



Iroquois Beadwork

Cultural portraits of the past and present

A project developed in partnership with the McCord Museum
and the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center

This is an older Teacher Guide made into a PDF for our new Societies and Territories site at
<http://societies.learnquebec.ca>

Note also, the new location for the [Iroquois Beadwork Kids' Zone !](#)
at <http://blogdev.learnquebec.ca/societies/iroquois-beadwork-kids-zone/>

Iroquois Beadwork Kids' Zone

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[A Day in the Life... of a Mohawk Child... 500 years ago and today](#)

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Home

Many First Nations in Québec and Canada have long practiced beadwork. This art has become a very real tradition for two Iroquois nations in particular, the Mohawks, who live near Montreal, and the Tuscaroras, who live on the American side of Niagara Falls. This website and the McCord Museum exhibition that inspired it - *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life* - are based mainly on the beadwork of these two nations.

The photographs and the images of beaded objects, which are a combination of old and new, show that the art of beadwork not only has a long history but is still very much alive today. In order to reflect this reality, a number of objects were made especially for the *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life* exhibition which was held last year at the McCord Museum and is now travelling to various locations in North America. The exhibition is organized and circulated by the McCord Museum, Quebec, and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, NY, in collaboration with the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake, the Tuscarora Nation community beadworkers within New York State, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

This project is being developed by teachers and consultants in partnership with the McCord Museum and the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center.

Iroquois Beadwork: General Overview

What initiated the project?

The project was initiated when Ann Cohen, pedagogical consultant at Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, toured the *Across Borders Iroquois Beadwork* exhibition at the McCord Museum in 1999. She realized that teachers were going to be in great need of gaining their own knowledge about First Nations and that there was going to be a need for materials for the implementation of the new History, Geography & Citizenship Education Program. She approached the director of the McCord Museum and Deborah Gross at the Services à la communauté anglophone with her idea.

A team of educators was formed and we've been working on the project ever since. Donna Boychuk coordinated the group, Christine Truesdale designed and developed the website, Robin Delaronde, Shelly Goodleaf-McComber, Pat Davies (1999-2000), Johanne Ethier (1999-2000), Barbara Vaupshas (2000-present), were the action-research teachers, and Ann Cohen was the educational consultant.

What is the project?

The project consists of a number of learning scenarios that teachers can use in their classrooms. However it is not a step by step lesson plan. Our team created, developed, tried out the scenarios in their specific classrooms and revised and adapted as the learning took place, in much the same way that any good teaching occurs. To use any of the learning scenarios and material resources suggested here would require that as a teacher of your particular students, you do the same. Try out adapt, change, add to and recreate your learning scenarios to fit your classroom and your students. These scenarios require tampering and meddling on your part. It is in this construction and reconstruction of the learning environment that we can create and recreate significant and meaningful activities for our students and assist them in the acquisition of competencies.

Cycle	Subject Areas
1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History, Geography and Citizenship Education• English Language Arts/FSL• Arts Education
Cross Curricular Competencies	Broad Areas of Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intellectual competencies• Methodological competencies• Personal and social competencies• Communication-related competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizenship and Community Life• Media Literacy

Background information

It's important to remember that in Québec alone there are eleven recognized Aboriginal nations. These ten First Nations - Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Huron-Wendat, Malecite, Micmac, Mohawk, Montagnais, Naskapi - and the Inuit of Québec make up the 54 different communities across the province. The 1996 Census enumerated 71,415 Aboriginal people in Québec, or 9% of Canada's Aboriginal population. However, it should be noted that several large reserves in Québec were not enumerated in this Census. Aboriginal people accounted for only 1% of Québec's total population. North American Indians made up about 67% of these Aboriginal people, Métis about 22%, and Inuit 12%. Québec's Inuit population of 8,300 is the second-largest in the country, representing about one-fifth of the total Inuit population.

For more information about Québec's Aboriginal people, visit The Native Trail -

<http://www.autochtones.com/>

(Unavailable as of Sept. 2009. French copy exists here though!)

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's website contains a map of Québec's First Nations:

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/scr/qc/aqc/Nations_2007.pdf

Many First Nations in Québec and the rest of Canada have long practiced beadwork. This art has become a very real tradition for two Iroquois nations in particular, the Mohawks, who live near Montreal, and the Tuscaroras, who live on the American side of Niagara Falls. The McCord Museum exhibition - *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life* - that inspired this project is based mainly on the beadwork of these two nations. This website focuses on the beadwork of members of the Mohawk community in Kahnawake.

The Iroquois/Haudenosaunee People

Iroquois, Six Nations Confederacy, People of the Longhouse, Haudenosaunee...these are all terms used to identify six Native nations who have lived in north-eastern North America for countless generations. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca came together for mutual support during a time of crisis. They were joined in the 18th century by the Tuscarora. Traditionally an agricultural people, the Iroquois occupied relatively permanent villages surrounded by fields of corn, beans and squash - crops known as the Three Sisters.

The arrival of the Europeans profoundly shattered the way of life of the Iroquois. They brought diseases which destroyed entire populations of Aboriginal peoples such as the Beothuks, a First Nation of Newfoundland, which has disappeared completely. These terrible losses were further aggravated by warfare between the Aboriginal nations and the European powers. At times, entire villages were displaced. This is the case of the Tuscarora, Iroquois of the south, who migrated northward where they were adopted by the Iroquois league.

Today the Iroquois continue to live under the Great Tree of Peace and to abide by the principles of the Great Law. They are recognized as a separate nation within the United States acknowledged by the 1794 Canandaigua Treaty. Present-day Iroquois comprises of some nineteen communities located primarily in the Northeast, Kahnawake, Kanesatake, and Akwesasne are located in Quebec. This website focuses primarily on a community with a long history of making and selling beadwork, and crossing borders - Kahnawake, situated southwest of Montreal.

Map of the geographical location of Kahnawake

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/gui/Mapqc/kahnawake.htm>

Map of the geographical location of Kanesatake

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/gui/Mapqc/kanesatake.htm>

The Iroquois Creation Story and its symbols

For the Iroquois, the traditional concept of the universe is inspired by their intimate relationship with the environment. This world view is handed down from generation to generation through the telling of stories. The most important of these stories is that of the Creation. Here is one version of that story, as told by Shelley Goodleaf-McComber, a teacher at Kateri School in Kahnawake and Corissa, Jarrod, Jay, and Devin, who are students at the school.

Go to the story on S and T site at

<http://blogdev.learnquebec.ca/societies/iroquois-beadwork-kids-zone/learn-about-the-creation-story/>

The origins of beadwork

Wampum Belts

Historical memory, transmitted via oral tradition, was preserved in wampum belts. These examples were made by weaving small cylinders made out of white and purple shells. These shell beads could also be used to make personal finery and we often find them in the form of belts made to commemorate certain events and to confirm agreements. Wampum belts were thus very important to the Iroquois.

The guardian of the wampums was the protector and the teller of the stories written within the wampum belts. However, events and time have sometimes blurred their significance, as in the case of the so-called "wampum with the two dogs," which dates from the end of the 1700s. We believe, though we are not certain, that it is linked to the Kanasesatake (Oka) territory. Purple wampums were rarer and more valuable than the white ones. Thus, wampums where purple is the dominant color commemorate an event or an agreement of great importance.

Including wampum belts in an exhibition is both rare and controversial. This particular wampum belt is displayed with the permission of the Iroquois of Kahnnesatake. In the United States, the Iroquois nations are opposed to the public exposition of wampum belts, as they consider them to be sacred. Since this exhibition will be traveling to the Tuscaroras Museum (on the American side of Niagara Falls) as well as to the American Indian Museum in New York, this wampum belt will no doubt provoke a great deal of debate.

The evolution of beadwork

Before the arrival of glass beads, the people of First Nations decorated their objects and clothes with materials found in their own environment, such as stones, shells, plants, porcupine quills, moose hair, and feathers. An example of this can be seen in these moccasins, where the geometric patterns are formed with dyed porcupine quills.

The origin of glass beads

The arrival of the Europeans meant the introduction of new materials in the decoration of Iroquois objects, namely glass beads.

Why were glass beads shipped to America?

European merchants used them as currency in the fur trade with the First Nations. One kilo of glass beads was equal to one and one-third beavers belts. In this way, millions of beaver skins were exchanged for glass beads.

What did the Europeans do with the beaver pelts?

Felt, which was made from the shorter hairs of the beaver fur was used to make top hats, which were in fashion for over 200 years.

The beads were made in Venice, in Italy. In order to monopolize the trade, the Venetians guarded jealously the secret of how to make glass. Glass was - and is - made from one principal element: silica. Silica is found in the sand and quartz at the bottom of rivers. In order to make glass, other materials such as cobalt and pieces of ground glass are added to the silica. This mixture is then heated in a large oven until it becomes a thick, red-hot paste.

In those early days, glass beads were made by shaping the paste into a ball. Then, using a long, hollow iron tube like a straw, an air bubble was blown inside the ball. After attaching an iron tube to each side of the bubble, two workers would run in opposite directions, each holding on to one of the tubes. In this way, the hot glass would itself become the shape of a tube, which would then cool and begin to harden before it had a chance to touch the ground. Before the glass got too hard, it was into a myriad of small pieces, each of which had a hole in the middle, because of the space left by the air bubble inside the paste.

Once they had properly hardened, the small pieces of glass were put into large wooden barrels containing sand or bran (the husk of wheat kernels). By rolling these barrels, the artisans were able to soften and round the shape of the glass beads. The beads were then slipped onto long threads which were later bundled together ready for shipping to the newly discovered territories: Africa, South America, and here in North America.

For more information about seed beads, you can visit the following website:

The Bead Site - Seed Bead Gallery

<http://www.thebeadsite.com/MUSSB-01.html>

Styles and techniques of beadwork

Styles and techniques of beadwork

Over the ages, the art and techniques of beadwork have changed but they have been handed down through many generations of Iroquois and are still an important tradition today.

Linear Style

This bag is an example of the linear style, where the beads form lines. This style is inspired by early work using porcupine quills.



We find straight lines, curved lines, geometric designs and borders. The lines most often trace the shape of flowers, hearts, suns, and, occasionally, animals and people.

The designs on these objects are of flowers and plants in pastel colors. Different colors are used to reproduce the shadows. At the centre of beadwork flowers, we often find a stylized flower with tapering petals. A hundred years ago, these objects were refined commodities, highly appreciated by Euro-North Americans and tourists, for whom the Iroquois made them. This particular style corresponds to a strong fashion and taste for nature in all its forms.

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White on red beadwork

A little more than a hundred years ago, Tuscarora artisans invented a new style of beadwork by sewing opaque white and transparent beads onto red velvet. They made all sorts of souvenirs, such as pincushions, needle-cases, doilies and amts, for tourists to buy when they visited Niagara Falls. Why were the pincushions so popular a hundred years ago? At that time, all fashionable ladies wore hats, which were held in place with a long hat pin. When a lady went indoors, she would re-move her hat, placing the pin in the pincushion conveniently sitting near the door.

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Flat multicolored beadwork



Flat multicolored beadwork is a style that became popular during the second half of the 1800s. We can recognize it by the flower and leaf designs in red, blue, gold, and green. In those times, tourists who visited the Kahnawake and Tuscarora reservations bought vast quantities of little bags, frames and other objects, decorated in this style of beadwork.



LEARNING SCENARIOS

Note: Links below have been removed! Scroll down to following pages!

Descriptions

Activity: "Used-to-be's"

An activity designed by Robin Delaronde
Kateri School, Kahnawake

Activity: "Used-to-be's"

A project developed by Barbara Vaupshas
Holy Rosary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Activity: "Exploring your views - Expanding students' knowledge about people of First Nations"

An activity designed by Johanne Ethier
Joliette Elementary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Activity: "Mohawk/Kanien'kehaka Creation Story"

An activity developed by Shelly Goodleaf McComber
Kateri School, Kahnawake

Activity: "Children Meeting Children - A cultural exchange"

An activity developed by Shelly Goodleaf McComber from Kateri School, Kahnawake
and Pat Davies from Bancroft School, English Montreal School Board

Activity: "Beaded Bird"

An activity designed by Robin Delaronde
Kateri School, Kahnawake

Longer units at the end of this PDF!

Unit: L'histoire des Premières Nations racontée par les écoliers

A unit designed by Johanne Ethier
Joliette Elementary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Unit: Learning about the Iroquois - a project-based approach

A project developed by Barbara Vaupshas
Holy Rosary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Activity: "Used-to-be's"

An activity designed by Robin Delaronde
Kateri School, Kahnawake

Description:

This activity is designed to help children to understand their own histories and to develop a sense of time and change.

Emphasis:

- a) Children recall their own "history"
- b) Children record their history using the format: "It used-to-be that I..."

Steps:

1. Begin with a discussion on events, situations, celebrations, etc. which used to happen in their lives but no longer occur (eg. a friend moving away, playing with an older brother, spending time with grandmother, etc.) Another motivator could be reading a picture book which focuses on changes -- *I'll Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, *Waiting for the Whales* etc.
2. Use some of the examples given and write them on the board using the format: "Used-to-be..."
 - "Used to be that I would spend much time at grandma's house but now that she is sick I cannot see her as much."
 - "It used to be that I was a shy kid, but now I am not so shy."
3. Children now write five of their own "Used-to-be's"
4. Student or teacher can choose one of the "used-to-be's" to type on the computer, enlarge it and identify it with the author's name.
5. Display the students' quotes on a bulletin board for all to read.

Extension:

- Students may use this format for a homework project and have their parents and grandparents write their "use-to-be's". Share with the class.
- Create a personal or class timeline with the "used-to-be's".

Activity: "Used-to-be's"

A project developed by Barbara Vaupshas
Holy Rosary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Description:

This activity is designed to help children to understand their own histories and to develop a sense of time and change.

Emphasis:

- a) Children recall their own "history" through objects.
- b) Children learn about their parents' and grandparents' histories through objects and stories.

Steps:

Student Process

1. Find an object (a photo, toy, piece of clothing, special memento) of something that tells about your past, something that "used to be". Be prepared to tell us:
 - About the object
 - Why it is special to you
 - What it tells us about you in the past
2. Ask one or both of your parents to provide you with one of their "used to be's". It can even be a story about what it used to be like when they were much younger (Have them tell you about it.) Tell us your parents' story.
3. Ask your grandparents to tell you something that "used to be" in their past. Tell us your grandparents' story.

Activity: "Exploring your views - Expanding students' knowledge about people of First Nations"

An activity designed by Johanne Ethier
Joliette Elementary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Description:

This serves as a precursor to other activities in the project.

Generally, its purpose is to help children discover:

What is my view?

Where did I get my view?

How did I get to know what I know?

What is valid information and where might I obtain it?

How has my view changed?

How do we gain our perspectives?

Specifically, children reflect on what they know about different aspects of First Nations peoples' lives "long ago" and today under several categories - a)housing, b)transportation, c)clothing, d)food, e)weapons, etc.

They are asked to try to remember where they got this information.

Before beginning this activity, it might be helpful to reflect on your own views about people of First Nations.

Steps:

Activity with students:

- a) Ask the students to draw/make collage/construct with paper what they know about First Nations (you might use the terms *Native people, Indians, Natives*) long ago and today. [Click here to see what Johanne's students knew \(moved to next page below!\).](#)
- b) Ask students to share their work with the class. The work could be posted in the class.
- c) Ask the students how they know what they know about people of First Nations . (Explore the sources of their views).
- d) Compile a list of the sources of "information", post it in the class to compare it to what is found later in the unit.
- e) Discuss where the class could find valid information about First Nations.
- f) At this point, there are many paths that you could take with the students - Children Meeting Children, a research project, etc.
- g) Once the students have engaged in the activities, take time to discuss what has been learned about First Nations.
How is it different from what was known before? A new list of sources of information is compiled.
- h) To demonstrate that/how their views have changed, students do a new drawing or a collective collage. This can be compared to the initial drawings/collage as a means of assessing what has been learned.

what Johanne's students knew

Long ago

Housing:

Long ago
tipis
longhouse
tent (decorated)
wigwam
tent built only with branches

Today

Today
log cabin
tipis
tent (in fabric)
wood stove

Transportation:

Long ago
wooden canoe
kayak (covered with pine gum)
snowshoes
wild horses
sleigh (horses or dogs)
sail boat

Today
boat with engine
trucks
4X4
walk

Clothing:

Long ago
chief hat (covered with feathers)
leather sweaters and pants
fur coat
leaf or feather comes
leather head band with one feather
moccasins
baby carrier
bear fur coat

Today
jeans
shoes
sweaters
maybe dresses
"like us" but different fabric

Food:

Long ago
beef
meat
moose
chicken
caribou
bear
hare
fish
corn
wild berries
chocolate
tomatoes
cucumber
squash
sunflower seeds
goat
maple syrup
rice
potatoes
milk

Today
"like us" but more game

Weapons:

Long ago
tree trunk
harpoon (wood and metal)
bow and arrow
spear (wood and rock)
knife (wood and rock)

Today
fire arms
knives

Miscellaneous:

Long ago
calumet
totem
feathers
pipe
drum
bowl (bark or clay)
leather purse
sculpture

Today
"like us" but no big electrical appliances

Sources of information:

books
school
movies
television
Museum of Civilization
guided tour of Reserve

Activity: "Mohawk/Kanien'kehaka Creation Story"

An activity developed by Shelly Goodleaf McComber
Kateri School, Kahnawake

For the Iroquois, the traditional concept of the universe is inspired by their intimate relationship with the environment. This world view is handed down from generation to generation through the telling of stories. The most important of these stories is that of the Creation. Here is one version of that story, as told by Shelley Goodleaf-McComber, a teacher at Kateri School in Kahnawake and Corissa, Jarrod, Jay, and Devin, who are students at the school.

Go to story...

Note: Story now located in the Iroquois Beadwork Kids' Zone at
<http://blogdev.learnquebec.ca/societies/iroquois-beadwork-kids-zone/>



Activity: "Children Meeting Children - A cultural exchange"

An activity developed by Shelly Goodleaf McComber from Kateri School, Kahnawake and Pat Davies from Bancroft School, English Montreal School Board

Description:

Children Meeting Children

a) meeting or sharing - students in a First Nations class and students in a public school class.

This could be done through e-mail or through regular mail

A one to one pairing up

Class activity to decide what type of information should be shared

First communication - sharing of information

Second communication consists of replies and questions

b) Creation of a class video and/or picture taking to be shared

Major class project to develop video

Photos could include landmarks

c) Collective Activity: Two classes participate in an activity together

Possible activities include video skit, creation of a collage, making a quilt, story writing

Possibility of including symbols, legends, creation story

Create photos and an exhibit

How to initiate an exchange:

Kids From Kanata project -

<http://www.kidsfromkanata.org/~kfk/>

(Note: above link is broken... Might be here: <http://www.kidsfromkanata.ca>)

School-based online cultural exchanges that bring schools together in groups of three, one of which is a First Nations school.

Activity: "Beaded Bird"

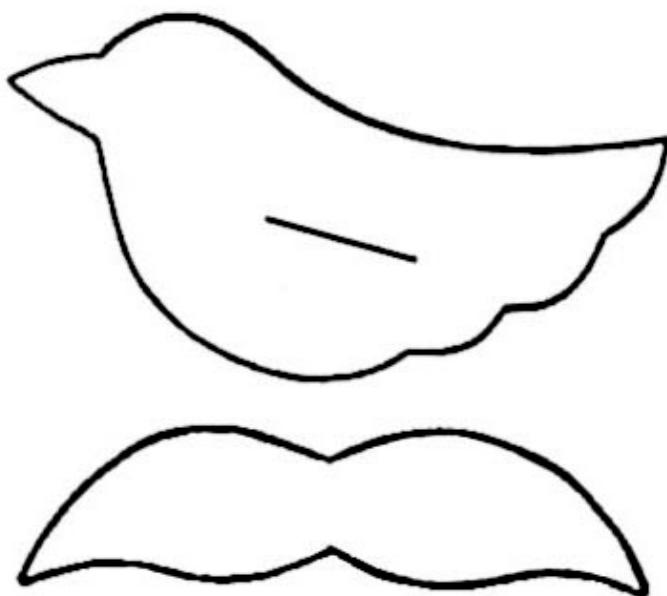
An activity designed by Robin Delaronde
Kateri School, Kahnawake

Description:

This beadwork project was submitted by Robin Delaronde who is a teacher at Kateri School, Kahnawake, Quebec. Her beadwork is featured in the Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life exhibition that was held at the McCord Museum last year and is now travelling to different locations across North America. The beaded bird pattern and instructions were provided by Blue Sky Beads, Kahnawake, Quebec.

Materials:

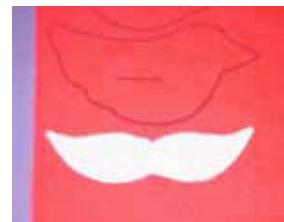
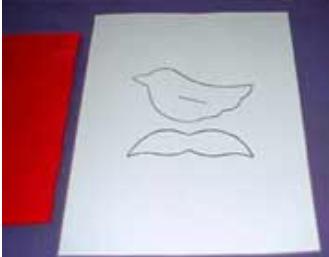
[pattern](#)



thread
beading needles
scissors
beads (various sizes)
felt (6" x 6" or half of an 11 1/2" x 8 1/2" sheet)
stuffing
pen

Steps:

1. Trace two copies of the given pattern on the piece of felt.



2. Cut out the patterns, making sure to cut the line in the middle of the body of the bird.



3. Choose various colour beads, and thread the needle.

4. Draw chosen designs on two sides of the bird.

5. Bead the design on the body and wing of the bird.



6. Attach the two sides of the bird's body by sewing one bead on the edges.



Make sure not to close the body in order to provide room to stuff the bird. Also, try to leave space where the bird wing can go through the two sides of the bird.



7. Once the bird has been stuffed, close the remainder of the body.	
8. Sew the two bird wings together using the same method as was done on the body of the bird.	
9. Slide the wing through the body of the bird.	
10. Attach a strand of beads between the top of the head and the tail to use as a hanging loop.	

LONGER LEARNING UNITS:

Unit: L'histoire des Premières Nations racontée par les écoliers

A unit designed by Johanne Ethier

Joliette Elementary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

L'histoire des Premières Nations racontée par les écoliers

Un projet réalisé par Johanne Ethier Hillcrest Academy, Laval Commission Scolaire Sir-Wilfrid-Laurier

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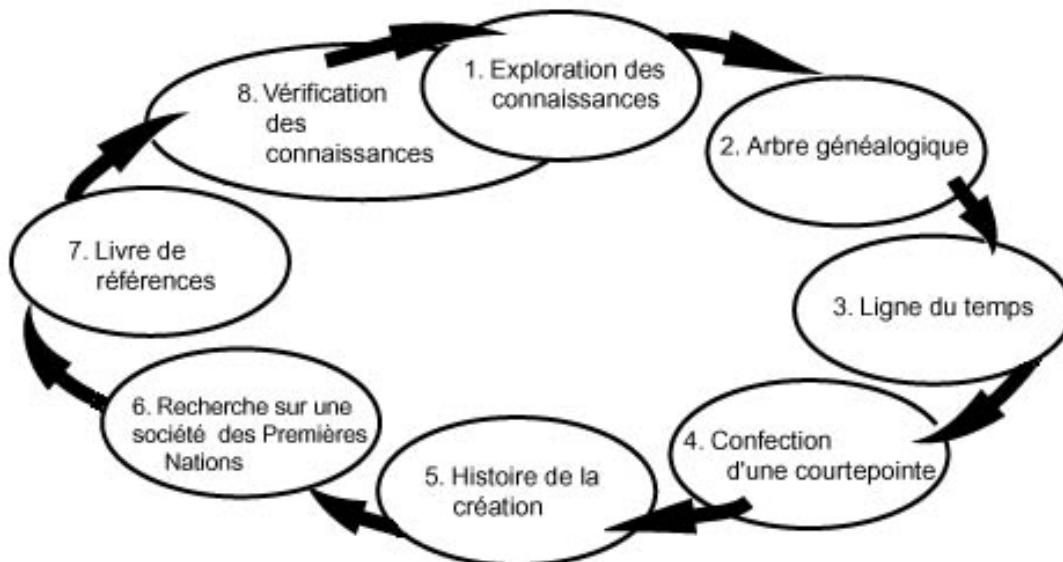
Cycle	Les domaines d'apprentissage	Les compétences transversales	Les domaines d'expérience de vie
C2	l'univers social les langues les arts le développement personnel	Les compétences d'ordre intellectuel Les compétences d'ordre méthodologique Les compétences d'ordre personnel et social Les compétences de l'ordre de la communication	Vision du monde et identité personnelle Développement sociorelationnel Vivre-ensemble et citoyenneté

Élaboration du projet:

Ce projet s'échelonne sur quelques semaines car il inclut plusieurs activités. L'écolier est amené à développer des habiletés de sciences humaines, de français et d'arts plastiques. Par ces activités, on le prépare à étudier une société différente de la sienne, vivant à une autre époque. Pour qu'il puisse comprendre l'histoire, l'élève doit pouvoir se situer lui-même dans le temps et être conscient de son propre passé.

Il apprend à s'interroger sur ce qu'il connaît, à vérifier et élargir ses connaissances pour ensuite évaluer ce qu'il a appris et déterminer ce qu'il voudrait approfondir. Par le biais d'un journal et de discussions de groupe il doit sans cesse réfléchir à ses apprentissages, mais aussi à ses aptitudes comme *leader* et participant à un groupe plus ou moins petit.

L'élève étant responsable de son apprentissage, il devient beaucoup plus motivé à faire un travail de qualité.



Bibliographie

Sites Internet

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http://www.autochtones.com/fr/premiers_peuples/histoire.html

CMC's Collections-Native Groups <http://www.civilization.ca/membres/fph/stones/welcome.htm>

Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada - Histoire et culture

http://www.inac.gc.ca/ch/index_f.html

Indiana Marketing - La référence en matière de communications et d'affaires autochtones au Québec

<http://www.indianamarketing.com/nations.htm>

Using the Internet for Social Sciences - First Nations webquest [Webquest Intro](#)

Premiers Peuples sur Rescol

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/menu-f.html>

HAUDENOSAUNEE - People Building a Long House

<http://www.sixnations.org/>

Haudenosaunee Children's Page

<http://www.tuscaroras.com/graydeer/pages/childrenspage.htm>

Queen's University at Kingston Teaching Units - Iroquois Creation Story

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/curriculum/iroquois/iroquois.htm>

Canada Heirloom Series - Canada's Native Peoples

http://collections.ic.gc.ca/heirloom_series/volume2/volume2.htm

Unit 2 : Learning about the Iroquois - a project-based approach

A project developed by Barbara Vaupshas

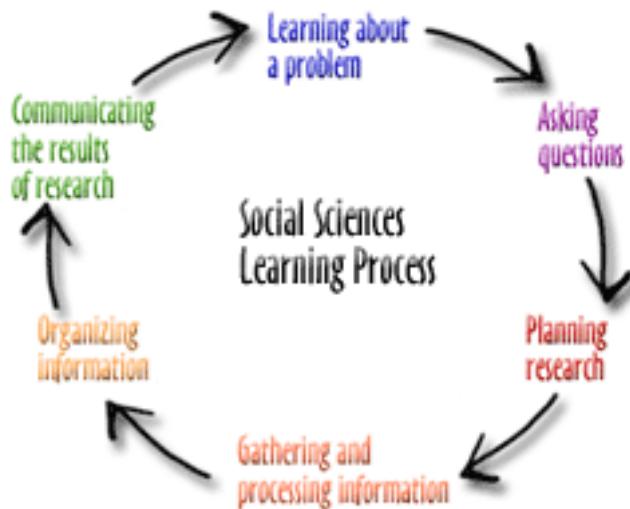
Holy Rosary School, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

This project unfolded during the 2000-2001 school year with two Cycle Two (Grades 3-4) classes. One class was her homeroom class, while the other was a class that she saw twice a week - once for an hour period and a second time for a half hour.

Curricular Fit at a Glance

- **Targeted Cross-curricular Competencies :** *Intellectual:* To use information *Methodological:* To adopt effective work methods
- *Personal and Social:* To cooperate with others
- *Communication-Related:* To communicate appropriately
- **Broad Areas of Learning:** Citizenship and Community Life
- **Subject-specific Competencies:** Geography, History and Citizenship Education: Competency 1 - *To understand the organization of a society in its territory*
- as well as English Language Arts, Arts Education (*Visual Arts, Drama*)

Social Sciences Learning Process



Teacher Planning and Process

- Scheduling and Setting Time Limits
- Grouping
- Inclusion
- Reflections
- Materials and Resources

Note: These pages are below the Process section next

Student Process in Brief...

Learning About a Problem

- **What do I know about First Nations People? How do I know this?** Brainstorm as a group. List what we know and how we know it. Categorize responses and sort examples.

How did the Iroquoian people live 500 years ago?

a cycle 2 project developed by Barbara Vaupshas Holy Rosary Elementary School Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Learning About a Problem - Exploring Your Views



What do I know about First Nations People? How do I know this?

Task: Brainstorm as a class

I asked the students to tell me everything that they knew about the First Nations and how they knew that, what was their source of information? We made a running list.

<u>What I know</u>	<u>How do I know this?</u>
ate rats and snakes	mom
women chewed men's boots	museum
first people living in Canada	dad
lived in U.S.	mom
now live in cities	project
paint themselves	learned
wear fur	
used spears	movie
lived in teepees	t.v.
savages	
wore leather	movie
used only what they needed	book
long hair	t.v
longhouses for 12 families	museum
hunting weapon	book
male hunt, female cook	
black hair	mom
brown skin	museum
scared of Europeans	thought
lived in forest	knew
rub sticks for fire	movie
feather headbands	movie
danced around fire	movie
animal head hats	book
liked Summer	mom
animal names	movie
youngsters naked	book

Asking Questions

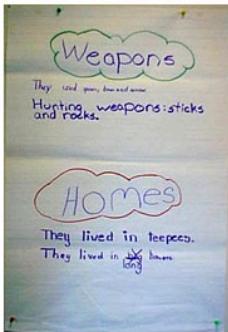
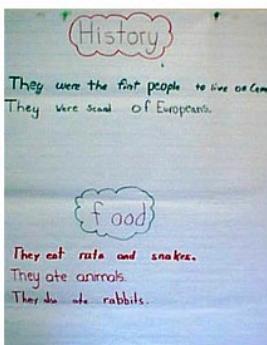
- What do we want to know more about? Make list as a group. What will we learn about? Choose (students or teacher) groups and topics.

Asking Questions - Determining the content of the inquiry

The students' responses were categorized. We made charts of the categories and listed examples. After that, we made a list of the things that the students wanted to know more about.

Then the students' responses were categorized. We made charts of the categories and listed examples. After that, we made a list of the things that the students wanted to know more about.

Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They lived in the US. • Now they live in cities. • They lived in the forest.
Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women chewed men's boots • They used only what they needed • Men hunted and female cooked • Rubbed sticks for fire • Danced around the fire • They liked summer
Weapons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They used spears, bows and arrows. • Hunting weapons: sticks and rocks
Homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They lived in teepees • They lived in [big] long houses
History
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were the first people to live in Canada • They were scared of Europeans
Food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They ate rats and snakes • They ate animals • They also ate rabbits
Dress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They paint themselves • They wear fur • They wear leather • They wear feather headbands • They had animal head hats • The youngsters were naked
Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were savages • They have black hair • They have long hair • They have brown skin • They had animal names



Teacher Process

In the class where I assigned the groups, I also assigned the topics to them. I sort of guessed what they would like to talk about. So there were eight groups and eight different topics. If some of them were disappointed, I said, after you do your project, if you want to learn about something else that another group is doing, you're free to read about it or pursue it.

For my own class, I let them choose their own topic. I thought that if they were really interested in something, they would be really enthusiastic and want to study it more so than something they were forced to study. But, what happened was that there were a lot of kids that chose the same kind of topic, we had three groups out of eight that chose the longhouse. So, at presentation time it was a bit redundant. I wouldn't do that again. It becomes boring for those that have to listen to the presentations. And what happened was that there was a kind of competition that developed. - *They're copying our ideas for the longhouse.* Next time, I would put all our topics in a hat and each group would pick out a topic. That the way they would function. It's all interesting and there's something new to learn, something that they didn't know.

Areas of study:

- Lives in General
- Family Life
- Farming, Food
- Weapons
- Dress
- Longhouses
- The Three Sisters
- Healing

Planning Research

- How will we do research and complete our projects? What are the steps? Make list of things to do as a group.

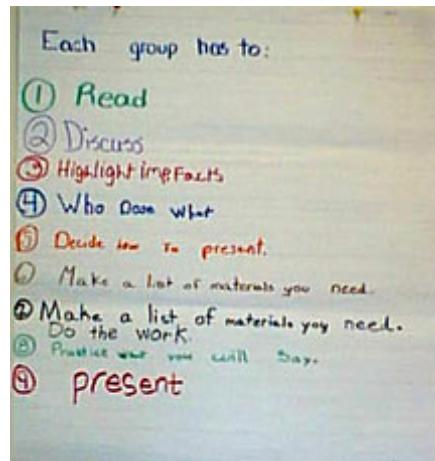
Planning Research



We discussed as a class - How will we do research and complete our projects? What are the steps? We made a chart of things to do.

Each group has to:

1. Read
2. Discuss
3. Highlight important facts
4. Who does what
5. Decide what to present
6. Make a list of materials you need
7. Do the work
8. Practice what you will say
9. Present



[Research_process_planner](#)

Gathering and Processing Information

- How will I gather information? Read from relevant sources and discuss information gathered in my group, answer questions for comprehension.

Gathering and Processing Information



Teacher Process

I provided them with the resources for researching the Iroquois. I gave them the reading material because we didn't have it in our school library. The children in my school were predominantly French speaking and I didn't think that they would get any reading material at their level.

If I were doing it a second time, I would have them provide some input into the materials for the class. I would ask each and every one to put into the pot. What are they bringing to the class so that we could all share in the ideas of learning about the Iroquois? Are they going to find a picture from National Geographic, are they going to get something from the computer at home, are they going to get a book from the library?

Student Process

They each read material related to their topics and highlighted the important information, then discussed it. Since English is a second language for most of the students, I structured their information gathering by asking them to answer specific questions about what they had read.

- **Processing information - let's reflect...** What have I learned that is new? Have my ideas changed? What ideas have changed? What do I think about what I've learned? Personal and shared reflections.

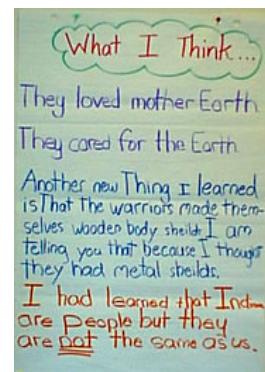
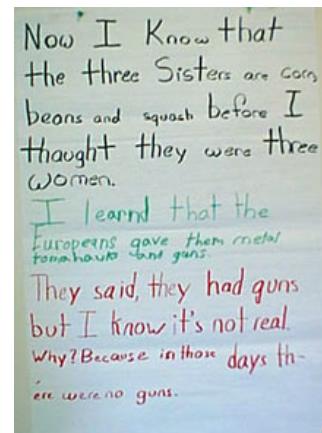
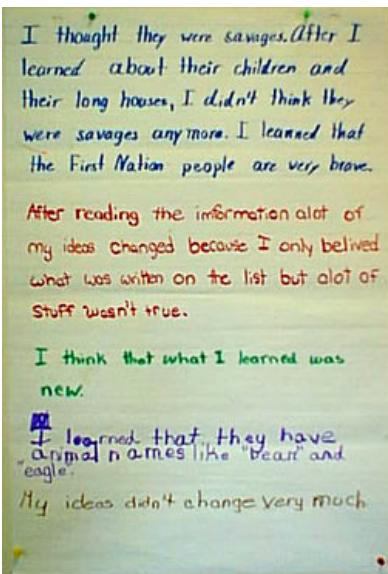
Processing Information - Student Reflection



We started with what we knew, and then by reading and learning, we saw how our ideas changed. And of course what we knew is mostly what we have seen in the media. Although some kids had been to a museum, so they knew facts because they got it from a reputable source, not a Hollywood movie. We talked about the fact that everything you see on TV is made for TV. It has to be exciting or people won't want to see it.

I said to the students, "Now that you've learned some of the things that you've learned, you've been reading, you've been gathering information, what's different about what you thought. Do you think differently now?" And I put all the charts up that we had made. Some of them just copied from the charts, and said, "This is what I think is different," but it wasn't. But a few kids understood what I meant - how did their thinking changed - so I got a few good responses there.

There was a change in the children's perspective on First Nations because they came to realize after their research that people are people. That they had a family life, they needed survival techniques, that parents loved their children the way that their parents loved them, they told stories at night, they spent a lot of time with their grandparents and their families. I believe that they learned to respect the Iroquois culture.



Organizing Information

- How can we show others what we have learned? How can we present our information?
- Brainstorm possible types of presentations/projects as a group.

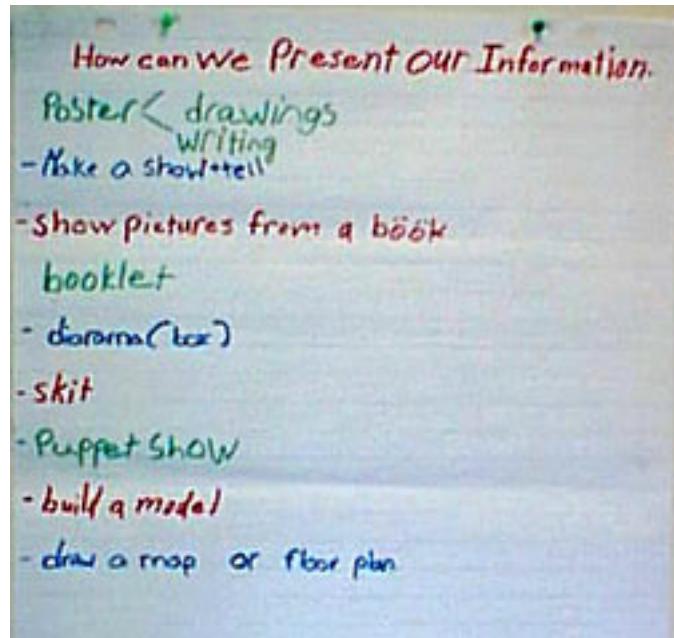
Format of the projects



As a group we discussed the following - *How can we show others what we have learned? How can we present our information?* We made a chart.

How can we present our information?

- Poster - drawings, writing
- Make a show and tell
- Show pictures from a book
- Booklet
- Diorama (box)
- Skit
- Puppet show
- Build a model
- Draw a map or floor plan



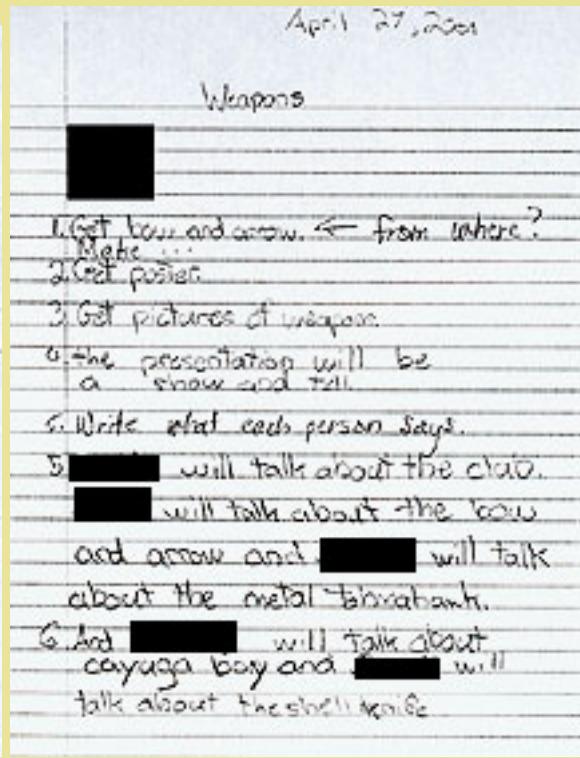
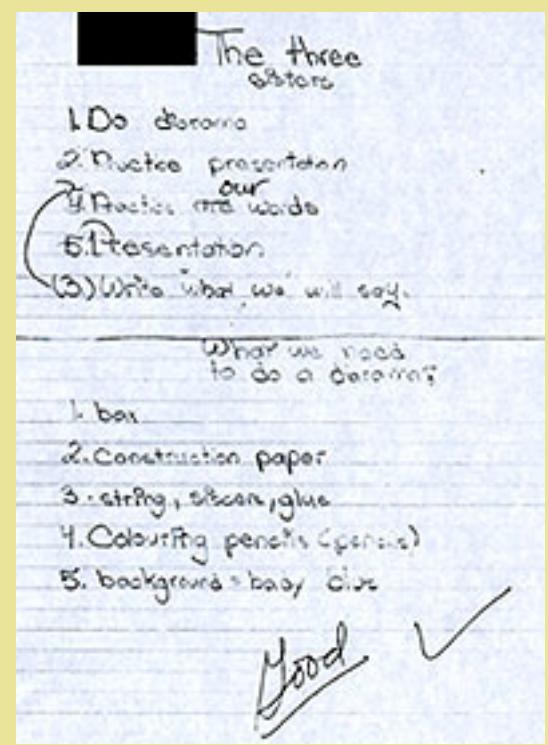
- What are we going to do? What materials do we need? Who will present what? What will we say? Write a group action plan.

The groups make a plan

I said, "Whenever we do something, when teachers come into class, we've made a plan. When I'm having a dinner party, I make a plan of the food I'm going to prepare. When your parents go grocery shopping, they make a plan of what food they're going to buy. If you're going on a vacation with your family, you make a plan of where you're going, the clothes you're going to take, what you're going to visit, how much money you need, when you're going, and when you'll return."

"So," I said, "for your project, I would like you to make a plan. Make a plan about how you are going to do things, the materials you'll need, who is going to say what. You can't just have one person in the group saying everything. Everybody has to have a turn, so I would like to see, on paper, your plan." Some groups did it really well, and other needed a bit more guidance.

Sample plans:



- **How will we work together?** Work on project in groups. Prepare our presentation

Letting it happen - Group process



A group of students were struggling with the longhouse that they were building. I had to hold back because I wanted them to figure out how to build the maquette, their structure. There was one group of kids that threw their project in the garbage three times because they weren't happy with the way things were going. They had bought a board and brought it to school, and then they quickly discovered that popsicle sticks would not stick inside the board. They tried to glue them, but they weren't staying up very well. Then they tried to make a fence out of paper, but that didn't stand up very well. So, they realized that they needed something like styrofoam. So, in comes the styrofoam that's all pink. Now of course, they realized that they had to change the colour, that the ground was not pink, so they began by gluing construction paper on the styrofoam piece but it didn't look like grass, it didn't look like land, the colour was there, but the texture wasn't there. So, they took that off and they painted it. That was a better solution.

In the end, after a lot of thinking and trying, they discovered what worked and what didn't work. It was really interesting because they came to their own conclusion of how to build a longhouse and how to make a representation of a garden and the utensils and the things used in a longhouse. It was a lot of hard work, but they really enjoyed it and they were pleased with their results. For example, when they were making corn stalks in the garden they quickly realized that a paper cornstalk made of construction paper will fall down in a hurry unless it's propped up with a popsicle stick or a toothpick to give it some strength. They found that cardboard is better than using construction paper. So, I didn't intervene with these things because I wanted them to figure it out and they did. I took a long time, but they did.

Communicating the Results of Research

- **How will I show others what I learned and learn about the other projects?** Present group productions and view others' work.

Presentation of Group Productions



When we did the presentations, in the class that had the eight groups, there were no repeats, everybody sat there and listened and it was really interesting. In fact, when they were writing the evaluation of the group, they would say things like - *What the group said was really interesting, I didn't know that before*. My purpose is not having them learn content in every single area and remember it. My purpose is having them develop this method of learning and putting together a project. Hopefully, they retained something, probably more on their own topic than the others. The presentation represents their learning. It's not an oral report. They had a sense that they had the responsibility of teaching what they had learned to everyone else.



- How can I improve my work? Self and peer evaluation.

Evaluation of Project and Presentation



When you have this kind of project-based learning everybody has succeeded. They all achieved what they were supposed to achieve because they followed specific steps. They had a baseline of what they already knew, they decided what they wanted to learn more about, they gathered the information, they put it down in some form, they made a project, they made a presentation, and they told the rest of us what they learned. So everybody has succeeded, everyone has achieved.

This is not easy for them because they are not used to it. But they are willing to take it on because it is fun, it's working in groups, doing something interesting and it's making things with their hands. There is some reading and writing, but there is also making things. And what's a presentation if you just have to listen to someone speak? You need to have audio-visuals of some sort.

I asked the students to do peer and self-evaluation because I wanted to know what they thought about their work and I wanted others to reflect on the group presentations.

Format of Peer-Evaluation

What did you think of the project?

The project... because...

How would you change something to make it different?

I would...

What did you like about the project?

I liked... because...

I was very specific in that I wanted only positive comments. And the kids were really good with each other. They gave positive comments - *I liked the way she spoke, I liked the way that he knew everything and didn't read from a paper. I liked the art work.* It was almost like they were parroting my comments, so it was comical in a sense, but they were really good to one another.

Self Evaluation of Project/Presentation

What I liked about my project. How I would improve it. I need to work on:

For their self-evaluation, most kids felt that they would improve their presentation by not reading from their notes as much. So that was the comment from most everyone. Most kids also said "*I would look for more information.*" What does that say about them wanting to learn more?

Where do we go from here?

How does it end? Participate in culminating activity

Culminating activity



At the end of our study, after all the presentations, we went to the McCord Museum. That was really interesting. Some of the things, like the longhouse, they knew all about the longhouse, so that exhibit was a little bit redundant and they were fidgety, but there were other areas where they learned new things. There was a lot of hands-on, they were allowed to touch the fur, and touch the bark of the canoe. That was really exciting because it tied in, it was like the culmination of their study. They were able to recognize a lot of the artifacts.

Other ways to extend the project:

I would say, "now that we've learned all this, why don't we write a play," complete with background and costumes. "What kind of a skit do we want to make?" And then we would videotape it for posterity - after all this work you would want to keep a record of it. So that's one thing we could do.

We could also make a slide show and they would perhaps show a person in another class, to teach someone else what they learned. They could get together in groups and make a slide show.

Process sections

Extras for Learning about the Iroquois - a project-based approach

How did Iroquoian people live 500 years ago?

Scheduling and Setting Time Limits

With the group that was not my homeroom class, I had an hour period and then on another day I had a half our period. I had to be very structured when I went into the class to work within those time constraints. My activities were structured in the sense that I knew what I wanted to accomplish with the children. I gave them specific tasks and they accomplished them within that time.

In my own homeroom, I borrowed time from other subjects, like Language Arts, so that I had more time to spend with the students working on the Iroquois Unit. Which, it turned out, was not necessarily a good thing because sometimes you think that if you have more time to do something, you'll do a better job, but it's not always the case. There's no control. I think you need to set specific controls and specific time limits.

Grouping

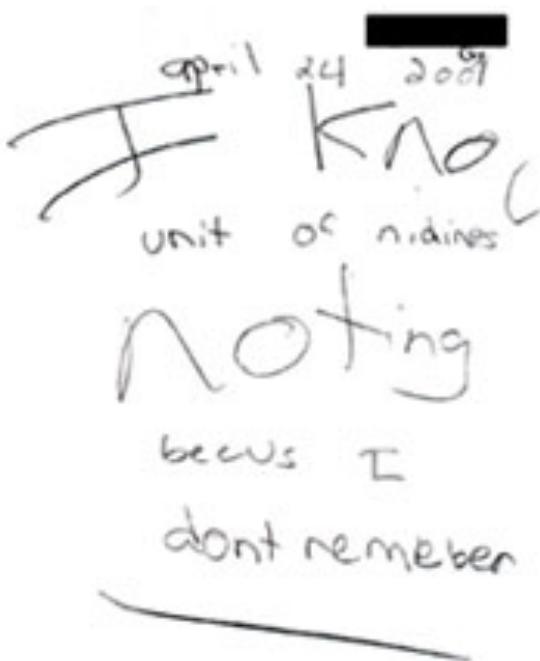
In my own homeroom class, the kids are used to working in groups, so I let them choose their partners. They were very comfortable with that because they knew each other well, they knew each other's strengths and weaknesses, and who was whose friend. Somehow, when you are working with a friend, a person that you like, you tend to work really well together, you do a good job. I found that they weren't wasting time and they were happy learners.

In the other class, I made up the groups of students. I decided who work with whom. I tried to pair children who were weak readers with children who were good readers so that when they read their information everybody in the group could understand. But in this class, there were personality conflicts. Students were complaining to me that so and so was bothering them, and that so and so was not working in the group and they were doing all the work. So, I ended up having to solve these conflicts when really they were supposed to be on task. In retrospect, I would let them choose their groups. I would find ways to accommodate the weaker students. I might have to help them, if the other students were working well on their own. It would mean less time for me to go around and observe, but I would probably be working with those that needed my help.

Inclusion

(*Students' names have been changed.)

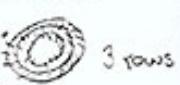
Sarah* was getting remediation for reading. This student was having a difficult time, she couldn't read. When asked to do the reflection about what she had learned, she was very frustrated. I asked another girl to help her to learn the content, because she needed to make a presentation, and she needed to do a project. I explained that if she couldn't read what was on the page and couldn't learn anything new, she wouldn't be able to tell us anything. So, they worked together after school in daycare for about two weeks.



Jennifer* would read the piece to Sarah, and then would make Sarah repeat almost like a teacher - well, what did I just say? Or can you tell me something important about what I read? And then Jennifer would write down the notes because Sarah wasn't able to. And then, after Jennifer said to Sarah, you have to learn what's on this paper, you have to say them to the class for your project.

But Sarah wasn't able to read the notes, so Jennifer and Sarah together made a rebus. They drew pictures which would represent what Sarah knew, they would spark the Sarah's knowledge, so that when she was presenting to the class she was able to look at her paper, she saw the picture and the few words that were written beside the pictures. Whether she could read the words or not is not important, but each picture sparked a thought of what she knew, what she had learned.

Village life
The Iroquoian people were farmers.

a palisade which is a fence was twice the height of a man.

Lookouts stood at the watchtowers.

There was only one opening in the fence. It was difficult to do sneak attacks.

Villages lasted 10+20 years.
The longhouse is 40 meters long more in length. It is 10 meters in width.
There are 100 people living in each longhouse.

Reflections

How would you describe your role using a project-based approach as opposed to your role in the past?

Well, my role before was a very authoritarian type of role, I dictated the content. I would give the information and the students would have to take notes and study it and then I would give them a test. Their results on the test would dictate how much they'd learned. But with this method, because the students are actively involved in getting the information, planning their project, planning their presentation, studying what they are going to say, giving the presentation to the others, they succeeded in all of these tasks. I led them through each task step by step and they all succeeded. I was leading them through the process of how to learn something. A different way to learn so that they are actively involved in their learning.

What did you learn about your students using this approach that you would not have learned otherwise?

You know, when you're teaching a lesson, the student that makes eye contact with you, the student that is listening in class, the student that is not disturbing, the student that performs well in daily work and on a test, well, everybody likes those kinds of students. And the student that is being disruptive and is having a difficult time, the one that is not paying attention, well, those are the ones you need to discipline. But in this kind of project, everyone is busy working. Everybody is accomplishing something. In the end, everybody is doing a presentation. So, everybody has a chance to shine, even the student that tends to be disruptive in a class is able to show everybody what he or she can do - what contributions they have made to the group.

Were you surprised by some of the outcomes?

Indeed I was.

Can you think of an example?

We are not always asking kids to draw things or come up with different ways to represent something. It's just the straight old - here's the fact, what do you know? Can you say it back to me to show that you know? But when you have students who make a puppet show to represent Iroquois life, well they are being creative in that they decided to make a puppet show, they had to make all the props, write the script, and plan it from start to finish. So, this is an enormous representation of what they know, more so than me just telling them the fact and then they repeating back in question and answer form. This makes learning fun. They like doing this. And not only are they learning some of the content and they'll remember it but it's the process of how to do something that they are acquiring.

What was the most difficult part for you?

It was time consuming for me to find material that was at their reading level. That was probably the hardest thing to do.

What was the most difficult part for the students?

The reflection - I think next time I have to talk about this a bit more before I give it to them as a written assignment. I have to start with myself as a model, what I think, what I learned is this...because. I say to them that just because adults are adults, your parents included, it doesn't mean that they stop learning about things. Everybody's always learning about something. Maybe it looks like we've stopped learning because we've stopped going to school and we have jobs, but we are still learning. But I don't know how much of that they understand

I think she's learned that the next time she has to do a book report or a science presentation, a social studies presentation, that she has to stand up in front of a class and talk, she won't be nervous anymore. She has learned that if she makes little pictures or symbols to represent thoughts she will be able to deliver her speech. Other kids will have notes. In fact, I said to the whole class, "This is such a wonderful idea, you should all use it." Who said that all our notes have to be words?