

BOOKS TO BUILD ON

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Thank you for downloading this Books to Build On Teaching and Learning "Seed" for you to plant in the garden of your professional practice! We are excited for you to use it in a good way to further Indigenous Education and reconciliation for you and your students. Please take them as inspiration and adapt them to your needs. See below for some important information.



Books to Build On: Indigenous Literatures for Learning

Okí, Ába wathtech, Danit'ada, Taanishi, Hello, Welcome!

What is this website?

Call for new lesson plan donations

Are you interested in contributing to the lesson plan selection available on Books to Build On? Have you written a lesson plan that accompanies an existing resource, or a resource you think we should include? Or, are you interested in creating a lesson plan for one of the resources? If you answered yes to any of these questions, the Books to Build On team would love to hear from you! We

These teaching and learning ideas originate from the Books to Build On: Indigenous Literatures for Learning website. Please check out the website, as well as the Indigenous Education resources at the Werklund School of Education, for more information on working with Indigenous literatures! We would love to hear your feedback on our educational materials! Please find our contact information on the website.

<https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/teaching-learning/indigenous-literatures-learning>

Open Education Resource



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How do we engage with Indigenous literatures in teaching and learning?

By Erin Spring & Aubrey Hanson

“Starting with Story” allows us to centre Indigenous voices, knowledges, people, and experiences in our teaching and learning

Why do we believe in teaching and learning with Indigenous literatures? During our years of engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems, communities, literatures, and scholarship, we have come to know that stories are at the heart of our work. Stories embody communities and their ways of knowing, being, and doing in an appealing form—reaching the heart, not only the head. Stories are inherently relational, in that a teller and listener are drawn into relationship with each other and with the story being told. And because relationships call for mutual responsibility, storytelling as a mode of sharing knowledge draws people into reciprocal webs of connection. Stories are not just for entertainment; they are there to guide how we live our lives. Thomas King’s oft-repeated line at the end of each chapter in the Truth about Stories lecture series is an illustration of this principle. King (2003) tells the reader that the story is “yours. Do with it what you will . . . But don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now” (p. 29). When deciding how to engage others in the work of Indigenous education, then, we believe in starting with story. We appreciate storytelling for how it respects Indigenous knowledge systems, ensures that knowledge remains rooted in context, and emphasizes the value of personal voice and collective listening. Stories are a key way into relational work in education.

Social responsibility is at the heart of our work, we are working for better futures

Teaching and learning with Indigenous literatures is part of the broader work of Indigenous Education. We believe that work in education must be socially responsible and committed to communities. Significant social impact is being created by the process of reconciliation and with Indigenous-focused teaching and learning happening across the country. We see our task as working to nourish Indigenous communities and knowledge systems, while challenging racism and colonialism. This work is also about fostering open and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This call for social responsibility informs our collaborations in the Books to Build On project.



Unit Plan for
**I Sang You Down
From the Stars**

by Tasha Spillett-Sumner

Resource Guide
& Unit Plan
Teacher-Author:
Emily Rozitis

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Resources used
& possible
concerns

Book: I Sang You Down From the Stars
Author : Tasha Spillet-Sumner

Publisher: Owlkids Books Inc.
Illustrator: Michaela Goade

Possible Concerns:

- Access to the physical book - the solution could be borrowing a copy of the book through your local public library, or using this link to a pre-recorded read-aloud:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyFHRN1nj_Q

Author/creator
& literature
background

Author : Tasha Spillett-Sumner

Illustrator: Michaela Goade

Author Background:

"Tasha Spillett-Sumner is a Cree and Trinidadian award-winning poet and author who is also working on her doctoral degree in Indigenous land-based education. She makes her home in Treaty 1 territory, Manitoba, where she raises her daughter, Isabella, with her husband."
(Hachette Book Group, 2022.)

Illustrator Background:

"Michaela Goade (Tlingit) is an award-winning designer and illustrator. She has illustrated a number of picture books including Shanyaak'utlaax: Salmon Boy, winner of the 2018 American Indian Youth Literature Best Picture Book Award, and the New York Times bestselling and Caldecott Award-winning book, We Are Water Protectors. She lives in Juneau, Alaska."
(Hachette Book Group, 2022.)

Literature Background:

"This unique baby book sings with Native cultural detail, while striking a universal chord in its celebration of the blossoming of love that comes with expecting and welcoming a new baby—with art by New York Times bestselling illustrator and Caldecott Medalist Michaela Goade. As she waits for the arrival of her new baby, a mother-to-be gathers gifts to create a sacred bundle. A white feather, cedar and sage, a stone from the river. Each addition to the bundle will offer the new baby strength and connection to tradition, family, and community. As they grow together, mother and baby will each have gifts to offer each other.
Tasha Spillett-Sumner and Michaela Goade, two Indigenous creators, bring beautiful words and luminous art together in a resonant celebration of the bond between mother and child."
(Hachette Book Group, 2022.)

Unit Contents

Unit Contents:

- What is a Constellation? Science/English Language Arts Inquiry Lesson
- Constellation VS. Star Chart, Science/English Language Arts Lesson

Grade 6
Curricular
Connections

(also suitable for diverse
multi-age disabilities
classrooms)

Unit Plan for

I Sang You Down From the Stars

by Tasha Spillett-Sumner

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Targeted Grade 6 Skills include:

Science:

"6-7: Observe, describe and interpret the movement of objects in the sky; and identify pattern and order in these movements.

Specific Learner Expectations - Students will:

- 1. Recognize that the Sun and stars emit the light by which they are seen and that most other bodies in space, including Earth's Moon, planets and their moons, comets, and asteroids, are seen by reflected light.
- 2. Describe the location and movement of individual stars and groups of stars (constellations) as they move through the night sky.
- 12. Understand that Earth, the Sun and the Moon are part of a solar system that occupies only a tiny part of the known universe."

(Alberta Education, p.36, 1996.)

English Language Arts:

"Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

2.4 Create Original Text - Structure texts:

- determine purpose and audience needs to choose forms, and organize ideas and details in oral, print and other media texts

Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to manage ideas and information.

3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate:

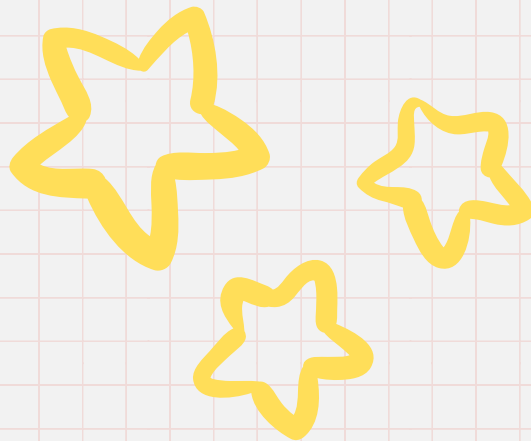
- Organize information: organize ideas and information using a variety of strategies and techniques, such as comparing and contrasting, and classifying and sorting according to subtopics and sequence
- Evaluate information: evaluate the appropriateness of information for a particular audience and purpose
- Recognize gaps in gathered information, and suggest additional information needed for a particular audience and purpose"

(Alberta Education, p. 44 & 58, 2000.)

Other: Social Skills- small or large group engagement, turn-taking, visual attention, listening skills (strategies may include personalized seating, whole-body listening, or Give me 5 supports.) Reading, writing and identifying numbers from a literacy perspective. Exploring language representation.

(Cunningham, Patrica M., Hall, Dorothy P., & Sigmon, Cheryl M., pp.142-143, 1999.)

All lessons have a primary focus of early numeracy and exposure and engagement with Indigenous language and culture, through written, visual, and oral storytelling.



Unit Plan for
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Materials

Grade Six - I Sang You Down From the Stars Resource Guide includes:

- What is a Constellation? Science/English Language Arts Inquiry Lesson Resource
- Constellation VS. Star Chart, Science/English Language Arts Lesson Resource

Other Materials:

- Writing tools (paper/whiteboard, chalk, pencil, crayon, wide-grip bingo-dabbers, marker, etc.)
- Access to the internet for research purposes (tablet, computer, etc.)
- Physical book

Rationale

Big Idea: This unit plan facilitates academic skill development, and connects students with Indigenous culture and family traditions. This unit plan is best suited for a typically developing grade six classroom, as well as diverse, multi-age, disability-focused learning environments.

Purpose: This unit plan supports classrooms with diverse skill levels, promoting engagement with fine arts and mathematical skills, in individualized ways. The goal is to create meaningful and authentic artistic and mathematical interactions with Spillett-Sumner's text, and facilitate exposure to, and understanding about, Indigenous culture. The intention is to connect students and educators with positive and authentic representations of Indigenous experiences through stories and imagery, and encourage students' personal creative expression.

Unit Contents

Contents:

- 2 Multidisciplinary Lessons (with a focus in science and literacy.)
- Grade Six I Sang You Down From the Stars Resource Guide (attached as Appendix, following Unit Plan)

****Lessons may be interchanged, based on the preference of the educator.*

Unit Plan for

I Sang You Down From the Stars

by Tasha Spillett-Sumner

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Lesson 1:

What is a
Constellation? Inquiry
Lesson

Accommodations include:

Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity

Science:

"6-7: Observe, describe and interpret the movement of objects in the sky; and identify pattern and order in these movements. Specific Learner Expectations - Students will:

- 2. Describe the location and movement of individual stars and groups of stars (constellations) as they move through the night sky.
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English Language Arts:

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3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate:

- Organize information: organize ideas and information using a variety of strategies and techniques, such as comparing and contrasting, and classifying and sorting according to subtopics and sequence
- Evaluate information: evaluate the appropriateness of information for a particular audience and purpose
- Recognize gaps in gathered information, and suggest additional information needed for a particular audience and purpose"

(Alberta Education, p. 44 & 58, 2000.)

Other Skills: Social Skills- small or large group engagement, turn-taking, visual attention, listening skills (strategies may include personalized seating, whole-body listening, or Give me 5 supports.) Exposure and engagement with Indigenous language and culture, through written, visual, and oral storytelling.

(Cunningham et al., pp.142-143, 1999.)

Preparation: Have a copy of the book available. Print enough copies of the "What is a Constellation?" resource for all students. Prepare writing materials. Ensure devices have access to these two webpages for students, on your SMARTboard (or on student's devices):

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzxWzjCiQMizj5F-QfTGmTzQPkpPr8gWW>

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/constellations/en/>

Activity:

1. Introduce the activity: students will be learning about constellations, though both a Western lens and an Indigenous lens.
2. Ask students, what do they know about constellations? Encourage students to discuss constellations with a peer, as you pass out the resource pages.
3. Ask students to fill in the first part of the resource using this webpage: <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/constellations/en/>
4. Next, watch one or more videos from this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzxWzjCiQMizj5F-QfTGmTzQPkpPr8gWW> together as a class. Alternatively, ask students to wear headphones or find a quiet space to watch the videos in groups of 2 or 3.
5. Encourage students to discuss the similarities and differences between the definitions and approaches to sky science, as they fill in the second part of the resource in small groups. Circulate and support students, as needed.
6. Encourage students to write objectively, using facts and clear language for the scientific inquiry.
7. Wrap up the lesson with a 5-minute discussion called "What did you learn and like today?" before cleaning up materials.

Unit Plan for

I Sang You Down From the Stars

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Lesson 2:
Constellation VS. Star
Chart

Accommodations include:

Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity

Science:

"6-7: Observe, describe and interpret the movement of objects in the sky; and identify pattern and order in these movements. Specific Learner Expectations - Students will:

- 1. Recognize that the Sun and stars emit the light by which they are seen and that most other bodies in space, including Earth's Moon, planets and their moons, comets, and asteroids, are seen by reflected light.
- 2. Describe the location and movement of individual stars and groups of stars (constellations) as they move through the night sky.
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Other Skills: Social Skills- small or large group engagement, turn-taking, visual attention, listening skills (strategies may include personalized seating, whole-body listening, or Give me 5 supports.) Exposure and engagement with Indigenous language and culture, through written, visual, and oral storytelling.

(Cunningham et al., pp.142-143, 1999.)

Preparation: Have a copy of the book available. Print out the "Constellation VS. Star Chart" template for all students. Ensure you have access to devices for students, or facilitate this lesson as a collaborative activity, using your classroom computer or SMARTboard.

Activity:

1. Introduce the activity: students will be making charts using facts about both stars and constellations.
2. Explain that when writing fact-based information, writers aim to depersonalize the text and use clear, informative language.
3. Pass out the resource "Constellation VS. Star Chart" to all students. Allow them to select a partner to work with, or pre-select students to work together. Allow them to open devices and navigate to these two webpages:

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/constellations/en/>

<https://science.nasa.gov/astrophysics/focus-areas/how-do-stars-form-and-evolve>

1. Ask students to complete the chart together, circulating and assisting as needed, for 20 minutes.
2. Ask students to finish final details, with a 5 minute warning. Close devices and put them away.
3. Facilitate a final brainstorm, writing down what you have learned on a large whiteboard or SMARTboard, asking students for ideas.
4. As an exit question, ask students: what is a fact about a star or a constellation that you learned?

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About the
Teacher-
Author:

Emily Rozitis has a Bachelors of Arts in French, and a Bachelors of Education in Inclusive Education from the University of Calgary. She is a practicing elementary school teacher who works in a severe disabilities classroom with non-verbal students (ages 6-12.) Emily uses a variety of communication supports in her classroom to promote a differentiated and inclusive literacy-rich environment. Her multimodal communication approach to learning includes the use of digital and paper-based communication devices, American Sign Language, assistive technology, and both verbal and visual methods of communication.

Emily believes that literacy, and learning, are for everyone. This resource is designed to be used in a multiple-disabilities classroom to support pre-literacy skills for every student, at every developmental level. Lessons are easily adapted to the typical Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 classroom.

I Sang You Down From the Stars

by Tasha Spillett-Sumner



This Resource Guide includes:

- What is a Constellation? Science/English Language Arts Inquiry Lesson Resource (1 page)
- Constellation VS. Star Chart, Science/English Language Arts Lesson Resource (1 page)

What is a Constellation?

Answer the questions below as you inquire about constellations, from both Western & Indigenous perspectives.



What is a constellation? (using the NASA webpage)



Why do constellations seem to move around the sky through the year?
(using the NASA webpage)



What is a constellation? (after watching the Tipiskawi Kisik: Night Sky Star Stories)



Why are constellations important?
(after watching the Tipiskawi Kisik: Night Sky Star Stories)

Constellation VS. Star Chart

Fill in the chart below with different information about stars & constellations, using these two webpages:

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/constellations/en/>

<https://science.nasa.gov/astrophysics/focus-areas/how-do-stars-form-and-evolve>

Stars

What is a star?

How are stars formed?

What are stars made of?

Constellations

What is a constellation?

How many constellations are recognized in Western culture?

Name two constellations:

Interested in learning more? Resources for additional reading:

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