

Title: Using “Secret Path” to Analyze How Literary Techniques Communicate Meaning and Emotion.

Bio: I am a junior highschool teacher in Calgary and have lived here my entire life. I am an Indigenous woman from George Gordon’s First Nation and many family members of mine have attended the previous residential school on the reservation. I myself have dealt with the impact of being ashamed of my identity and culture and want to share my journey of acceptance to educate and inspire other people to be proud of their identity.

<p>Resources used and possible concerns</p>	<p>Secret Path Gord Downie's The Secret Path Neither Gord Downie or Jeff Lemire are Indigenous, therefore the resource itself is not an authentic First Peoples resource. Resource contains sensitive content</p>
<p>Author/creator and/or literature background</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Downie, Gord Gord Downie was a Canadian singer/songwriter and was well known as The Tragically Hips’ front man. However, Gord was also a writer and activist. He unfortunately passed away from brain cancer in 2017. Prior to his passing, Gord released a solo album, graphic novel and animated television film “Secret Path” where he retold the story of a young boy who tried to escape residential school. In addition, he began the Downie &amp; Wenjack Fund to build cultural understanding and a path toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.</li> <li>- Lemire, Jeff Jeff Lemire is a Canadian cartoonist who partnered with Gord Downie in 2016 to create a graphic novel retelling the story of Chanie Wenjack.</li> </ul>
<p>UPE course connections (not exhaustive)</p>	<p><b>Education 445 - Individual Learning: Theories and Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson fits well in the goal of the course which is to apply theories using examples that demonstrate and exemplify individual learning. This is because the assignments students will complete will allow them to express their individual perspective and creativity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education 450 - Diversity in Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson plan will allow pre-service teachers to see how using a variety of activities and assessment within one lesson implements a diverse approach to learning.</li> <li>- Additionally, this lesson allows pre-service teachers to experience a lesson that contains a multitude of media and technology within a lesson (video, song lyrics,</li> </ul>

	<p>graphic novel, artistic creation, visual thinking, etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson will also allow pre-service teachers to observe how one lesson can have different forms of formative assessment (sticky notes, group discussion, exit slips) to accommodate a diverse set of learners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education 456 - Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson will allow pre-service teachers to observe how one lesson can have different forms of formative assessment (sticky notes, group discussion, exit slips) to accommodate a diverse set of learners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education 530 - Indigenous Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson will allow pre-service teachers to learn an example of an experience many Indigenous peoples endured related to education as this is a story of a boy who ran away from residential school, an educational institution designed to assimilate the Indigenous culture.</li> <li>- Teachers will also be able to experience the lesson themselves and take it to be used in their own classes.</li> </ul>
<p>K-12 connection</p>	<p>English Language Arts - Grade 7-9  <b>2.2 Respond to Texts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↪ experience oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres ( journals, nature programs, short stories, poetry, letters, mysteries, historical fiction, drawings and prints)</li> <li>↪ discuss how techniques, such as colour, shape, composition, suspense, foreshadowing and flashback, are used to communicate meaning and enhance effects in oral, print and other media texts</li> <li>↪ compare the choices and behaviours of characters portrayed in oral, print and other media texts with those of self and others</li> </ul>
<p>Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secret Path book (optional)</li> <li>- Secret Path YouTube video, Smart Board/projector to play it on and speakers</li> <li>- Sticky notes</li> <li>- Pens</li> <li>- Whiteboard/chart paper</li> <li>- Individual Paper and colouring utensils</li> </ul>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p><b>Big idea:</b> Students will discuss how different techniques such as colour are used to communicate meaning through a music video, song lyrics and illustrations. Simultaneously, students will build an emotional connection to the tragic story of a boy who ran away from residential school and why he may have</p>

	<p>made that decision to run away.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> This plan is intended to be completed in the span of 3-4 lessons. Through this lesson, students will understand that techniques in texts can be used in a variety of ways to translate emotion and tone. Additionally, students will be learning about the residential school system and why children like Chanie Wenjack ran away. Through this, students will also participate in an activity where they will use colour to showcase emotion while also comparing their behaviours they enjoy, to Chanie's likes and dislikes. This will allow students to build an emotional connection to the story and will allow them to further understand why it is so important to honour the residential school survivors and the memory of those who did not survive.</p>
<p>Lesson/activities</p>	<p>To preface this activity, students should have a basic understanding of what residential schools were and why children attended them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warn students prior to beginning lesson that some vulnerable topics will be touched upon and that some may feel very emotional during this lesson. Ensure this is a safe space and that it is important to talk about what has happened in the past in order to help move forward and support Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities who may have been affected by the residential school system.</li> <li>2. Begin video, <b>only</b> telling students they need to listen to the words and to watch the images on the screen. Encourage students to try and immerse themselves in the video, really paying attention to the detail of the images and techniques used. Begin the video at 3:00 (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGd764YU9yc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGd764YU9yc</a>)</li> <li>3. At 4:00 stop the video to explain how far 600 kilometers is so students can truly appreciate how far Chanie tried to walk.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Can use the analogy: the distance is from Calgary to Edmonton and back or Calgary to Kelowna, to put the distance in perspective for students</li> <li>b. Optional: prior to or following the video, take the students on a walk outside (preferably during the fall time) to have them experience the elements and ask what physiological responses they are experiencing to allow them a taste of what</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>Chanie experienced.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Continue watching the video after discussing the distance Chanie had to walk. <b>*CAUTION: there is a swear word during the song “Secret Path”. Additionally, there is suggestive content referring to abuse during the song “Don’t Let This Touch You”.*</b></li><li>5. Finish video at 46:11</li><li>6. Ask students to volunteer a summary of what the story was about and what happened in the story. Have a group discussion about the plot, events, characters and the conclusion in order to ensure all students understand what has occurred in the story.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b>Discuss the timeline: The story starts with Chanie walking down a railroad, it then flashes back to a happier Chanie who is fishing with his family. Chanie consistently sees a Raven along the way throughout this book (you may choose to stop and dig more about the symbolism of a Raven (symbolizing death) here). The story then flashes back to Chanie’s time at the residential school where it shows Chanie and his friends running away. Chanie’s friends make it home and send him off with matches for his journey. Images of the matches disappearing indicate how long he’s been walking and the map of Ontario shows how much further he has to go. Chanie is woken up by his “father - discuss if this was real or not. More memories at the residential school are shown including the raven and scary masks. Chanie lies down and sees an image of his father and says “goodbye”. Here is where you can reiterate that this content is sensitive and sad but that it is important to discuss true events of the past in order to support survivors and the community. Here, discuss why Chanie wanted to run away (cutting hair, scary teachers/pastors, misses family)</b></li></ol></li><li>7. After discussing the events as a class, shift the focus to the meaning of colour during the video/book (this may come up in the retelling of the plot). Ask students to get into groups of 3-4 and ask one person from each group</li></ol>
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to grab a pack of sticky notes and a pen. While groups are getting organized, on a whiteboard or chart paper, create a 2x2 grid (shown below).

LIGHT COLOURS	DARK COLOURS
EVENTS IN THE STORY WITH LIGHTER COLOURS	EVENTS IN THE STORY WITH DARKER COLOURS

8. (5 MIN) Instruct students to first write down all the emotions or meanings they can think of when they think of “bright colours” versus “darker colours” on the sticky notes - using one sticky note per word for each category (light and dark). Encourage students to think of at least two emotions/meanings for each category. Give students approximately 4-5 minutes to complete this task.

a. Examples could be:

- i. LIGHTER COLOURS: happiness, calming
- ii. DARKER COLOURS: sadness, anger

9. (5 MIN) Ask students to bring their sticky notes to the front and place their words under the appropriate sections under the grid. Try and encourage students to place repeats on top of each other to indicate that many people think of the same meaning/emotion. When finished, read off the emotions listed.

10. (5 MIN) Next, instruct students to stay in their groups and use the sticky notes to write down all the events in the story they can think of when bright colours were used and when “darker colours were used. Again, use one sticky note per event per category. *\*This is when it may be helpful to have a physical copy for students to refer to. Alternatively, have the video with no sound playing in the background.\** Give students approximately 8-10 minutes to complete this task.

a. Examples could be:

- i. LIGHTER COLOURS: when Chanie is

with his family

- ii. DARKER COLOURS: during his time at the residential school or on the train tracks

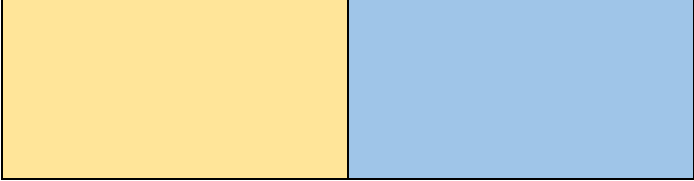
11. (10 MIN) Ask students to bring their sticky notes to the front and place their words under the appropriate sections on the grid. Try and encourage students to place repeats on top of each other. When all sticky notes are at the front, begin a group discussion about how the events that brought Chanie joy and happiness were illustrated with yellows and green and events that brought Chanie sadness and ultimately death, were illustrated using darker colours such as black and blue.

12. Next, introduce the assignment they will complete in response to the video.

- a. YOUR TASK: complete an illustration of 1) something you love doing or something that brings you happiness and 2) a fear of yours, something that makes you nervous or something that you don't like
- b. Students will receive a piece of paper, instruct students to split this paper in half with a line (or pre-prepare some).
- c. Tell students on one side of the paper you will draw something you enjoy or something that brings you happiness and that they must use colours that are bright and that symbolizes happiness (*note: they are not to just use their favourite colours, but colours that SYMBOLIZE emotions of happiness - this may be an opportunity to expand on a conversation that certain colours symbolically mean different emotions*)
- d. On the other side of the paper, students will draw something they are scared of, or something they don't like. This side must be coloured with darker colours or colours that symbolize sadness and fear.
- e. Examples could be: An illustration of family on the happiness side and an illustration of airplanes or a fear they have on the other.
- f.

illustration of something that make you happy

illustration of something you don't like

	 <p>13. On the back of the illustration, ask students to answer the following questions as an exit slip:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. How did the colour help you better understand the events in the story?</li><li>ii. In the story, how did using colour enhance your emotional response (friendly language for younger grades: In the story, how did the use of colour influence how you felt during the video)?</li><li>iii. How do you or the illustration you drew relate to the events Chanie enjoyed doing (example: spending time with family, fishing, spending time with friends)</li></ol>

Supporting Sources (APA):

Downie, G., Lemire, J. (2019). *Secret path*. Toronto, ON: Simon & Schuster.

Jeff Lemire. (2020, July 31). Retrieved August 26, 2020, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff\\_Lemire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Lemire)

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund. (2020). Retrieved August 26, 2020, from <https://www.downiewenjack.ca/>