

Overview

This document is a guide to produce a community archive, namely for the Tataskweyak Cree Nation, which will consist of real history, personal history, and mythic history. The method in collecting information will be done by the students of the local school, who will interview parents, elders, and community members. The students will learn about their culture, including their language, identity and important life teachings, such as the seven teachings.

Context

The setting of this project will take place at the Chief Sam Cook Mamuhwee Education Centre, which is in the community of Tataskweyak Cree Nation (Split Lake), Manitoba. This school has a population of about 750 students, where the majority of the students are of First Nations descent. The grade level that will be working on the project will begin with the grade 8 students. These students will be used to collect stories to compile for the archive from the elders, as well as other community members.

It will be proposed to the Native Studies and Multimedia teachers to incorporate in their classrooms as well. By using the project in these two classrooms, high school students will begin to learn about their culture as well. The relevance to the Native Studies course is self explanatory. As for the Multimedia class they can use the skills that are being learned there to compile and document the information collected by using today's technology. They are also an asset in that they can record using digital cameras and compiling them in a computer database. At this rate, with the help of other students, the archive will have begun forming.

Purpose

The larger purpose of this project is for students, parents, as well as other community members to gain a sense of pride by learning about their identity through past experiences of their elders and community members of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation. Students will also learn to live by the seven teachings that our ancestors used as their daily teachings. The seven teachings that will be taught are as follows:

To cherish **knowledge** is to know wisdom.

To know **love** is to know peace.

To honour all of creation is to have **respect**.

Courage is to face life with integrity.

Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave.

Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation.

Truth is to know all these things.

Once students begin learning the seven teachings, along with the stories they collect, they will begin to understand our culture as a Cree people.

Objectives

The objective of this document is for the youth of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation to take ownership of what is theirs, their identity.

Students will:

- have to commit to collecting stories from elders or other community members whether they are about personal, real, or mythical history.
- learn how to use their communication skills by interviewing people.
- learn how to document the information they collect.
- learn the importance and meaning of the seven teachings by the lessons they learn along their journey through the process.
- begin to bring together the closeness of their relationships with either parents' and/or grandparents.
- begin to understand their Cree language by listening to elders who speak only the one language, Cree.
- learn to appreciate the importance of communication with elders.
- learn by cooperating with others, learning that it is okay to help one another.
- become better writers in that they must transcribe or write out the story being told to them.

Rationale

The importance of this document is to allow students to take pride in their culture by listening to the stories of their elders, as well as other community members. This will bring the community closer in a sense that there would be more open communication, closeness, and understanding between the youth, parents, and elders. The students will learn about their identity and appreciate more of their culture, language and community. This project will build a stronger community, where the people of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation will always have a written and recorded record of their personal, real, and mythical history.

Storytelling has been a form of teaching that was used by our ancestors, as well as elders in the recent past, of the people of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation to teach their youth. It is an important aspect of our culture and needs to be brought back. The youth need to be reminded in the ways of how our people were taught and how children learned. It is with the seven teachings that the youth will learn and accept the ways things are done. The seven teachings are often transparent, in a sense that they are not always a visible teaching. It is through storytelling that children learn and apprehend information that is being taught to them.

The Plan

This section will provide the activities in how the students will collect the information needed to complete the community archive. The timeline of this project can be done sporadically throughout the year. The expectations of the information that is collected will be solely on a trial basis. In the next year it may be refined to a particular area, whether it be in the area of personal, real or mythical history.

There are many ways that this project can be delivered to the students; it is solely up to the teacher to deliver in a way that better suits the students' needs in their particular class. The project may be done in the order it is presented, or it can be done in whichever way it fits into the styles of learning for the students'. Students may have a preference to either do personal, real, or mythical history. So to suit this, a way is to divide the class into groups of their preference. This way there are more stories being collected, providing a narrower topic in mind for the student to focus on.

The students will find a person to interview, preferably an elder. The student can ask the help of a parent or someone who is fluent in the Cree language for translation purposes. The students must make up the questions themselves and transcribe all interviews. This is a big commitment for a student, especially a grade eight student, but once the procedure is understood by them it should work out.

There are many activities that are included in this plan and can be too excessive. There may be very little time in a school year to do all of it. It is with hope that some activities be done throughout the school year. It will be up to the teacher's discretion to pick and choose which activities to do with their students. It is also recommended that the activities done should be under one branch of history: Personal, Real, or Mythical.

Students will do the following activities:

Personal History

➤ Family Tree

Students will each compile information on their family history by creating a genealogy chart. They will include their immediate and extended family. They can ask parents, grandparents, and/or other family members to help them complete this task. The students will then bring their charts back into class and create a chart by making the connections. Taking into consideration that this is a small community there would be connections at some point in their family tree that will link them with another student(s) family tree.

The timeline for this activity can be two weeks, allowing them one week to compile the information and one week to create one huge chart. All students can participate in this activity as they do tend to get to know who their family is and who their relations are. It is also fascinating to find out how far a student gets in their family tree going back to at least six generations.

➤ Family Traditions

Students will ask parents, grandparents, or other family members what kinds of traditions they may have at home. Family traditions can include descriptions of what they do every time a special occasion or holiday comes up, for instance during the holidays such as Christmas or Easter. Other traditions can include what their families do at any particular time and for what reason. For example, a family tradition could be that a grandmother may make all baptisms gowns, decorating it with ribbons of various colours, for her grandchildren and great grandchildren, believing it is important to have a greater presence while receiving the holy symbol. The time line for this activity can be two weeks, allowing students to collect information for one week and using the other week to prepare it in an orderly fashion.

- Creating a book of Memoirs
 - ✓ Personal accounts of childhood memories. Anything a parent, grandparent, or other family member would like to share about their memory of growing up. This type of interview can be recorded using a digital camera, capturing the language and gestures of the person sharing. These two are important to know and learn in how stories are shared.
 - ✓ Collecting information of personal accounts of memories about the residential school experiences the people have gone through. This activity must be done with the utmost respect of the people being interviewed as this is a very touchy subject. Permission must be sought out first for the people who are willing to share. This can be a positive or negative memory shared. The more the youth hear these types of stories the more empathy one gets for another person. It is imperative that the youth understand and comprehend what our parents and grandparents have gone through as a child/youth. They must see how fortunate they are to have their families with them, raising them.

- Picture Gallery
 - ✓ Collecting old pictures and compiling them in a book by the order they were taken. The dates will be recorded on each with the names of people in the picture or where it was taken. This will offer the students a visual picture of how people dressed, lived and how the land and water looked.

- Origin of Last Names
 - ✓ Students will investigate how people received their last names and who was involved in the process. The time line for these activities can be at the discretion of the teacher. It may take two weeks or can happen in a month, depending on how willing and committed the participants are in the process. This will also allow student to practice their researching skills in that they may be able to find information in Manitoba archives at the Manitoba Museum or through church records.

Real History

- Time line of the development of the community of Tataskweyak Cree Nation
 - ✓ Students will create a timeline in the development of the community of all the significant dates that have occurred, such as when the treaty was signed, when the church came and so on.

- Life at York Factory
 - ✓ A history of how people used to live originally at York Factory near the Hudson Bay. Students will collect memoirs of the elders who are still around to share their stories. They can ask neighbouring communities, such as York Landing and War Lake, for information from their elders. This can be done as a Pen Pal program with students from that school. Teachers can collaborate on any further information regarding the project.

- Why this location?
 - ✓ A look at how and why the current location of Tataskweyak Cree Nation was chosen. Also there will be research in who was in leadership at the time and which families originally re-located to this location.
- Past Leadership of Tataskweyak Cree Nation
 - ✓ A list of all past leaders will be compiled into a data base. This will be pertinent information to learn.
- Schooling
 - ✓ Students will collect information about the history of schooling. Who taught the children before the churches and ministries came? What kinds of lessons were taught? When did residential school come into action? Why?
These types of questions will be asked to elders and other community members who may know information.
- Transportation
 - ✓ How did people get from place to place in the past? What methods of transportation were used?
- Economic Development
 - ✓ How did the community develop into what it is today?
- Trapping and hunting
 - ✓ Trapping and hunting were a source of survival for our people in the past. They had taken only what they needed and never overused a certain animal. Students will look at the importance of why our people migrated and what sorts of fur were trapped. Also at the type of animals that were hunted.
- Pictures
 - ✓ A collection of any pictures that may have been taken in the past that illustrate anything that has to do with the real history of Tataskweyak Cree Nation.

Mythical History

- Community Stories
 - ✓ Any community stories that are often made up for the certain purposes. For example the stories about Gee-mah-boo that were told to children to make sure they were in bed at a certain time. This was a mythical being who went out at night looking for children to grab if they weren't in bed at home.

- Trickster
 - ✓ Stories about Wesakachak, the Trickster, who had many powers. The students will compile these stories and the lessons each teach. There are also the stories about Wesakachak who give a purpose to why something is so, such as the spots on the Loon.

- Visitors from the North
 - ✓ Every New Year's Day there are "visitors of the North" who come to the community band hall to bear with them gifts and a message to start off the year. Students will compile videos of previous years and record them to include into the archive. They will also ask elders or other community members to share stories to the origin of this sacred occasion that has been happening for as long as I can remember.

- Any other stories that may be relevant under this category.