

Aboriginal Perspectives Unit Guide for the Theme Youth

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Overall Objective

The focus of this unit on youth is *Our Hope...Our Future*. The NFB films used depict the struggle of Aboriginal youth to resolve the competing views of traditional cultures and contemporary society. Complicating this process is the challenge of emerging from the devastating effects of colonialism.

Grade Levels

7-12

Content Areas

Social Studies

History

Language Arts

Career Guidance

Native Studies

Films (and excerpts used)

If the Weather Permits, 2003 excerpt 2 (13 min 28 s – 15 min 53 s)

Mother of Many Children, 1977 excerpt 3 (15 min 13 s – 19 min 3 s)

Tales of Sand and Snow, 2004 excerpt 2 (24 min 50 s – 27 min 43 s)

Materials Required

Internet access, data projector, web-cam, poster paper, markers

Optional: tanned hide, leather hole punch, acrylic paints and brushes

Summary

The films in this unit guide were chosen to teach about the hardships of the past while offering a sense of hope for the future. Colonialism has cast a long shadow on all Aboriginal people of Canada. The activities focus on the realities facing youth in Native communities and helping to equip them with the skills to overcome adversity and work towards prosperity.

Introduction Activity (10 minutes)

We all need to know *where we are* and *where we are from* to have some sense of *where we are going*. Teachers, share with your students the path you followed that led you to where you are today. Discuss the concept of goal setting and how this process helped you achieve your own goals. Then have students view the films associated with this theme focusing on how each of the people depicted in the films faces the challenges in their own lives.

ACTIVITY 1: Overcoming Challenges by Recognizing Opportunity

(2 X 50-minute periods)

Step 1: View *If the Weather Permits*.

- Have students write a description of life for the youth of Kangirsujuaq.
- Brainstorm activities the young people might do in such a remote region, keeping in mind the activities they already participate in.

Step 2: Set up a video Web link with a northern school (refer to the Resource section). Encourage an exchange of ideas between the classrooms. Use the information gathered in the brainstorming activity to guide the dialogue between the two groups of students.

Step 3: Groups could explore the possibility of an educational exchange with the assistance of SEVEC: Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (see Resources).

Step 4: Review the community development plan for Kangirsujuaq. What are the short-term and long-term goals? (See Resources for the Web address.) Have students work in groups to create a plan for their own communities. Use poster paper to display group ideas.

ACTIVITY 2: Our Future Is Now! (2 X 50-minute periods)

Step 1: View *Mother of Many Children* and *Tales of Sand and Snow*.

- Discuss the notion that humans are a part of nature, not apart from it. What are the implications of human activity on our planet? How are values of stewardship portrayed in the film?
- Explore how students might change their own actions to reduce the impact on the environment.

Step 2: Ask students to write a slogan that encapsulates their belief about their relationship to planet Earth (ex: Respect Our Mother: Mother Earth, or Together We Make the Circle Strong). Refer to the Youth Canada Web site for ideas. Select and draw an image to accompany the slogan.

Step 3: Use a tanned hide as a canvas to display the slogan and image chosen by each student. Then paint the hide. The painted hide becomes a symbolic reminder of the class's commitment to honour our precious and fragile environment.

Closure Activity (5 minutes)

Ask students to select one idea from their discussions in class to share with their families at home. Extending the discussion to the home helps create momentum for those ideas to truly take flight.

Check for Understanding

Ask students to reflect on the phrase "Think Globally, Act Locally." How would this axiom apply to the activities done in this unit?

Evaluation rubric

Rubric for Group Discussion

Criterion	1	3	5
Participation	Off-task; distracting; inappropriate responses or contributions.	Shares some ideas; requires encouragement; sometimes needs redirection; may need prompting.	Actively participates, paraphrases; encourages others; is patient; is enthusiastic.
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates little comprehension of the problem; comes to hasty conclusions; little or no consideration of others' viewpoints.	Identifies the problem through restating main points, showing a general understanding; some/limited application of ideas.	Clearly identifies problem; considers others' viewpoints; formulates conclusions, makes comparisons and contrasts; applies extended learnings.
Communication of Ideas	Vague positions; judgmental; confrontational; shares own point of view in a negative fashion or is non-committal/withdrawn.	Demonstrates ideas in a general way; limited paraphrasing and questioning; passive interaction.	Has a well-defined position; uses questioning; paraphrasing and clarifying; uses positive body language (eye contact, posture, voice); supports others and is convincing.
Use of Knowledge	Refrains from contributing any knowledge or denigrates others' knowledge.	Shares a general knowledge of the issue.	Shares in-depth knowledge; applies knowledge to past, present and future issues.

References and Resources

ACTIVITY ONE

Kativik School District: Map of schools

http://www.kativik.qc.ca/html/english/our_organization/schools/index.html

Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada

http://www.sevec.ca/index_e.htm

Kangirsujuaq Community Development plan

http://www.nvkangiqsujuaq.ca/en/index_eng.htm

ACTIVITY TWO

Canadian Government Web site for Youth

<http://www.youth.gc.ca/yohome.jsp?lang=en&flash=1>

Appendix

Teacher's notes

ACTIVITY One:

- Links with Northern schools will have to be initiated by each classroom teacher. Contacts should be made before starting the unit.
- SEVEC is a Canadian charitable agency that assists in student exchanges across the country.

ACTIVITY Two:

- Note: If tanned hide is unavailable, then use a heavy gauge paper for the slogans and images.
- The Youth Canada Web site may be used for a number of activities around goal setting and career planning.