

Elementary Lesson: Black Bear, Red Fox - Colours In Cree by Julie Flett

Lesson created by Maya Anderson, 2020 Werklund Graduate

After getting a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Calgary in 2005, Maya has worked as an arts educator with many different organizations and young artists-in-training for the past 15 years. In 2018, Maya decided to become official and work towards getting a Bachelor of Education at the Werklund School of Education, which she achieved in 2020. She loved her learning journey so much that she wanted to continue working towards a Masters of Education. Her focus is on supportive, inclusive learning design through an arts immersion lens. She is passionate about experiential learning, interdisciplinary education, and the incorporation of student voice and choice. Maya is also fortunate to be the Mom of two amazing human beings who are her guinea pigs for all of her learning designs.

Resources used and possible concerns

- Picture Book: Black Bear, Red Fox - Colours In Cree by Julie Flett

Author/creator and/or literature background

- The picture book, Black Bear, Red Fox - Colours In Cree, is written and illustrated by Julie Flett, a Cree/Metis author and illustrator. It was published in 2017 by Native Explore.
- From the publisher: Black Bear, Red Fox - Colours In Cree is a dual-language board book authored and illustrated by Cree artist Julie Flett. Different animals and plants and their colours are shown in English and then in Cree
- In this beautifully illustrated, minimalistic picture book, Julie Flett shows us pictures of animals and flowers as well as their colour and names using Plains Cree, Swampy Cree and English.
- It teaches colours and animal names in Cree with a pronunciation guide making Cree accessible to young readers.

UPE course connections

- **Educ 420 - Issues in Learning and Teaching.** In this lesson students will be going outside to find materials for their creations. Learning from nature, the land and our connection to nature is an important part of Indigenous cultures. In addition, sharing their thoughts and final creation in a circle as well as self-reflecting is a central part to Indigenous culture.
- **Educ 435 - Literacy, Language, and Culture.** This resource connects all three elements of this course by encouraging practice with literacy, language and Cree culture. It provides a way in which students can interact with literacy in an experiential manner by exploring colours in nature, categorizing elements based on colour and creating an art piece to display their knowledge of colours and Cree and English languages.
- **Educ 450 - Diversity in Learning.** This lesson highlights strategies on how to engage students with diverse needs in numerous ways. Learning activities include listening to stories, participating in group discussion, creating artwork and written statements, and taking part in kinesthetic activities such as group games based on the topic of the book. Additionally, learning is broken into manageable steps to ensure that students of all levels are able to find success in the learning task.
- **Educ 456 - Assessment.** This lesson plan provides multiple ways to assess students, particularly where there are gaps in learning which allows teachers to adjust lessons based on students prior knowledge and grasp of concepts. Additionally, students are given the opportunity to show their knowledge in many

ways, including verbally through discussion, visually through art creation, and through free writing. The lesson concludes with a self-reflection piece that is geared specifically for younger elementary students. This allows students to be part of the assessment process and engage in metacognition of the experience.

- **Educ 520 - Interdisciplinary Learning.** This resource connects literacy, social studies, science, fine art, and language learning in an interdisciplinary manner. Using the story as the basis for the lesson, learning outcomes from ELA, visual arts, science, and social studies are woven together throughout the lesson. Students explore Cree language and culture in an experiential manner by creating an art piece that showcases their knowledge in a unique manner.

K-12 connection

- Targeted age range: Grades K-2 but could be used with older students with the addition of a written artist statement for the piece that students create.
- Subjects: language arts, fine art, science, social studies
- English Language Arts:
 - Respond to texts
 - Appreciate artistry of texts
 - Present and share
 - Respect others and strengthen the community
 - Work within a group
- Visual Art:
 - Decorate items personally created
 - Create an original composition, object or space based on supplied motivation
 - Use media and techniques, with an emphasis on exploration and direct methods
 - Create emphasis based on personal choices
 - Add finishing touches
- Science:
 - Describe seasonal changes, and interpret the effects of seasonal changes on living things
 - Identify and evaluate methods for creating colour and for applying colours to different materials
- Social Studies:
 - Demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building
 - Demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy
 - Appreciate how Aboriginal and Francophone peoples have influenced the development of the student's community
 - Appreciate how cultural and linguistic exchanges connect one community to another

Materials

- Black Bear, Red Fox - Cree Colours by Julie Flett
- Cardstock
- Markers
- Pencil Crayons
- Crayons
- Glue
- Stash of natural items (Leaves, flower petals, twigs, pebbles, feathers etc).
- Printout of Self-Reflection forms

Rationale

Big idea:

The languages in different cultures may be different but we experience many things, such as

	colours of the natural environment, in similar ways. By learning words in another language and exploring the similarities we have with other people, such as how we experience colours in nature, we build empathy, compassion and inclusion in our community.	
Purpose:	<p>This lesson provides an interdisciplinary and experiential learning activity that encompasses social studies, language arts, fine art and science. Through engaging with the story and reflecting on the cultural as well as artistic elements, particularly the representation of colours, of the book, students begin to see how they are similar to Cree people.</p> <p>By learning Plains Cree, albeit basic parts of the language, and perhaps struggling with the words, students develop empathy for people who do not get to speak their own language. Some students may be unaware that there are other languages spoken in Canada, so this provides a wonderful learning experience. By going on a nature walk and connecting to the land, as well as creating the beautiful art out of their natural items, students will experience a central component of Indigenous ways of knowing.</p>	
Lesson/Activities		
	Details	Assessment
Engage	<p>Welcome students to class/lesson/activity and invite students to sit in a circle. Using a talking stick (or stuffy), encourage students to respond to prompt “What are some colours that we can see in nature?” Students will pass the talking stick around the circle. The person with the talking stick is the only one who is allowed to speak. Students may pass the stick on without responding if they are not ready or would prefer to remain silent. If time permits, go around the circle one more time and allow those students who passed to speak if they are ready.</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Anecdotal evidence about students' knowledge and experience with taking care of other people.</p>
Explain	<p>To provide context for the story, explain to students that there are many Indigenous communities around Canada, and many in Alberta. Many Indigenous communities speak a dialect of Cree, such as Swampy Cree or Plains Cree, like in the book we are about to read. It is the most widely spoken Indigenous language in Canada, being spoken in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the NWT. 96,575 people speak Cree. There are many dialects including Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Swampy Cree, Moose Cree, James Bay/Eastern Cree (CBC/Radio-Canada, 2019). For more information on Cree visit https://originalvoices.ca/language/cree/.</p> <p>Explain that today we will read about Cree culture and learn animal, flower, and colour names in Cree. Read the book and stop to talk about the illustrations, the culture and the colours as you read the book. Stop at each colour and invite students to repeat the colour.</p>	<p>Formative assessment: Anecdotal evidence of students prior knowledge of Cree language and Indigenous culture.</p>
Explore	<p>After reading the story, invite students to share their favourite page and scene in the book.</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Anecdotal evidence of following instructions and</p>

	<p>Invite students to stand up so that we can play a colour game. Explain that you will say a colour name in Cree as well as hold up a card of the same colour. Students will have 30 seconds to find something that is the same colour. They will bring the item back to the circle. Once everyone is back in the circle we will all try to say the colour name in Cree. Do this for several rounds.</p> <p>After the game, invite students to sit down in a circle. Show the students a colour wheel, explain basic colour theory and how a colour wheel is organized: Primary colours (Red, Blue, Yellow), Secondary colours (Orange, Green, Purple), Warm (Red, Orange, Yellow), Cool (Green, Blue, Purple). Explain that we are going to create our own colour wheels using Cree numbers and nature. Explain that we are going on a nature walk. Students need to find small natural items like leaves, petals, pieces of bark, small pebbles, flowers, blades of grass etc. Students need to find as many different colours as they possibly can.</p> <p>Go on a nature walk around the school. Give each student a container that you have in your classroom (like empty yogurt containers, tupperwares, boxes from your recyclable materials etc) to carry their natural items.</p>	<p>representing numbers by collecting the correct number of items.</p>
<p>Elaborate</p>	<p>After the nature walk, come back to the classroom. Show students the sample (see below) and go through the self-assessment form so students know what they are working towards. Have students make their own colour wheels using the supplies provided. Have students label their colour wheels using colour names in Cree and English (depending on the level of the students, you could provide pre-made labels for the colour names).</p> <p>ALTERNATE: If students are more free-flowing and would like to create a picture from their natural items rather than a colour wheel, they may do so. Have students write two to three sentences describing the colours that they used in their creation (see sample below).</p> <p>Play music and invite students to create the most beautiful colour wheel/creation that they can. Provide tables with prewritten charts of numbers in Cree and English. Assist students with writing the Cree and English numbers.</p>	<p>Formative assessment: Understanding of task and process. Teacher will circulate among students and assist where necessary.</p>

Evaluate	<p>At the end of the creation time, invite the students back to the circle. Pass the talking stick around the circle and encourage students to share their creations with one another and reflect on their experience with the activity. Prompt students to share what they liked best, what worked well, what they learned and what they would do differently next time. Also invite students to share how they could take care of the item that they chose. As before, only the student with the stick is allowed to talk, and if students wish to pass they may do so.</p> <p>Invite students to fill in their self-reflection form (see below). Go through the categories to make sure that students understand the criteria.</p>	<p>Summative assessment: Assess completion of their creation based on criteria below. Students will fill in the self-reflection form.</p>
Total Time	<p>Approx. 85 mins (Could be split into multiple sessions: Session 1: Read story, respond to story in sharing circle, play colour game, go on nature hunt Session 2: Recap numbers, begin to create colour wheel collage Session 3: Finish collages, share and self reflect</p>	
Supporting sources		
<p>CBC/Radio-Canada. (2019). Cree. Retrieved from https://originalvoices.ca/language/cree/ Flett, J. (n.d.). About. Retrieved from https://www.julieflett.com/contact</p>		

Colour Wheel Rubric - Self Reflection Form			
Choose which level you think you are at for each part of the project using the three categories below. Circle your choice.			
My Name Is:			
	I am an expert	I'm almost there	I'm still learning
I wrote the Cree and the English names for my colours	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
I used the correct colours on my colour wheel.	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
My art is carefully made. Cutting, glueing, and colouring are neat.	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
My art is unique and I used my own ideas.	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊

Samples





My fairy has a wāpikwanīwinākosiw skirt, a osāwisiw shirt, askihtakosiw wings, a wāposāwisiw hat and nīpāmāyātisiw shoes.