Resources for Teaching Indigenous Education in the K-6 Classroom

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BOOK RESOURCES

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3:

STOLEN WORDS (MELANIE FLORENCE)
The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. When she asks her grandfather how to say something in his language – Cree – he admits that his language was stolen from him when he was a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandfather find his language again.

WHEN I WAS EIGHT (MARGARET POKIAK - FENTON)
Bestselling memoir Fatty Legs for younger readers. Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she doesn’t know how to read. Ignoring her father’s warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders’ school to learn.

THE MISHOMIS BOOK (EDWARD BENTON - BANAI)
Created for people of all cultures, but especially for Ojibway and Native youth, The Mishomis Book is detailed introduction to Ojibway culture and the sacred Midewiwin teachings. Parents will appreciate the message that life should be centered on respect for all living things, vibrant community and a respectful relationship with nature.

WHEN WE WERE ALONE (DAVID ALEXANDER ROBERTSON)
It’s one of many responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 calls to action— one of which is to begin education about the legacy of residential schools with children as early as kindergarten. When We Were Alone is a story about a difficult time in history, and merges exceptionally well into a story of empowerment and strength.
A WALK ON THE SHORELINE (REBECCA HAINNU)

After spending one night in town, Nukappia and his uncle Angu begin the long walk down the shore to the family summer campsite, where all of Nukappia's cousins and aunts and uncles are waiting for him. Along the way, Nukappia learns that the shoreline is not just ice and rocks and water. There is an entire ecosystem of plants and animals that call the shoreline home. From seaweed to clams to char to shore grasses, there is far more to see along the shoreline than Nukappia ever imagined.

Alongside “A walk on the tundra”, this book can be used in science classes, to build upon the idea of scientific observation, and traditional knowledge gained from exploring nature.

LITTLE WATER AND THE GIFT OF ANIMALS (CJ THOMAS):

A great hunter, Little Water has a special gift – he can communicate with the animals of the forest, who respect him. One day, when Little Water returns from the hunt, he finds his village silent. Everyone is very sick, and the medicine man cannot cure them. He instructs Little Water to seek help from the animals. But Little Water is caught in a terrible storm and injured. The animals come to his help and give him knowledge of their healing powers. With their help, Little Water is able to save the villagers, who never forget the gift from the forest animals.

Most CJ. Thomas books cover a multitude of indigenous nations’ stories and legends.

SUGAR FALLS: A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STORY (DAVID ROBERTSON)

Based on a true story. A school assignment to interview a residential school survivor leads Daniel to Betsy, his friend’s grandmother, who tells him her story. Abandoned as a young child, Betsy was soon adopted into a loving family. A few short years later, at the age of 8, everything changed. Betsy was taken away to a residential school.
ALL THE STARS IN THE SKY: NATIVE STORIES FROM THE HEAVENS (CJ TAYLOR)

The heavens — the sun, the stars, and the moon — have inspired, intrigued, and mystified us from the beginning of time. We’ve always searched for ways to comprehend their beauty and their meaning. Mohawk artist and author C. J. Taylor has drawn from First Nations legends from across North America to present a fascinating collection of stories inspired by the night skies.

The legends — Salish, Onondaga, Blackfoot, Netsilik (Inuit), Wasco, Ojibwa, and Cherokee — are by turns funny, beautiful, tragic, and frightening, but each one is infused with a sense of awe. From the Ojibwa legend of the great hunter, White Hawk, and his love for an unattainable maiden, or the Salish legend of a magical lake that is threatened when human beings turn greedy and lose their respect for its gifts and for the sun’s power, to the delightful Cherokee legend of Grandmother Spider who brought light to the world, this is an important collection that is enhanced by Taylor’s glorious paintings.

WHAT IS TRUTH, BETSY? (KATHERENA VERMETTE)

Miskwaadesi is puzzled about the teaching Truth. But she knows more than she thinks she does. The author Katherena Vermette is a Metis writer, which gives the books s sense of authenticity as an Indigenous resource. A great resource to introduce students to different Indigenous traditions and customs.

This book is one of seven, in the Seven Teachings stories series, which reveals the seven teachings of the Anishinaabe — love, wisdom, humility, courage, respect, honesty, and truth — in children’s stories.

GRADE 4 TO GRADE 6:

FATTY LEGS (MARGARET POKIAK - FENTON)

Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak has set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic. Faced with unceasing pressure, her father finally agrees to let her make the five-day journey to attend school, but he warns Margaret of the terrors of residential schools.
**THE ELDERS ARE WATCHING (DAVID BOUCHARD AND ROY HENRY VICKERS)**

The Elders are watching is a collection of short stories, poetry and artwork that aims to understand Canada’s West Coast and the Indigenous people that reside there. It aims to educate students on how we can better respect Mother Earth and her land.

**I AM NOT A NUMBER (JENNY KAY DUPUIS)**

When Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school, she is confused, frightened and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from despite being told to do otherwise. When she goes home for summer holidays, her parents decide never to send her away again, but where will she hide and what will happen when her parents disobey the law?

**NEEKNA AND CHEMAI (JEANNETTE C. ARMSTRONG)**

Neekna and Chemai are two young girls growing up in the Okanagan Valley before contact. The friends learn about their people through interactions with elders. It is told in the first person, from Neekna’s point of view. It is organized around the seasonal cycles, focusing on traditional activities carried out in each season.

**NO TIME TO SAY GOODBYE : CHILDREN’S STORIES OF KUPER ISLAND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (SYLVIA OLSEN WITH RITA MORRIS AND ANN SAM)**

This book tells the story of children from the Tsartlip First Nation who attended the Kuper Island Residential School in the 1950s. It is a fictional story, but is based on the experiences of members of the Tsartlip First Nations who shared their stories.

**THE SECRET OF THE DANCE (ANDREA SPALDING AND ALFRED SCOW)**

This story tells of a time when ceremonial dancing and the wearing of regalia and masks were forbidden by law. A young boy, based on Judge Alfred Scow’s boyhood story, witnesses the last secret potlatch of his community before the threat of imprisonment caused them to stop dancing.
SHI-SHI-ETKO (NICOLA I. CAMPBELL)

Shi-shi-etko is a young girl who will be going away to school in four days. Her family - mother, father and grandmother - teach her about the significance of the land, and she collects various plants to put in her memory bag, to hold her remembrance of the land while she is away.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ATLAS OF CANADA (CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC)

Produced in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis Nation, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and Indspire, the four-volume set shares the stories, perspectives, voices and history of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. The Atlas includes historic and contemporary maps and explores themes of language, demographics, economy and culture. Important topics such as treaties and residential schools are covered in-depth, as well as the contributions of Indigenous Peoples, their oral traditions and land-based knowledge.

7 GENERATIONS (DAVID ALEXANDER ROBERTSON)

This graphic novel follows one Plains Cree family from the early nineteenth century to the present day. For Edwin, the story of his ancestors from both the distant and recent past must guide him through an uncertain present and to the dawn of a new future. 7 Generations explores the life of Stone, a young Cree warrior, the smallpox epidemic of 1870, and the residential school system of the 20th century and its familial legacy.

A STRANGER AT HOME (MARGARET POKIAK - FENTON)

This is the sequel to Fatty Legs. Olemaun Pikiak arrives in Tuktoyaktuk to meet her family after being at residential school in Aklavik for 2 years. However, her homecoming is not what she expected. Her mother doesn’t welcome her, treating her like a stranger. She couldn’t eat the food her mother served, and she could barely speak her own language. She felt like she no longer belonged to her family. She learns her family won’t be going back their home on Banks Island, but instead were settling in Tuk. She read to her family from a book a nun had given her, with her father translating.
ONLINE RESOURCES:

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3:

STORYBIRD: HTTPS://STORYBIRD.COM/

This is a platform where kids can write their own picture books using an array of illustrations provided by the website. This can be used to encourage Indigenous students to write dual-language books, and bring the beauty of their native tongue into the classroom. Such projects often nurture in students ownership over their learning and a sense of pride in their culture.

INDIGENOUS STORYBOOKS CANADA: HTTPS://INDIGENOUSSTORYBOOKS.CA/ABOUT.HTML

Indigenous Storybooks Canada is a website for teachers, parents, and community members that aims to promote bilingualism and multilingualism in Canada. It makes stories from the Little Cree Books collection available in Cree, English, and French, as well as community translations into the major immigrant and refugee languages of Canada. A story that is read in English or French at school can be read in the mother tongue by parents and children at home. In this way, Indigenous Storybooks Canada helps children to maintain the mother tongue in both oral and print form, while learning one of Canada’s official languages. Similarly, the audio versions of the stories can help beginning readers and language learners make the important connection between speech and text.

LITTLE CREE BOOKS: HTTP://LITTLECREEBOOKS.COM/

Little Cree books is a website designed for young Cree language learners. It provides the story in both Plains Cree Dialect and English for speakers of each language to enjoy the story books.

maskosis naniskomow.
Little Bear gives thanks.
Inhabit media publishes books that help preserve and promote Inuit and arctic stories and voices. Although not Treaty 7 stories, they also provide educational support. The publisher has made free pdf packages that assist teachers on how to teach using these books in the classroom, on this page of their website.

**LESSON PLAN RESOURCES AND OTHER**

**Learning Dene and the Tale of the Raven (NFB)**

**Indigenous Plant Diva by Kamala Todd (NFB, 2008)**
https://www.nfb.ca/film/indigenous_plant_diva/

https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org
https://peacelearner.org/2016/03/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan/
http://projectofheart.ca/teacher-guideslesson-plans/
http://projectofheart.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Education-Resources_3_6_FINAL.pdf
https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org
https://peacelearner.org/2016/03/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan/
http://projectofheart.ca/teacher-guideslesson-plans/
http://projectofheart.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Education-Resources_3_6_FINAL.pdf

**GRADE 4 TO GRADE 6:**

- Government of Canada teaching resources on Indigenous arts and culture: https://www.rcaanc-circoc.gc.ca/eng/1302868012055/1534942371387
- Global oneness project is a website for educators that provides ideas for interdisciplinary projects. The project in the link is an example of a high-school level unit on Native America today.
  https://www.globalonenessproject.org/resources/lesson-plans/todays-native-america

**RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS ONLINE RESOURCES**

- Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools: http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation http://www.ahf.ca/publications/residential-school-resources
- Grade 5 Indian residential schools and reconciliation. http://www.fnesc.ca/grade5irsr/
It is divided into sections to introduce residential schools and leading up to the healing journey of reconciliation. Includes lots of resources, as well as worksheets.

### TREATY 7 ONLINE RESOURCES

- Kainai Nation: [http://bloodtribe.org](http://bloodtribe.org)
- Piikani Nation: [http://piikanination.wixsite.com/piikanination/administration](http://piikanination.wixsite.com/piikanination/administration)
- Stoney Nakoda Nation: [http://www.stoneynation.com](http://www.stoneynation.com)
- Tsuut'ina Nation: [https://informalberta.ca/public/organization/orgProfileStyled.do?organization](https://informalberta.ca/public/organization/orgProfileStyled.do?organization)
- Niitsitapi Learning Centre (CBE) Niitsitapi li tass ksii nii mat tsoo kop: A Place of Learning for All Indigenous People [http://school.cbe.ab.ca/school/Niitsitapi/Pages/default.aspx](http://school.cbe.ab.ca/school/Niitsitapi/Pages/default.aspx)

### SUPPORT ONLINE RESOURCES

- Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary: [https://www.afccalgary.org](https://www.afccalgary.org)
- Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth: [http://usay.ca](http://usay.ca)
- Metis Nation of Alberta: [http://albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com)
- Education for Reconciliation (Alberta Education) [https://education.alberta.ca/first-nations-m%25C3%25A9tis-and-inuit-education/education-for-reconciliation/?searchMode=3](https://education.alberta.ca/first-nations-m%25C3%25A9tis-and-inuit-education/education-for-reconciliation/?searchMode=3)
- Calgary Aboriginal Services Guide [https://www.frfp.ca/parents-resources/community-resources/aboriginal_agencies_services_guide.pdf](https://www.frfp.ca/parents-resources/community-resources/aboriginal_agencies_services_guide.pdf)
- Native Centre - University of Calgary Campus [https://www.ucalgary.ca/nativecentre/home/about](https://www.ucalgary.ca/nativecentre/home/about)
- Nation Centre for Truth and Reconciliation [https://education.nctr.ca/](https://education.nctr.ca/)

### LESSON PLANS (WEBSITES)

- Learn Alberta: Sample Lesson Plans: [http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmilp/index.html](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmilp/index.html)
Please see Appendix A for an example of an FNMI Math lesson plan.

PLACES TO VISIT

CHINIKI CULTURAL CENTRE
SPOTTED ELK CULTURAL CENTRE
HERITAGE PARK - FIRST NATIONS ENCAMPMENT
GLENBOW MUSEUM
HEAD SMASHED-IN BUFFALO JUMP
BLACKFOOT CROSSING HISTORICAL PARK
NOSE HILL PARK - MEDICINE WHEEL
NOSE CREEK MUSEUM
**APPENDIX A**

Grade 6 Math lesson

| Name of Lesson:  Stealing the Sun: Surface Area of Rectangular Prisms |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade Level: 6  |                                                                                   |
| Time: 150 minutes (3 x 50 minute math periods) |                                                                                   |

**Objectives:** To motivate students to explore the concept of surface area by exposing them to a Haida creation story regarding the origin of the sun, moon and stars.

To engage students in the task of constructing a series of nested boxes, to be used as a prop for their drama presentations to other classes, in order to expose other students to different worldviews.

**Curriculum Expectations:**

**Math**

**Measurement**

1. Estimate, measure and record length, area, mass, capacity and volume, using the metric measurement system
2. Determine, through investigation using a variety of tools (e.g. nets) and strategies, the surface area of rectangular and triangular prisms
3. Solve problems involving the estimation and calculation of the surface area and volume of triangular and rectangular prisms

**Assessment Strategies:** Diagnostic Assessments: 1) Students’ sticky note answers to the KWL chart "What I know about finding the area of the net of my rectangular prism"

2) Anecdotal notes regarding students’ ideas about how many squares and rectangles they will need to construct the nets for their rectangular prisms. Formative assessment: Collection of students’ placemat answers about the dimensions of the box needed to hold all of the world’s light. Collection of individual student answers in their math notebooks and journals to assess student understanding of the concept of surface area. Collection of student boxes to assess how students have measured length, width and area.

**Accomodations and Modifications:**

English language learners will be put in a group with a peer who speaks their first language. Universal design for the lesson includes the use of visual aids (including picture from the picture book, the teacher-created net and demonstration of the creation of the rectangular prism from this net). Students whose IEP’s indicate challenges with writing may use pictures and numbers, and orally express their reasoning for the design of their boxes to the teacher, who will scribe their explanation for them in their journals.

**Materials required:**

- Book *The Raven Steals the Light* by Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst (including Bill Reid’s illustration of this creation story)
- Chart paper and markers for KWL chart
- Pieces of chart paper (2 per group) and markers for students’ group work
- Sticky notes (two per student)
- Scissors (one per each group of students)
- Bottles of glue (at least 1 per group)
- 4-5 boxes of popsicle sticks
- 1 ruler per student
- Pre-made chart paper placemats (1 per group)
- at least 20 cardboard boxes
- 1 photocopy per student of the rectangular prism net + 1 copy for teacher to put together
Math Period 1

Introduction (Hook)

Timing: 15 minutes   Grouping: Whole Class

Show students the Bill Reid’s illustration of the Raven stealing the sun. Ask students to think-pair-share what they think this story is going to be about. Draw students’ attention to the nested boxes illustrated. Ask students to count the number of boxes in the illustration (3 boxes). Tell the class that they will hear a creation story from Canada’s West Coast Haida Aboriginal peoples. Read students “The Raven Steals the Light.” Ask students to think-pair-share for each of the following questions, and then follow with whole-class discussion.

1. Why do you think the Haida culture tells this story? What does it explain?
2. Do you believe that this is the way the sun, moon and stars came to be in the sky? If you don’t, why do you think we read this story?
3. Would you have known this belief about the creation of the sun, moon and stars existed if we hadn’t read this story today?
4. Do you think it’s important to know about the beliefs of other cultures? Why or why not? (Lead into a discussion about respect for other’s beliefs, and connect student ideas with how the European explorers did not understand or respect First Nations beliefs).

Tell students that they will dramatize this story and share it with their primary reading buddies. In order to do this, they will need to create the props necessary for the story—including the nested boxes, which we will be creating in our math class.

Middle

Timing: 10 minutes   Grouping: Whole Class

Ask students to take a minute to write down or sketch how many rectangles and how many squares they think each of their 7 boxes will need. After 2 minutes, ask for student answers and write them on the board. Then tell students to find someone with a different answer than theirs, and defend their position (4 minutes). During this time, use anecdotal notes to assess whether students remember how to make a rectangular prism. After this is done, discuss answers with the students and work in the following information:

A rectangular prism (a box) has six faces. 4 are rectangles and 2 are squares. A cube is also a possibility for a box. It has 6 square faces. For the purposes of our boxes, we are going to make them rectangular prisms.

Show students a net of a rectangular prism (on overhead—see attached for net), and demonstrate putting this net together.

Timing: 25 minutes   Grouping: Small Groups

Show students a tennis ball and tell them that it represents all the light in the world. Explain that when it comes to balls (spheres) we don’t really talk about how width or long they are—we have a term called diameter that tells us how wide they are all the way around (show students the diameter of the tennis ball). Tell students that the diameter of their “light” (how “wide” it is) is about 7 centimeters and the “height” of their light is also the diameter, and is also 7 centimeters. Tell students that if the light were a cube, it would be 7 centimeters wide, 7 centimeters long, and 7 centimeters high. Write these dimensions on the board so students can refer to them during the activity.
Divide students into groups of 3. Distribute tennis balls and rulers to each group, and then ask students to solve the following problem:

“What do you think the length and the width of the rectangles and squares for your box could be if we want to make sure that all the light in the world (this ball) is contained in the smallest box?” Emphasize that there is more than one answer.

Distribute the sample rectangular prism net handout (see attached) to the students along with a placemat. Ask each student to draw and explain, on their placemat, using pictures, numbers and words, the dimensions of each rectangle and each square (the measurements for its length and width) that they would use to make their box. Tell the group they must create a net, like the model they have, with all the dimensions labelled. Have the group draw the design they have decided to go with on a piece of chart paper, and write the reason why they decided on that design. Have each group present their answer to the class.

Discuss student answers and help students see that if they want the light to fit in their boxes, the length and the width of each of their rectangles and squares must be greater than 7 cm.

**Math Period 2**

**Timing:** 10 minutes  **Grouping:** Whole Class

Tell students that today we are going to finish planning our boxes and start making them. Distribute 4 sticky notes for each student. Tell students to individually write their answers, along with their names (for assessment purposes) to the following questions on the KWL charts on the board. “What do I know about finding the area of the net for our rectangular prism box?” “What do I want to learn about how to calculate the area of the net for our rectangular prism box?” Discuss student answers.

**Timing:** 20 minutes  **Grouping:** Small Groups

Divide students back up into their small groups. Re-distribute the charts that students created last math period to explain the design of their boxes. Tell students that, in order to build their boxes for their presentations, they will need to use the materials provided. However, we have a limited amount of cardboard, so students must figure out, in advance, how much material they need. Tell students that they must design a net for each of their boxes.

Using chart paper, have each group of students work out how much material their group will need to use in order to build this box and have each group present the way they figured this out to the class.

Discuss the concept of surface area and tell students that, by adding up the areas of all the faces, they have determined the surface area for their smallest box (how much material they will need).

**Timing:** 20 minutes  **Grouping:** Individual

Tell students that, now that they have figured out the surface area for one of their boxes, they must answer the following question in their math books: “What are some possible surface areas for the next two nested boxes?” Ask students to draw the nets of these next two nested boxes. Ask students to explain their reasoning in their math journals using pictures, numbers and words.

**Math period 3**

**Timing:** 20 minutes  **Grouping:** Small Groups

Tell students that, using the nets they designed in their math notebooks as a starting point, their groups will design their nets for the next two nested boxes. They may test out their designs by cutting out the nets and putting them
together one inside the other. Once they have done this, the group must hand in their designs to the teacher to be looked over, and the teacher will give them the cardboard and popsicle sticks necessary to make their boxes.

Timing: 20 minutes Grouping: Small Groups

Write the directions on the board and explain the following to students: Each group member is responsible for measuring and cutting out one of the boxes from the cardboard. Students must put their names on the box that they produced. Students may then glue popsicle sticks on the outside of their cardboard nets, and decorate their boxes with markers.

Timing 10 minutes Grouping: Whole Class

After students have created their boxes, have each group present their reasoning for choosing the designs for these boxes.

Extensions:

Drama

Curriculum expectations:

--Students will create, rehearse, and present drama and dance works to communicate the meaning of poems, stories, paintings, myths, and other source material drawn from a wide range of cultures;

--identify the significance of symbols in dramatic explorations, and use various props appropriately;

Students will create scripts based on the story “The Raven Steals the Light.” Students will rehearse their interpretations of “Raven Steals the Light” and present them to their primary reading buddies. Students will journal about the significance of the boxes that they created, and what the boxes might represent, using their knowledge that cedar was sacred to the Haida culture.