

# **SMALL POX – GENOCIDE OF ORAL CULTURES – SIMULATION MODEL**

## **BIG IDEAS**

**(Grade 4)** Interactions between First Peoples and Europeans lead to conflict and cooperation, which continues to shape Canada's identity.

**(Grade 5)** Canada's policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies.

**(Grade 6)** Economic self-interest can be a significant cause of conflict among peoples and government.

**(Grade 8)** Exploration, expansion and colonization had varying consequences for different groups.

**(Grade 10)** Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an exclusive, multicultural society.

**(Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12)** Indigenous peoples are reclaiming mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being despite the continuing effects of colonialism.

**(Genocide Studies 12)** The intentional destruction of peoples and their cultures is not inevitable, and such attempts can be disrupted and resisted.

## **CORE COMPETENCIES (possible examples)**

**Personal Awareness and Responsibility** – I can participate in classroom and group activities to improve the classroom, school, community and natural world.

**Social Responsibility** – I can share my ideas and accomplishments, and accept responsibility for my actions.

**Critical Thinking** – I can use observation, experience and imagination to draw conclusions and make judgements.

## **CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES (possible examples)**

I can differentiate between intended and unintended consequences of events and decisions.

## **KNOW DO UNDERSTAND (What will success look like?)**

**Know** – Learn about oral cultures and pre-contact First Nations societies on the Prairie; learn the calamitous effects of disease on Indigenous societies.

**Do** – Work collectively to narrativize experiences; reflect upon one's role within a larger community.

**Understand** – That cultural loss is both individually and collectively experienced/suffered.

## **BIG SIX HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPTS**

Cause and Consequence

Continuity and Change

The Ethical Dimension of History

## **UDL – UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (low floor, high ceiling)**

Invitational, oral structure; small and whole group conversational design.

## FIRST PEOPLES' PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

## COGNITIVE TOOLS OF IMAGINATIVE EDUCATION

**Story Form** – Orality; creating an emotional arc to the lesson.

**Personal Narratives** – Students express and understand their contributions to traditional FN societies.

**Metaphor** – The rear side of a traditional drum as the relational interdependence of FN communities.

**Vivid Mental Images** – In establishing a setting; the smallpox image reveal.

**Somatic Awareness/Bodily Senses** – At the smallpox 'reveal' and the onset of loss.

**Abstract Binary Opposites** – Abundance - Loss; Interdependence - Isolation; Life - Death.

**Jokes and Humor** – In building community skill set.

**Change of Context** – Interactive lesson, imaginatively situated elsewhere.

**Extremes and Limits** – The violence of smallpox; the extent of loss (80%).

**Heroic Qualities** – Of each student as well as the collective.

**Humanization of Meaning** – Comprehending the extent of cultural loss.

## INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

**Set the time machine** – Back to a semi-nomadic community; Blackfoot; circa 1820s; oral society; land-based skills; immediately *pre-contact* with European settlement.

**Invoke the metaphor** of the traditional FN drum; every person an interdependent thread contributing to the strength and integrity of the instrument (focused on the 'knot').

**Think-Pair-Share** – Everyone determines three traditional (non-anachronistic) skills that they actually possess now but would be useful to a traditional community (then).

**Gather twenty volunteers** (each receives a unique marker, such as a playing card).

**Twenty volunteers report their skills**, during which time students clarify and extend accurate historical knowledge to understand traditional FN society.

**Identifying missing skills**, necessary to the community's integrity and survival.

**Chance to adapt** the three reported skills of the volunteers (as necessary/possible)

**Reveal image of smallpox child** – Briefly discuss smallpox, symptoms, geography, fatalities, etc.

**Randomly cross out 80% of volunteers** (by name, predetermined by their unique marker).

**Identify the remaining skills** and, more importantly, what essential skills are now absent.

**Emphasize the distinction** – Personal loss (i.e. a grandparent) and a communal/systemic loss.

**Invoke the metaphor** of the traditional FN drum; most threats are cut, the drum has lost integrity, irretrievably damaged (because an oral culture/intergenerational memory losses).

**Back to the Present** – Situate smallpox into a larger conversation of cultural genocide: disease, legal systems, residential schools, voting rights, access to water, criminal justice systems, etc.

# "TEACHING AS STORY TELLING"

## SMALLPOX IN THE SHAPE OF SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

