Critically Examining, Analyzing and Evaluating Picture Books on Aboriginal Canada

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Description:
By developing critical thinking skills and information literacy skills, educators and students can help combat the damaging pervasive stereotypes found in literature. Educators and students need to critically examine, analyze, and evaluate literature to make sure minority groups are treated fairly, objectively, and accurately.

This is an opportunity for students to collaborate with classmates and critically evaluate Picture Books on Aboriginal Canada that have been written by Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors. As is the case with many minority groups in the U.S., in the standard K-12 public school curriculum, Indigenous people are often inaccurately portrayed and their contributions are inadequately represented. Consequently, it is important to examine how omissions and misrepresentations negatively impact individuals and contribute to their limited success and how developing relevant culturally sensitive curriculum inspires high achievement, and promotes educational equity and excellence. It is also important for future teachers and for students to consider how bias-free educational materials and resources better represent reality, encourage tolerance for individual differences, and provide students with the freedom to make up their own minds based on accurate information.

Students will have the opportunity to explore books written about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures. Students will be asked to complete a KWLH Chart, explore numerous web sites, articles and books on using Picture Books to learn about Aboriginal peoples, peruse reviews written on Picture Books on Aboriginal Canada, explore resources created by the Montana Office of Public Instruction to help teachers critically evaluate literature about and by American Indians and apply the criteria to Picture Books on Aboriginal peoples of Canada where appropriate. As is the case in classrooms across the United States where teachers cover Canadian culture, history, and geography, it is important for educators to validate and substantiate First Nations, Inuit, and Métis identity.

Grade Level:
Undergraduate Teacher Candidates; High School Juniors and Seniors

NB: This lesson was designed to be used with undergraduate teacher candidates enrolled in a Multicultural Foundations course in the state of Montana but can be adapted and used in Grade 11 or 12 high school language arts classrooms in any state. The same approach can be used to explore other Indigenous people or other minority groups.

Subject Areas:
Multicultural Foundations course (undergraduate); 11th or 12th Grade Language Arts/English

Duration:
A total of 180 minutes divided into two 90 minute class sessions or a combination of three 60 minute class sessions.

Goal:
Picture Books have a universal appeal. Picture Books on Aboriginal Canada will be used to introduce teacher candidates/students to the richness and diversity of Aboriginal Canadian cultures examined within their own unique contexts and within historical, contemporary, and future realities. This lesson will accomplish this goal by helping teacher candidates/students to develop information literacy skills by exploring the value of “reading-aloud” and critically examining, analyzing, and evaluating Picture Books to introduce a topic they know little about.

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
• develop metacognitive strategies as they plan for their inquiry, review the evaluation criteria, and monitor their progress through, research, discussions with group members, formative assessments, and class presentations
• explore the benefits of using Picture Books to provide insights into different cultures and alternative historical narratives and to use information literacy to distinguish between fact and fiction
• gain a deep understanding of a First Nations, Inuit or Métis cultures through the inquiry process
• develop a critical thinking skills model of instruction, coupled with resources carrying the authentic voices of Indigenous peoples

Standards:
This lesson aligns with INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) Standard 3: The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. In particular, students will have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the following knowledge, disposition and performance skills:

1. The teacher has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and community diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students’ experiences, cultures, and community resources into instruction;
2. The teacher is sensitive to community and cultural norms; and
3. The teacher seeks to understand students’ families, cultures, and communities and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students’ experiences (e.g. drawing explicit connections between subject matter and community matters, making assignments that can be related to students’ experiences and cultural norms).

Materials:
1. Articles/Books

2. Websites
   o American Indians in Children’s Literature, by Debbie Reese -- critical perspectives of indigenous peoples in children's books, the school curriculum, popular culture, and society-at-large. americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/
     http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/01/third-american-indian-youth-literature
   o First Nations/First Peoples Bookstore Index. The First Nations site is delighted to announce the opening of what is in effect a "satellite" branch of Amazon.com, the worlds largest on-line bookstore. Revenue generated through the use of this site will be used to continue the promotion of First Nations issues via the First Nations/Wounded Knee WWW sites. www.dickshovel.com/amadex.html
   o First Nations Resources http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/first_nations_resources.htm
   o The First Nations Webquest http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/First_nations/notes.html#Cross-Curricular%20Themes
Kidsbooks.ca This publishing house believes strongly in providing a diverse selection of books for children. This selection includes First Nations and aboriginal Picture Books, non-fiction information books, fiction and graphic novels. [www.kidsbooks.ca/department.aspx?DeptID=3700](http://www.kidsbooks.ca/department.aspx?DeptID=3700)

KWHL Chart -- What We Already Know (K), What We Want to Find Out (W), What We Have Learned (L), How We Expect to Find Out (H) [http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/First_nations/KWLchart.htm](http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/First_nations/KWLchart.htm)

Oyate, publisher and reviewer of books about Native Americans, particularly those aimed at school children. [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org).

Picture Books for H.S. Students: First Nations [http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/First_nations/picturebooks1.htm](http://gladstone.vsb.bc.ca/library/First_nations/picturebooks1.htm)


### 3. Assortment of possible Picture Books choices concerning Aboriginal Canada

- Andrews, Jan, *Very Last First Time*
- Auger, Dale, *Mwakwa Talks to the Loon*
- Blades, Ann, *A Boy of Tache*
- Bouchard, David, *The Elders Are Watching*
- Bouchard, David, *Nokum Is My Teacher*
- Bouchard, David, *The Song within My Heart*
- Brouchac, Jospeh, *Pushing Up the Sky: Seven Native*
- Brummel Cook, Connie, *Maple Moon*
- Caduto, Michael J. and Joseph Brouchac, *Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*
- Cameron, Anne, *Raven Returns the Water*
- Campbell, Nicola I. and Kim La Fave, *Shi-shi-eto*
- Cleaver, Elizabeth, *The Enchanted Caribou*
- Debon, Nicolas, *Four Pictures by Emily Carr*
- Ipellie, Alootook and David MacDonald, *The Inuit Thought of It*
- Johnson, E. Pauline, *Legends of Vancouver*
- Johnson, E. Pauline, *A Lost Island*
- Kusugak, Michael, *Arctic Stories*
- Kusugak, Michael, *Baseball Bats for Christmas*
- Kusugak, Michael, *Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails*
- Littlechild, George, *This Land Is My Land*
- London, Jack, *Fire Race: A Karyuk Coyote Tale about How Fire Came to the People*
- Loyie, Larry, *As Long As the Rivers Flow*
- Loyie, Larry, *The Gathering Tree*
- Shetterly, Susan Hand, *Raven’s Light*
- Silvey, Diane, *Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*
- Taylor, C. J., *Bones in the Basket*
- Taylor, C. J., *How Two Feather was Saved from Loneliness*
- Toye, William, *The Loom’s Necklace*
- Toye, William, *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*
- Trottier, Maxine, *Dreamstories*
- Trottier, Maxine, *Storm at Batoche*
- Valgardson, W.D., *Sarah and the People of Sand River*
- Van Camp, Richard, *A Man Called Raven*
- Wargin, Kathy-Jo, *The Legend of the Lady’s Slipper*
- Waterton, Betty, *A Salmon for Simon*
- Xerxa, Leo, *Ancient Thunder*

### Procedures:

1. Break students into groups of five.
2. Have each student select a Picture Book on Aboriginal Canada from the list below.
3. Have students read aloud their Picture Book to their group members.
4. Have students complete the KWHL Chart on the Aboriginal people portrayed in their Picture Book.
5. Have students research information on the Aboriginal culture portrayed in their Picture Book.
6. [at college level and in Montana] Have students review Montana OPI evaluation criteria.
7. Have students review the content, language, and illustrations in their Picture Book.
8. Have students complete the checklist on p.14 and complete the Evaluation form on p.16 of *Evaluating American Indian Materials & Resources for the Classroom*.
9. Have students research the use of Picture Books in gaining information on a topic.
10. Have students peruse web sites covering Picture Books on and by Indigenous authors.
11. Have students write a synopsis of their Picture Book.
12. Have students write comparative analysis essays covering reviews written and research done on Picture Books.
13. Have students prepare a class presentation on their Picture Book.

### Assessment:

- Students are asked to complete a KWHL chart—(K) What I Already Know; (W) What I Want to Find Out; (L) What I Have Learned; (H) How I Expect to Find Out—focusing on the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis highlighted in the selected Picture Book on Aboriginal Canada.
- Students are asked to complete the Checklist on p.14 and the Evaluation form on p.16 of *Evaluating American Indian Materials & Resources for the Classroom*.
• Students are asked to write a synopsis of their Picture Book.
• Students are asked to write a comparative analysis essay covering reviews written and research done on their Picture Book.
• Students are also asked to prepare a class presentation on their Picture Book that synthesizes their findings.

**Evaluation:**

The student rubric follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critically Examining, Analyzing, and Evaluating Picture Books on Aboriginal Canada</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed KWLH Chart focusing on the Aboriginal culture portrayed in Picture Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Checklist on p.14 and Completed Evaluation form on p.16 of Evaluating American Indian Materials &amp; Resources for the Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis of the story in your Picture Book highlighting the Aboriginal culture portrayed in Picture Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative analysis essay covering reviews written, and research done on Picture Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation on Picture Book</td>
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</tbody>
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**TOTAL POINTS:**