

Elementary Lesson: We All Count - A Book of Cree Numbers 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: We All Count - A Book of Cree Numbers by Julie Flett

Author/creator and/or literature background

- The picture book, We All Count, is written and illustrated by Julie Flett, a Cree/Metis author and illustrator. It was published in 2014 by Native Explore.
- From the back cover: Whether in the country or the city, creature or insect, plant or animal, a part of a big family or a small family, we all live together and we all take care of one another. We all count. (Flett, J., 2014).
- In this beautifully illustrated picture book, Julie Flett shows us pictures of Cree culture as well as counting using Plains Cree, Swampy Cree and English.
- It teaches numbers 1-10 in Cree with a pronunciation guide making Cree culture 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 427 - STEM.** In this resource numbers are showcased as well as learning about Cree culture through the land. This has a strong connection to STEM as it connects science with math. In addition it could easily be used to develop a rich math problem.
- **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 storytelling and numbers in Cree. In addition, students explore literary devices such as imagery, point of view, and repetition.
- **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, math, fine art, science (if done in different seasons to observe seasonal changes).
- Math:
 - Say number sequence 0-10
 - Subitize and name familiar arrangements of 1 to 5 objects or dots
 - Relate a numeral, 1 to 10, to its respective quality
 - Represent and describe numbers 1 to 10, concretely and pictorially
- 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

Materials

- We All Count - A Book of Cree Numbers by Julie Flett
- Pre cut cardstock circles
- 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: By learning another language and seeing things through the eyes of someone in another

	culture, 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, math, fine art and science. Through engaging with the story and reflecting on the cultural as well as artistic elements of the book, students begin to see things from the eyes of Cree peoples.</p> <p>By learning Plains Cree, albeit basic parts of the language, and perhaps struggling with the words, students may 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 is one way you can take care of others?” 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 number names in Cree. Read the book and stop to talk about the illustrations, the culture and the numbers as you read the book. Stop at each number and invite students to repeat the number.</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>Explain that we are going to create our own number wall using Cree numbers and nature. Have each student choose</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Anecdotal evidence of following instructions and representing numbers by collecting the correct number</p>

	<p>a number from 1-10. Depending on the size of the class students may have to double up on numbers. 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 between 1-10 items each based on the number they chose.</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>	of items.
Elaborate ~ 30 mins	<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 number circle using the supplies provided. (Students may use pre cut number circles or cut their own depending on their skill level).</p> <p>Play music and invite students to create the most beautiful representation of their number that they can. Provide tables with prewritten charts of numbers in Cree and English. Assist students with writing the Cree and English numbers.</p>	Formative assessment: Understanding of task and process. Teacher will circulate among students and assist where necessary.
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>	Summative assessment: Assess completion of their number circle based on criteria below. Students will fill in the self-reflection form.
Total Time	<p>Approx. 85 mins (Could be split into multiple sessions: Session 1: Read story, respond to story in sharing circle, go on nature hunt Session 2: Recap numbers, begin to create number collage Session 3: Finish collages, share and self reflect</p>	

Supporting sources

CBC/Radio-Canada. (2019). Cree. Retrieved from <https://originalvoices.ca/language/cree/>
Flett, J. (n.d.). About. Retrieved from <https://www.julieflett.com/contact>

Number Circle 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 name for my number	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
I used the correct number of items on my circle	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
My art is carefully made. Cutting, glueing, and colouring are neat.	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊
My art is unique and I used my own ideas.	😊😊😊	😊😊	😊

Sample

