

Title: The Power of Storytelling and Symbolic Narrators

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.

Resources used and possible concerns	<p>Wenjack Some controversy surrounds the authenticity of Joseph Boyden as an Indigenous author</p>
Author/creator and/or literature background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boyden, Joseph</li> <li>- Joseph Boyden is a best-selling Canadian author of novels and short stories. He is of Irish and Scottish descent and claims Indigenous descent, although this is disputed. He is well known for writing about First Nations culture (Wikipedia, 2020)</li> </ul>
UPE course connections (not exhaustive)	<p><b>Education 435 - Literacy, Language and Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson will allow pre-service teachers to experience an activity, that they can use in their future classrooms, that focuses on the power of storytelling and the literary skills of summarizing and retelling</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>- This lesson will also allow pre-service teachers to observe how one lesson can have different forms of formative assessment (entrance slips, 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 (entrance slips, charting during group discussion, jigsaw activity and 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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers will also be able to experience the lesson themselves and take it to be used in their own classes.</li> </ul>
K-12 connection	<p>Grade 7-12</p> <p><b>2.3 Understand Forms, Elements and Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify the narrator's perspective, and explain how it affects the overall meaning of a text</li> </ul> <p><b>3.1 Plan and Focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use note-taking, outlining or representing to summarize important ideas and information in oral, print and other media texts</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ~12 copies of Wenjack (or photocopied copy of each chapter if copyright rules are followed)</li> <li>- Paper and pens</li> <li>- Technology for research (iPad, laptop, desktop, etc.)</li> </ul>
Rationale	<p>Big idea: Students will read portions of “Wenjack”, in the form of literary circles. Groups will be responsible for analyzing the narrator they are assigned to and will focus on the perspective it is written in. A jigsaw activity will be completed where all members of each group will have the opportunity to share as well as listen to each portion of the story and what the respective narrators symbolize. This activity may carry over into more than a one day activity - depending on how much time is allocated for your class.</p> <p>Purpose: The main purpose of this activity is for students to critically analyze the art of storytelling and the value it has in Indigenous cultures. Additionally, students will research the symbolic meaning of their assigned narrator/creature. On top of analyzing the literary devices in this text, students will also be learning about the tragic story of Chanie Wenjack and just one of the consequences of the residential school system.</p>
Lesson/activities	<p>To preface this lesson, students should have a general understanding of what residential schools are and why they were put in place.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (5-8 MIN)Begin the lesson by handing out an entrance slip (can be done on scrap piece of paper) with the following questions:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What was the purpose/reasoning for residential schools in Canada?                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Answers should include: to assimilate the Indigenous communities to align with the</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p style="text-align: center;">European culture and values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>b. Generally speaking, how were children treated in these schools?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Answers should include: poorly, victims to various abuse, bad, neglect, etc.</li></ul></li><li>2. While students are answering the questions, walk around the room to complete a formative assessment, noting which student may need more assistance or review prior to starting the jigsaw activity. Collect the entrance slips</li><li>3. (10 MIN)Next, in a mini lesson, introduce the concept of storytelling to the group. Begin a group discussion with the following prompts:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. What do you know about storytelling? Why is it used?</li><li>b. Why do you think a lot of Indigenous groups use the art of storytelling?</li><li>c. What could be some disadvantages to relying on storytelling to pass on information or agree on things?</li></ul></li><li>4. (2 MIN)Following the mini lesson, instruct students to get into groups of 3-4 (it may be wise to pre-determine the groups in order to group students according to different strengths)</li><li>5. (5 MIN) Once students are in their groups, assign each group a narrator from the story “Wenjack” (2017, Boyden).<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. SUCKER FISH</li><li>b. CROW</li><li>c. HUMMINGBIRD</li><li>d. OWL</li><li>e. MOUSE SKULL</li><li>f. PIKE</li><li>g. SPIDER</li><li>h. WOOD TICK</li><li>i. BEAVER</li><li>j. SNOW GOOSE</li><li>k. RABBIT</li><li>l. LYNX</li></ul></li><li>6. (20 minutes) Once students are grouped accordingly, instruct the students to complete the following tasks:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Read your respective chapter of the story (if you are assigned “Owl”, read and analyze only the “Owl” section of the book)</li></ul></li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>b. Next, you are to take notes and summarize what happened in your section of the book. Make sure all group members are involved in this as each person will be responsible to showcase their retelling and summarizing skills.</li><li>c. Finally, using an electronic device, research what your group's animal historically symbolizes or metaphorically represents in literature in general. *This does not have to connect to an Indigenous group's meaning*. Example: a owl commonly represents wisdom, silence, intelligence and sometimes even death in literature</li></ul> <p>7. (30-40 minutes)Following the task completion, each individual from the group will meet with other groups through a jigsaw activity where you will listen and present your findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Organize students accordingly:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. One jigsaw group should consist of 12 students, one from each group. There should be enough for 2-3 jigsaw groups. Adjust groups that may have more or less people.</li><li>ii. Have all 12 students sit in a circle facing each other (inform students that sitting in a circle is symbolic and powerful in most Indigenous cultures and especially when storytelling - OPTIONAL: have students have something connected to the earth such as a rock or stick to act as a talking stick to symbolize who is talking and that others may not speak if they don't have it)</li><li>iii. Taking turns, Have students go in order of the chapters and have each person from their group retell the section of the story and what their animal symbolizes. Instruct students they should only take 2-3 minutes for their section</li><li>iv. While groups are completing this, conduct a formative assessment using charting to assess students' ability to retell and summarize their sections.</li><li>v. In the end, the entire book should be retold so that all students can understand the factual story of Chanie Wenjack,</li></ul></li></ul>
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	<p style="text-align: center;">through the fact-fiction story written by Joseph Boyden.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. As a closing activity, ask students to return to their seats and finish by asking students to complete an exit slip, answering the following questions (hand out scrap paper or use the backside of the previous entrance slip)<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Why do you think the author chose to have different narrators tell the story of Chanie Wenjack?</li><li>b. What was the impact of retelling and listening to others retell the story through a sharing circle?</li><li>c. Why do you think students like Chanie chose to run away from the residential schools?</li></ol></li></ol>
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Supporting Sources (APA):

Boyden, J. (2019). *Wenjack*. Vancouver, B.C., Langara College.

Joseph Boyden. (2020, August 16). Retrieved August 26, 2020, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Boyden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Boyden)