

Mi'kmaw Studies 11

Support Document

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Mi'kmaw Studies 11: Support Document

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Prepared by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, learners need an education system that keeps pace, stays relevant, and prepares them for the future. Nova Scotia is a diverse province and schools place a high value on students' languages, cultures, and identities. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed the following resources to support teachers in engaging learners with issues that are inclusive and respectful of demographic, cultural, and ethnic diversities.

Teaching our learners to be good citizens means educating them about those who have different backgrounds, different perspectives, and emphasizing the importance of being inclusive, empathetic, and compassionate. Education also has a role to play in arming learners with the knowledge to support environmental stewardship. This resource includes learning experiences that provide opportunities for learners to engage in the rich and diverse histories and experiences of the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous people. Learners make connections between the past, present, and future of Canada as they examine the methods Indigenous people and Canadians have used to address inequitable conditions. They will also consider how Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous people have taken action to bring awareness to the impacts of residential schools, and create changes for their communities. The resource also includes a learning experience to support learners as they consider the impacts of environmental racism on the health of communities across Mi'kma'ki and Canada.

Through these learning experiences, learners will explore contemporary issues and consider how those issues are connected to our shared experiences as Nova Scotians and Canadians. Acknowledging the challenges of the past, examining the related impacts on the present, and focusing on the strength and resilience of Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous individuals and communities will allow learners to develop authentic understandings of contemporary issues. By learning about the actions taken to address these challenges, learners will examine various ways that community members can make changes that improve the lives of Nova Scotians and Canadians.

Inquiry-Based Learning in Social Studies

The learning experience described below is designed to support inquiry-based learning (IBL) in Social Studies. The learning experience is organized into three parts:

- **Inquiring** The focus of the lesson is an inquiry introduced by the teacher or developed by the learners. The teacher provides explicit instruction and modelling to support learners with concepts, skills and strategies being developed.
- **Finding Evidence** Learners use evidence from various primary and secondary sources to respond to the inquiry question. They practice skills and strategies that have been modelled with feedback from the teacher.
- **Communicating** Learners choose and develop a communication form appropriate to the learning experience with support from the teacher. Learners share their findings.

Outcomes

- G5 Evaluate the adverse effects of discriminatory policies, legislation, and social injustices (including those faced by women and veterans) on First Nations in Canada
- E2 Investigate the origins, goals, and impacts of the Indian Residential School System

Environmental Justice Learning Experience

Outcome

Evaluate the adverse effects of discriminatory policies, legislation, and social injustices (including those faced by women and veterans) on First Nations in Canada

Guiding Question

How have Canadians worked to raise awareness about inequitable conditions?

Introduction to the learning experience

In Canada, Mi'kmaw and other racialized communities are disproportionately affected by exposure to contamination and pollution through environmentally hazardous activities. Before beginning this learning experience, it may be helpful to have learners investigate the factors that influence decisions around land use to provide context for the practices and policies that contribute to environmental racism. As learners evaluate Canadian responses to environmental justice issues, they can investigate the effects of environmental racism on communities in local and national contexts.

In this learning experience, learners ask questions about how environmental racism has affected the physical and mental health of Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous communities. Using dependable sources, they locate relevant details about how the community's health is being affected by environmental racism before choosing a communication form to share their findings with the class.

Inquiring

The teacher can introduce one community affected by environmental racism in Mi'kma'ki using a resource such as a news article, video clip, photo montage, maps, or other. The teacher could share:

- Where the community is located
- Who lives in the community
- What is causing environmental degradation
- When the degradation began
- Why the community facing this issue

When the teacher introduces the resource, they can model posing a question they may have about how the community's health is being impacted. As the learners explore the resource, they can note down questions that they have. After the learners have recorded their questions, they can be invited to share and the teacher can record the responses.

The teacher can choose one question and use it to model how to find relevant and dependable information about the effects of environmental racism on physical and mental health in the community. The teacher can share one pre-selected source and model strategies to find relevant information. For example, the teacher can answer the question by thinking aloud as they highlight, annotate or add notes to identify relevant information. The teacher may also wish to explain how they know the source is dependable.

Before moving on to "Finding Evidence", the teacher may wish to choose another source featuring a different community and work collaboratively with learners to identify relevant information. This will help to ensure that learners understand the strategies that were modelled.

Finding Evidence

Learners can work in partners or small groups to investigate another community from Mi'kma'ki or elsewhere in Canada that is affected by environmental racism. The teacher can provide curated, dependable resources for learners to use. Using the strategies previously modeled by the teacher in “Inquiring”, the learners can locate several relevant details to answer:

- Where the community is located
- Who lives in the community
- What is causing environmental degradation
- When the degradation began
- Why the community facing this issue
- How the community's physical and/or mental health has been affected by environmental racism

As learners are locating information, the teacher can circulate and provide specific feedback to each group on the relevance of the details. Depending on their observations and conversations, the teacher may wish to provide further instruction on the strategies modelled in “Inquiring”.

Communicating

The teacher can model various ways that learners can communicate their findings such as:

- Presentation
- Story Map (see Appendix: ArcGIS)
- Short Video
- News report
- Other communication form

The teacher and learners can co-construct criteria to guide the development of their communication forms. For example, the class could co-construct a rubric where the teacher provides the assessment criteria and learners would help to describe the performance levels.

In their partners or small groups, learners can be given time in class to develop their communication forms in relation to the community they researched. As learners are working, the teacher can circulate to provide feedback based on the assessment criteria.

Once learners have completed their communication forms, each group can be invited to share their findings with the whole class. Either through class discussion or note-taking, learners can compare details to identify similarities and differences in how the communities' physical and mental health are affected by environmental racism.

Assessment

Based on their chosen communication forms, teachers can look for evidence that learners can identify relevant information in relation to the questions. Based on the class discussion or notes, teachers can look for evidence that learners can identify similarities and differences in how the communities' physical and mental health are affected by environmental racism.

Additional Resources

Web-based Resources:

[ArcGIS](#) is free to all teachers and learners in Nova Scotia. The program can be accessed through the [GNSPES landing page](#) by selecting the ArcGIS icon. Here teachers can select the 'Create a Story Map' button in order to find related step-by-step instructions and video tutorials. *Please note, teachers will need to request ArcGIS accounts for themselves and their learners, which can be done after selecting the ArcGIS icon.*

- [Environmental Racism in Canada Prepared for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#)

News Reports:

- [Canada votes to collect data to document 'environmental racism'](#)
- [The movement to address environmental racism is growing](#)

Websites:

- [Environmental Racism in Canada](#)
- [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#)
- [Learning from Practice: Advocacy for Health Equity-Environmental racism](#)
- [It's time for Canada to address environmental racism](#)

Print Resources:

- *There's Something in the Water*, Ingrid Waldron ([NSSBB# 2002702](#))

Websites:

- [Noteworthy historical figures - Canada.ca](#)
- [Carrie Best | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [Black United Front - MemoryNS](#)
- [Calvin Ruck | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [One Woman's Resistance | Viola Desmond's Story](#)
- [Mayann Elizabeth Francis](#)
- [Flying Officer Allan Bundy: The RCAF's first Black pilot](#)
- [Black Athletes Who Made Olympic Sport History in Canada](#)

Print Resources:

- *Amazing Black Atlantic Canadians*, Lindsay Ruck, James Bentley ([NSSBB# 2002592](#))

Place Name Learning Experience

Outcome

Evaluate the adverse effects of discriminatory policies, legislation, and social injustices (including those faced by women and veterans) on First Nations in Canada

Guiding Question

How have Canadians worked to raise awareness about inequitable conditions?

Introduction to the learning experience

As Canada moves towards greater equity in Canadian society, many individuals and communities are challenging colonialist place names and landmarks that represent derogatory language and the difficult histories of communities which have been negatively impacted by colonialism. Difficult history is defined as historical content that evokes strong emotional reactions; it often includes oppression, violence, and trauma. Difficult history can force both teachers and learners to confront their own worldviews and privileges, which can be challenging. Before beginning the learning experience, it is important that teachers create a safe and trusting space to foster respectful and reflective classroom discussions. Teachers and learners can co-construct a classroom agreement that provides expectations to support them in engaging in respectful dialogue. Teachers should select resources that foster opportunities for responsible citizenship, respect for human rights, social justice, and building healthy, inclusive relationships. Teachers can provide context for historical figures and language learners may encounter in their research and prepare them for the lesson. “Tips for Teaching Difficult History”, a teacher resource developed by the Canadian Museum of history, can be found [here](#).

Across Canada, communities, streets, buildings, and other sites have been named after or created to commemorate historical figures whose legacies represent historical harms done to vulnerable communities. In recent years, this has led to community actions to rename sites such as communities, streets, and schools, and to remove statues and other forms of recognition for colonialist figures. In Nova Scotia, these community initiatives are seen by many as important steps in decolonization. In this learning experience, learners begin to consider how changing place names can create a more equitable society. They compare methods used by community members to change the names of controversial landmarks or places. They explore how governments have responded to proposed name changes. Based on their findings, learners develop a proposal to support changing the name of a community or landmark in Canada.

Inquiring

The teacher can begin the class by posing the question, “What’s in a name?” and then sharing news articles or reports that feature two community initiatives that are working to change the names of a landmark or place. For example, the teacher may choose to begin by comparing initiatives to rename Nova Scotian landmarks or places such as those named after Edward Cornwallis, or other sites with controversial names. Using information from the news articles or other sources, the class can consider various questions with the support of the teacher. For example, learners may consider:

- How can changing place names support greater equity and decolonization in Nova Scotia and Canada?
- Who chose the original name? How might their perspective on this choice differ from our own?
- Why was the community advocating for the name change?
- What method(s) did the communities use to advocate for the change?

The teacher can provide explicit instruction and model strategies to support learners in identifying similarities and differences in the methods chosen by community members in each example.

Depending on the example selected, the teacher can introduce the municipal, provincial, or federal procedures community members must engage with to effect a name change. Based on information from the article, learners can discuss:

- Did the community encounter any barriers to changing the name?
- What methods did the community use to address the barriers they identified?
- How did government procedures affect the methods community members chose?
- What steps did the government take to engage in meaningful community consultations before coming to a decision?

During the discussion, the learners can record the similarities and differences the class identifies in a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram.

Before moving on to “Finding Evidence”, the teacher may wish to choose another source featuring a different community and work collaboratively with learners to identify relevant information. This will help to ensure that learners understand the strategies that were modelled. If possible, this could be an opportunity to invite a member of the affected community to talk about their experiences.

Finding Evidence

Before beginning “Finding Evidence”, the teacher may wish to introduce the collaborative learning strategy *think-pair-share* to frame the learning experience. Learners can then choose another community that wants to change the name of a landmark or place. In response to learners’ needs, the teacher may wish to provide pre-selected sources for learners to use, or to provide explicit instruction on how to locate dependable sources. Using the questions and strategies modeled in “Inquiring”, learners can research their selected communities and identify the methods used to effect change. Learners can highlight or annotate their texts to mark relevant information that they find.

Learners can then get into pairs with a classmate who chose the same community. Learners can share their information with their partners, Learners can expand their graphic organizers to include their community and record their findings. As learners are comparing methods, the teacher can circulate and provide specific feedback to each group on their findings. Depending on their observations and conversations, the teacher may wish to provide further instruction on the strategies modeled in “Inquiring.”

Partners can share their findings with the class, identifying similarities and differences in the experiences of various communities. The teacher can then lead a class discussion about how methods varied in response to the specific situation in each community. Learners can be invited to share their thoughts on which methods were most effective and why.

Communicating

Working with their partners, learners can select a landmark or place that they feel requires a name change. Using methods they or their classmates identified in “Finding Evidence”, learners can develop a proposal to have the name changed. Before beginning their proposals, learners can reach out to various individuals or organizations in the selected community to ensure that their findings are informed by those affected. In their proposals, learners can include:

- a rationale behind changing the name that includes why the existing name is controversial and how changing name creates greater equity for the community
- methods that community members can use to advocate for the name change. Methods can include ways of engaging in community consultations, approaches to raising awareness around the issues, opportunities for political participation, etc.
- explanation for the selection of specific methods in relation to the learners’ chosen landmark or place

The teacher and learners can co-construct criteria to guide the development of their communication forms. For example, the class could co-construct a rubric where the teacher provides the assessment criteria and learners could help to describe the performance levels.

In their partners, learners can be given time in class to develop their communication forms in relation to the community they researched. As learners are working, the teacher can circulate to provide feedback based on the assessment criteria.

Once learners have completed their communication forms, each group can be invited to share their proposals with the whole class or the community.

Assessment

Based on their think-pair-share conversations, teachers can look for evidence that learners can identify similarities and differences between methods chosen by various communities. Based on learners’ proposals, teachers can look for evidence that learners can identify relationships between the methods they chose and the specific landmark or place name while offering an interpretation to support their choices.

Additional Resources

News Reports:

- [Process to change racist Nova Scotia place names nears completion](#)
- [Halifax starts process to rename Cornwallis Street](#)
- [Former Cornwallis Park officially renamed Peace and Friendship Park](#)
- [Statues and streets named after controversial figures in Canada](#)
- [‘Shift in perspective’: Indigenous place names moving Canada from colonialist past](#)

Websites:

- [Tips for Teaching Difficult History](#)
- [Nova Scotia Place Names](#) - GeoNOVA
- [Renaming places: how Canada is reexamining the map](#)

Residential Schools Learning Experience

Outcome

Investigate the origins, goals, and impacts of the Indian Residential School System

Guiding Question

How have Indigenous individuals and communities taken action to bring awareness to the legacies of residential schools?

Introduction to the learning experience

Education about the history and legacy of the residential school system is an important step towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada. Sharing and honouring the experiences of former students and their families provides Canadians with the opportunity to contemplate the impacts of the residential school system and the resilience of survivors, their families, and their communities. Difficult history is defined as historical content that evokes strong emotional reactions; it often includes oppression, violence and trauma. Difficult history can force both teachers and learners to confront their own worldviews and privileges, which can be challenging. Before beginning the learning experience, it is important that teachers create a safe and trusting space to foster respectful, reflective classroom discussions. Teachers and learners can co-construct a classroom agreement that provides expectations to support them in engaging in respectful dialogue. Teachers should select resources that foster opportunities for responsible citizenship, respect for human rights, social justice, and building healthy, inclusive relationships. Teachers can provide context for historical figures and language that learners may encounter in their research to prepare them for the lesson. “Tips for Teaching Difficult History”, a teacher resource developed by the Canadian Museum of history, can be found [here](#).

Through various art forms, Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous people in Canada are raising awareness about the impacts of residential schools. The residential school system was created by the Canadian government and run by churches with the purpose of assimilating Indigenous children into “mainstream” Canadian society through education. The system forcibly separated children from their homes and forbade Indigenous languages and cultures. The artwork being created in response to those experiences are acts of resilience and advocacy. Indigenous cultures are thriving and many Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous artists are expressing their languages, heritage, and cultures through their work. In this learning experience, learners begin to consider how artwork can be used to respond to the history of residential schools. They gather information from various forms of art and supporting sources about the impacts of residential schools to explore how artists are using their work to raise awareness.

Before beginning this learning experience, learners can explore the intentions behind the establishment of the residential school system.

Inquiring

The teacher can begin by posing the question, “how can art teach us about history”? The teacher can then share a piece of art by a Mi'kmaw or other Indigenous artist to engage the learners, such as a song, poem, picture book, or piece of visual art. The teacher can model posing some questions about the artwork and invite learners to pose questions of their own. The teacher can record the questions for the class. For example:

- Who is the artist?
- From which community or nation is the artist?
- How is the artwork addressing the residential school experience?

- Why was the artwork created?
- How does the artwork help to raise awareness about the impacts of residential schools?

The teacher can model how to find details from the artwork to respond to the questions, and explicitly teach strategies for finding reliable information about the artist and their work. The learners can be invited to share their observations and findings.

Before moving on to “Finding Evidence”, the teacher may wish to choose another artwork featuring a different artist and work collaboratively with learners to identify appropriate information. This will help to ensure that learners understand the strategies that were modelled. (Examples can be found in Additional Resources.)

Finding Evidence

The teacher can curate 4-5 artworks by Indigenous artists and supporting resources before beginning this part of the learning experience. Learners are divided into small jigsaw groups and each learner is assigned one artwork to explore. Learners can use the questions and strategies modeled in “Inquiring” to gather and select appropriate, relevant information. The teacher can circulate to provide feedback to individual learners.

Once learners have completed their research, they can get into an “expert” group with other learners who have studied the same artwork. Each member can share their findings with the group. Learners consider the implications of how Indigenous artists are using their work to raise awareness about the impacts of residential schools, and share their perspectives. Learners can change or add to their original notes. The teacher can circulate between groups to provide feedback or further instruction.

Communicating

Learners can return to their jigsaw group to communicate their findings. Each learner can share their artwork and findings with the group. The teacher can then invite learners to engage in a whole class discussion about how the artworks have raised their awareness about the impacts of residential schools.

Assessment

Based on their jigsaw and expert group conversations, teachers can look for evidence that learners can select appropriate, relevant information and consider the implications of the information from multiple perspectives.

Additional Resources

News Reports:

- [Rite Joe: Turning a painful past into poetry](#)
- [Ceremony remembers Indigenous children who died at residential schools](#)
- [“Mi’kmaq \(sic\) couple use their international attention and traditional art to create awareness of residential school system”](#)

Websites:

- [The Survivors’ Flag](#)
- [Picking Up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket](#)

Print Resources:

- *I Lost My Talk*, Rite Joe ([NSSBB# 1005286](#))
- *The Secret Path*, Gord Downey, Jeff Lemire ([NSSBB# 2001769](#))
- *Out of the Depths*, Isabelle Knockwood ([NSSBB# 22383](#))

Videos:

- [“Gentle Warrior”](#) - Kalolin Johnson (feat. Devon Paul and Thunder Henry)