide the teachings to the students or if not possible, with a projector, teaching the students more about these teachings using a website such as one listed in the resources. Handout and go over Seven Grandfather Teachings handout

Action: (Rich Performance tasks/Culminative Task/Social Action task, etc.)

After the circle, the students will be put in small groups. They will meet with the others with the same grandfather words. In the group, the students will brainstorm about the word. They will prepare to present their thoughts and to create an image that communicates the meaning of the teaching.

On large construction paper using markers, the students will do stream of consciousness writing and symbolic drawing without talking or editing each other. The teacher needs to make it clear that this form of mind mapping does not include commentary. It is open writing/drawing of what the teaching brings up.

Next the group will discuss ways that they could represent the teaching in poster form. They will be asked to create a dynamic visual that combines:

- The word
- A straightforward concise statement about the teaching
- A photographic image that illustrates the word.

Students will draw a basic layout of their “teachings” poster and share it with their teacher.

Once the poster is approved, students will be given a digital camera and will be directed to go around the school or out onto the school grounds to “find” the pictures they need. They are encouraged to take 5 images so they can choose between them.

When the class has completed their poster, the teacher will demonstrate:

- Basic Photoshop image manipulation so students are equipped to create their posters:
 - Layering, cutting/pasting, text, colour changing, filters, colour fine tuning (saturation, contrast, lightness), etc. They will be given a tool sheet to refer to as they work.
- or
- How to use Comic Life

In their groups, students will create the final version of the poster in Adobe Photoshop Elements or Comic Life to the size of 7.5 x 10 inches. When done they will save the image and print it in black and white as a test print. Once the teacher has checked the poster for spelling, grammar and gives feedback on composition and colour use, the students will print to poster in colour.

These posters may be laminated and placed in a visible location in the classroom so they can be referred to during the semester.

Reflection and Consolidation (e.g., self-questioning, peer assessment, teacher feedback, teacher wrap-up activity for entire class, etc.)

Each small group will present their poster and explain why they communicated the teaching - in the manner they did (e.g., Why that picture? Why that text? Why those colours? etc.)

Consider following up with a journal writing activity where students chose one teaching and write reflections on what that teaching means and how it has influenced them personally.

Evaluation (Overview of how students will be evaluated):

- Rubric evaluation of the visual posters
- Peer assessment of learning skills for the small group work.

Teacher Reflections (Questions for the teacher to consider):

- Have the students learned from this task and met the expectations?
- Could these teachings be taught in another manner that will combine visual, written and verbal literacies?

SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

The Seven Grandfather teachings are traditional teachings about how we can lead our lives in a good way. Each teaching is an important one. They are all equal. Each teaching is important for us to consider as we become adults and make choices about how to treat others: family, friends, community members, and the natural world. At different times, the teaching you need to work on will be prominent. They are not in order of value... they are all important

Honesty

What is honesty to you? Are you always honest with yourself? Are you honest with others?

Can you think of a situation when someone was not fully honest with you? What impact did this have on you? Have you been dishonest?

It takes strength to always be honest, but it is important to be able to be honest even when it would be easier to lie.

Respect

Respect is about showing caring and honour to every living being. It means that you first must respect yourself and make choices that are good for you. It means you remind yourself about your strengths and you try to be positive about yourself. Once you respect yourself others will notice and follow suit. Respect is also about showing others that you care about them. This includes all living beings. When have you not been respectful to yourself? When have you shown respect for another person? Who is respectful to you? How can you avoid put downs, insults, swearing, arguing, and instead show caring, communicate when there are issues, avoid negative thought patterns, and genuinely go out of your way to care for others?

Courage

Courage means you are strong both physically and emotionally and you are willing to do what it takes to protect yourself and others in many situations. Courage means you are brave when facing oppression, indifference, negative or abusive talk, and you defend yourself and others when they are threatened or attacked both physically or mentally. Courage is speaking up when it might not be easy to do so.

Who is someone who has shown himself/herself to be brave? Why do you need courage to make changes in your life? How can you communicate your beliefs in a constructive way even when faced with difficult people?

Love

Love goes beyond romance and infatuation. Love means that you care enough about another person to put that person first and to take care of that person. It means you want to be the best you can be so that your relations with the other person are good ones. It might mean making changes, making different choices, being alert to another person's needs and to overcome fear of rejection. Love is felt in many ways; towards a romantic partner, towards a family member, a friend or an animal. Love also is about self-love. This means you must appreciate not only the strengths in others, but also in yourself. Love is not always comfortable or easy. It may require you step outside your comfort zone and take risks of not being loved in return. Infatuation and crushes are short-lived but a good loving relationship where both people genuinely care about each other and take care of each other is something that can develop into a lifetime commitment. Who do you love? Who loves you? When have you faced fear when considering love?

Wisdom

Means that you take the life lessons you have learned, the teachings you have received and the advice you are given and absorb it so you have learned how to lead a good life. Wisdom is genuinely trying to understand what you can learn from a given situation, from an elder, from a parent, from others. Wisdom is also the determination to learn from the difficult times in life, and from the people who challenge you. It is about taking all these lessons and moving forward with a new approach to solving difficult situations. It is also about being wise about what you need to do to take care of yourself, your family, your community and your world. Who is the person you know who is wise? What makes you think this about him/her? When have you learned from prior mistakes?

Humility

Means facing others with a genuine understanding that no-one is worthless and no-one is superior to another. It is acknowledging that we are all different and each of us has a path to follow in life and we have been given our own talents and gifts. It means we celebrate our gifts/talents by using these gifts for good, and by not boasting or bragging. It means that sometimes we have to put our pride aside to do the right thing.

Are you humble? What are your strengths? What are you continuing to work on? When has someone seemed to ego centric and this has impacted upon you? When do you need to remember to be humble?

Truth

Truth is acknowledging the truth of life: its limits, its joys and its challenges. Truth is about acceptance and facing the truth even when it would be easier to ignore it. Truth is about speaking the truth and listening to the truth. Truth is about all of the teachings and being true to yourself.

A Talking Circle

The talking feather is used to facilitate calm and harmonious communication and may be a feather that is decorated or may be plain depending on the cultural traditions. It may be an eagle feather which is gifted to a person by an elder as a sign of acknowledgement that the person is ready to speak and teach. Sometimes, in classroom settings other feathers are used. There may be a particular meaning for a specific bird's feather and these meanings vary from nation to nation. Some cultures have talking sticks to facilitate communication while some elders pass a rock from person to person. The feather is used to facilitate communication and to ensure that the communication is not competitive.

There are some basic guidelines for a talking circle

- Only one person holds the feather. That person is the only person who is to speak. All other members of the talking circle are active listeners and show their respect for the speaker by not interrupting.
- We are all in a circle so we can all see each other and maintain eye contact.
- We are all at the same level. If one person is standing and the rest sitting this creates an energy that goes against the harmony of the circle. Also everyone has a right to speak.
- The person who is starting the circle does not control the talking circle by deciding who is important to speak first or who can and cannot speak.
- The feather is passed around the circle in a specific direction (It varies between nations)
- When a person has a feather in his/her hand she/he chooses whether or not to speak. Not speaking is fine. People speak when they are ready to speak and should never be hassled for passing on speaking.
- A person must not speak if he/she is in a disrespectful frame of mind. If you are thinking angry or negative thoughts then opt out of speaking until you can control yourself to the point of being able to speak in a respectful way.
- The feather is a sacred object and one holds it if he or she can honour it properly.
- Talking circles are used in some traditional ceremonies, in reaching consensus, in assisting with difficult situations and in healing practices
- In some cultures other objects such as talking sticks or stones (grandmothers/grandfathers) are used.