

THE SHARING CIRCLE LESSON PLAN

Grade Levels					
1-3					
Time in Lesson	Two 30-45 Minute Sessions	K-12 Alberta Curriculum Connections	Social Studies, English Language Arts, Health, Math, General Literacy	Educ Course Connections	Educ 420 - Issues in Learning and Teaching Educ 435 - Literacy, Language & Culture Educ 445 - Individual Learning: Theories and Application Educ 520 - Interdisciplinary Learning
Developed by	<p style="text-align: right;">Jenny Yuen</p> <p>Jenny Yuen is an education and science graduate from the University of Calgary's class of 2020. Jenny has a passion for working with elementary aged children particularly from K-3. Jenny is passionate about creating safe and welcoming learning environments for risk taking while exploring new ideas and possibilities. Jenny is enthusiastic and passionate about life-long learning and hopes to share this with all those that come across her path. She can be directly reached at jenny.yuen@ucalgary.ca.</p>				

Rationale
<p>Big Idea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharing Circles is a sacred Indigenous tradition. By using sharing circles/talking circles as part of the classroom instruction we are providing students with a safe environment where they can share their perspective and listen to the point of views of others. ● Partaking in a sharing circle shows that everyone is equal and everyone belongs. ● The intention of sharing circles is to understand and connect with one another <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Sharing Circle</i> is a resource that is written by an Indigenous Elder, Theresa “Corky” Larsen-Jonasson - Cree/Danish Metis Elder with roots in Red Deer, Didsbury and Maskwacis First Nations (Medicine Wheel Education, 2020). She shares with us authentic cultural stories of Indigenous traditions. ● This resource is a picture book which is unique towards bringing in Indigenous knowledge into an elementary classroom.

IDENTIFY DESIRED RESULTS

Learner Outcomes from the K-12 Alberta Curriculum Program of Studies

What are the SPECIFIC outcomes to be addressed in this lesson?

Social Studies

- In what ways do people cooperate in order to live together peacefully?
- How do groups make decisions?
- What are some examples of traditions, celebrations and stories that started in the past and continue today in their families and communities?

English

- Represent and explain key facts and ideas in own words
- Talk about information-gathering experiences by describing what was interesting, valuable or helpful
- Relate aspects of stories and characters to personal feelings and experiences
- Retell important aspects of oral, print and other media texts
- Participate in shared listening from a variety of cultural traditions and genres such as stories

Health

- Identify the characteristics of being a good friend (consideration of feelings, kindness, listening)
- Demonstrate simple ways to resolve conflict, with limited adult assistance

Math

- Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems.

**University of Calgary Education Course Connections
(Non-Exhaustive)**

Educ 420 - Issues in Learning and Teaching

- This course takes on a critical pedagogy lens and looks at the issues we face in education, such as what is currently missing in our curriculum. By using this resource, we are contextualizing the use of Sharing Circles to make it relevant in our classroom community and not just a tool that is used by the Indigenous people from long ago.
- One of the main themes in Educ 420 looks at the “Nature of Learning.” This resource showcases the importance of listening and learning from others which ties in closely to how people learn naturally.

Educ 435 - Literacy, Language and Culture

- This course showcases the responsibility that educators have in K-12 literacy no matter what specialization you are in. In addition, Educ 435 brings to light the intersectionality between literacy, education, culture and society. By using *The Sharing Circle* you will be providing culturally relevant materials through literacy that reflects the culturally diverse ways of knowing into your classroom.

Educ 445 - Individual Learning: Theories and Application

- This course introduces teachers with various techniques to support and meet the needs of diverse learners in our classrooms. This lesson plan is written in the universal design for learning approach which provides multimodal ways for students to engage in learning, express their learning and represent their knowledge.

Educ 520 - Interdisciplinary Learning

- To create a meaningful learning experience for our students where they develop deep understandings this course highlights the importance of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. This lesson plan is designed with an interdisciplinary approach in which students are provided with opportunities to experience math, social studies, health and general literacy all together while being in a social context of learning from different perspectives as members share in the Sharing Circle.

<p align="center">Objectives in student-friendly language</p> <p align="center">What will students understand/experience/appreciate as a result of this lesson?</p>	<p align="center">Assessment Strategies</p> <p align="center">What will I accept as evidence of learning/development? Have I employed formative assessment? Do I make use of prior assessments in this lesson?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can develop an appreciation for the Maskwacis “mask-ka-cheese” (Willier, 2013) First Nations Peoples in Alberta ● I can identify the importance of Sharing Circles to the Indigenous people of our land ● I can identify the importance of how and why a sharing circle should be used ● I can identify the important parts of a story and retell it ● I can understand the perspectives of others ● I can listen to others ● I can tell the difference between big and small problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share during the sharing circle what they think was the important part of that story. Be able to visually represent this on the storyboard ● Participate in the thumbs up, sideways and down to identify whether a problem is “always, sometimes or never” a problem ● Writing journals and writing down why the animals in the story use a sharing circle. Taking on the perspective of an animal in the story and writing about how they felt. What are other ways you can solve problems in life. Without prompting we will see if they are able to make a personal connection with the story.
<p align="center">Resources</p> <p align="center">What materials/resources/technology will be required?</p>	<p align="center">Personalization/Differentiation</p> <p align="center">How will you attend to the needs of ALL learners in this lesson?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Sharing Circle (Written by Theresa “Corky” Larsen-Jonasson) ● Talking Stick ● Writing Journals ● Paper for Story Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeating the parts of the story multiple times (students retell the important parts) ● Story will be told first with just the words. The second time the story is told the pictures will be shown ● When writing, words that are longer than four letters will be provided to students on sticky notes ● Students will provide anonymous feedback by sitting with their eyes closed for a portion of the sharing circle activity. Students will be asked to consider whether they think a problem is a “always, sometimes or never problem.”

Author/Creator/Literature Background

Author

- Theresa “Corky” Larsen-Jonasson is a Cree/Danish Metis Elder with roots in Red Deer, Didsbury and Maskwacis First Nations (Medicine Wheel Education, 2020).

The Sharing Circle

- Published in 2016 by Medicine Wheel Education - a company that aims to deliver culturally authentic books, resources and tools specialized for teachers and schools (Medicine Wheel Education, 2020).

LESSON PLAN SEQUENCE

Introduction

How will you **ACTIVATE** prior knowledge and **ENGAGE** them in the lesson and how does this lesson connect to prior lessons?

- Begin by asking students how they have solved problems in the past.
- Show students the cover of *The Sharing Circle* and spend some time talking about the author.
 - Map of Alberta and locate where the roots of author come from: Red Deer, Didsbury and Maskwacis First Nations
 - Spend some time to talk about the land this lesson is situated on. (Ex: Calgary is situated on Treaty 7 territory)
 - Author is Cree/Danish Metis Elder - take the time to go over what that means
 - Author lives according to her traditional indigenous teachings taught by her parents, Kokom, aunties, uncles - discussion about how students are taught their cultures at home
- Let students know that the Sharing Circle is found in many cultures that have a strong oral tradition. They are found in many First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities here in Canada. Sharing Circles are used for many reasons including having discussions to solve problems. However, it is important to note that different nations have different protocols for the Sharing Circle.
- Go over protocols of using Sharing Circles (Alberta Education, 2013).
 - All members are treated equally and respectfully in a safe and natural setting
 - Use a sacred object such as a talking stick for turn-taking
 - Members should speak from the heart
 - Those that are listening should be doing so actively and free from judgement.

Learning/Activity Sequence

How will students ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN, ELABORATE, and/OR EVALUATE their understandings of the outcomes.

What is the TEACHER doing? What is your plan for the body of the lesson? What steps are taken during the lesson?	What are the STUDENTS doing? How are they engaged while you are teaching the lesson?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start in a sharing circle formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important that the teacher is also a participant in the Sharing Circle as everyone is equal ● Teacher shows students the cover of the story book that we are going to read. Teacher proceeds to cover the book with a piece of paper so that the students are not able to see the pictures of the story book. ● The teacher stops at four parts of the story and asks students to draw down on their story board what they thought was the important part of that section of the story. ● The teacher will proceed to ask a few students what they thought was important in that particular section of the story. ● Teachers will draw out the important parts of the story on a white board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important that the white board is in the middle of the circle so everyone is equal ● Teacher reminds students that different people have different perspectives and different people may have different ideas to what they think are important in that part of the story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are listening to the teacher tell the story. ● Students draw out what they thought was the important part of the story on their story board paper. ● Students are selected to verbally state out loud what they thought was the important part of that story.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After the entire story is told and there are 4 important parts of the story being displayed on the board, the teacher will ask one student to retell the story based on the important parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One student will be selected to retell the story based on the important parts that are displayed on the board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher will retell the story with the pictures this time and ask them to see if they have changed their mind on what they thought are the important parts of the story. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remind your students that sometimes when you listen to something again and take in the perspectives of others you may hear details that you may have missed the first time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will listen to the teacher retell the story with pictures this time and consider whether they think the important parts of the story have changed after they can see the book.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher asks students to consider when they will use a sharing circle to discuss a problem. Are the problems always, sometimes or never problems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will turn around in the sharing circle with their eyes closed and rank

- Teacher asks students to turn around the sharing circle and offer examples of “always, sometimes, never problems” and see how they will rank these problems based on thumbs up, sideways and down.
- Teacher takes formal observations of what the students rank those problems.

different problems as if they are always, sometimes or never problems.

Conclusion

How will you ensure students walk away with a sense of understanding the PURPOSE of the lesson and its IMPORTANCE to their learning?

- Students will be asked to write in their writing journals answers to the following questions and prompts:
 - 1) Why did the animals use a sharing circle in the book? (Must use the word because)
 - 2) Pick one character and tell me how you think they felt in the story.
 - 3) Can you think of a different strategy to solve a problem other than the sharing circle?
 - 4) Can you share a personal connection with the story?
 (Questions can be adapted to the grade level you are teaching)

Sources

Alberta Education. (2005). Talking circles. *Our words, our ways: Teaching first nations, Metis and Inuit learners* p. 163. Retrieved from <https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615876/our-words-our-ways.pdf>

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