

Misconceptions

Activity Information

Grade Appropriate Level: Grade 10-12

Duration: ~six 40-minute periods for introductory lesson & full project (Teacher can choose to do some or all of the components of this project.)

Materials: chart paper, marker, use of Internet for students, attached information sheets and worksheets

Objective

The purpose of this mini project is to engage students in a dialogue about prevalent misconceptions about native people. The lessons are designed to increase student awareness and to have them think about strategies for addressing these issues in responsible and respectful ways. Through research and interviews, students will learn the tools of how to dispel popular and potentially harmful myths.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

History, Resource Science, English, Technology

- demonstrate awareness of and appreciation for Aboriginal peoples relationship with the forest in British Columbia
- demonstrate awareness of a variety of perspectives on land claims
- analyze the exchange of ideas, practices, and materials between First Nations and other cultures, in historical and contemporary contexts, with reference to: governance, economics, environment, language



- demonstrate the ability to think critically, including the ability to: define an issue or problem, develop hypotheses and supporting arguments
 - gather relevant information from appropriate sources
 - assess the reliability, currency, and objectivity of evidence
 - develop and express appropriate responses to issues or problems
 - reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information
 - assess the influence of mass media on public opinion
 - practice handling Internet information in an ethical way
- demonstrate a willingness to take a tentative stance, tolerate ambiguity, explore multiple perspectives, and consider more than one interpretation
 - develop focused inquiry questions with specific purposes and audiences in mind

Introductory Activity



- Prior to beginning this activity, talk to the class about the sensitive nature of the lesson. Review with them your usual guidelines and expectations about respecting others' opinions and demonstrating appreciation for diversity in the classroom.
- Engage students in a conversation about *misconceptions*. Some leading questions might be: What is a misconception? Share an example with the

class and have students offer some ideas. How does a misconception come to be? How is a misconception harmful or damaging? How are misconceptions spread and how (if possible) can they be stopped?

- The teacher can offer a few questions at a time and allow students time to dialogue in partners or small groups before sharing ideas aloud.
- Ensure that all students have a solid understanding of the concept before proceeding to the first lesson.

Suggested Instructional Strategies

Lesson One

- Hand out the sheet “Some Popular Misconceptions About Native People” to each student to read. Let them know the source of this information.
- Using chart paper for recording, ask students to share some initial feelings they have about this information. They should NOT offer their opinion about the common misconceptions at this time, but only express what they felt after reading. For example: surprised, confused, neutral, angry, unsure, etc. Title the chart paper: *How Misconceptions Make Us Feel*. Draw a line below the responses leaving room for more thoughts to be added at the end of this study. [At that time students can make comparisons between the feelings they had before and after and discuss reasons for some of the possible changes.]
- Ask students to raise their hand if they have heard of any of these misconceptions prior to reading the information sheet. Based on the response, close the lesson by explaining that their job will be to debunk one of the myths with supporting evidence.



Lesson

*Project length will need to be altered by the teacher depending on available blocks of time in the class scheduling. Approximate time needed: three to five 40-minute classes if the work will mostly be done in class time. Teachers will need to determine which

portions of the project will be done in each class.

- In partners, students will choose one of the five stated misconceptions about native people to research. With only five choices, there will be some

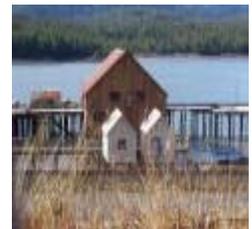
overlap in topics. The teacher should ensure that the choices are divided up evenly among the partner groups to facilitate closing discussions in larger groups later on. For example: With 30 students in a class (15 partner groupings) there would be room for 3 partner groupings to cover each misconception topic.

- Provide students with the worksheet: “*Misconceptions – Research Notes*” and review the details of the research project.
- Provide students with the handout: “Resource Options”. They will use this sheet as a guide to search the Internet for information to complete the worksheet. Students may find other worthwhile sites to explore that can be approved by the teacher prior to the lesson.
- In addition to using websites to find information about their topic, students also must interview an appropriate, knowledgeable candidate to add to the dimension of their research. The teacher should outline criteria for seeking an appropriate candidate. For example: a First Nations member from a group such as Assembly of First Nations, or BC Union of Indian Chiefs (see resource/contact list)
- Students will need to complete the worksheet: “Interview Questions” and have the teacher’s approval prior to conducting the interview. Once research, worksheets and interview are complete, partners will organize their information into a short oral presentation to be delivered to the class. Give students time to practice. (See Suggested Assessment Strategies for ideas to design presentations)
- After each presentation, the teacher should allow time and encourage the audience to offer constructive comments about the presentation and ask questions or clarify information.
- Once all presentations have been shared, refer the class back to the “*How Misconceptions Make Us Feel*” chart. Again, ask the class to share their thoughts now that the project is complete.

Suggested Assessment Strategies

Teachers should record observations throughout the project based on the following criteria.

- Complete, thoughtful and detailed research that demonstrates the use of at least 3 different website resources.
- Interview questions for candidate were thorough, unbiased, and completely relevant to the topic. In addition, were students resourceful in terms of obtaining answers that satisfied their questions as opposed to being left with an “I don’t know.” Did they try another source?
- Work is completed on time according to set deadline.
- Students work cooperatively in partners with fair distribution of the work, and support each other throughout project.
- Students demonstrate a willingness to seek truth about the misconceptions being explored.
- The teacher can work with the students to set assessment criteria for the presentation.



Some important components could include: To what extent has the project proved the misconception wrong or not entirely accurate? To what extent has the research and interview been used to achieve the purpose? To what extent have the students delivered an unbiased and factual presentation? To what extent has the presentation engaged students? To what extent have the presenters used effective communication skills? To what extent have the presenters utilized helpful and innovative tools (overheads, visuals, etc.) in order to deliver a quality presentation?

Suggested Extensions

- Following the presentations, partners meet up in small groups with other partners who researched the same topic. They can discuss the similarities and differences they experienced during the project. Students can also compare the information supplied by the interviewee and draw some conclusions about their information.
- As a class, revisit the topic of misconceptions. Based on the presentations, findings and their point of view (before & after) how do students feel about these misconceptions? What do students think are ways that these misconceptions could be squashed? For example: more education about topics to the public. How can students become involved in the education process or take leadership?

Some Popular Misconceptions about Native People

1. Native people don't pay taxes.

Maybe not the same taxes on land and housing, but we do pay taxes. Except for a few items, gas and tobacco products bought in our convenience stores, all the rest of our buying power is taxable.

Much of our major business and personal spending is done in the urban centres and is not tax exempt. For every dollar we spend in our community at least nine dollars is spent elsewhere to purchase food, clothing, school supplies, cars, trucks, major appliances and other household items. Bands spend all of their capital dollars elsewhere to purchase construction, electrical and plumbing supplies, office furnishings, equipment and supplies. We do our banking at the major banks.

2. Native people get FREE housing.

Most of our housing comes under Canada Mortgage & Housing. Other than the trades personnel employed from our communities, the rest of the housing dollars go elsewhere, including interest on bank loans. Our members do pay rent, some of which goes towards the Band's housing maintenance program.

3. Native people get free education.

For many Native families living off reserve, education dollars are not readily available and they rely on scholarships, student loans and bursaries to pay for post secondary education. Some members receive funds to cover only books and tuition costs. The federal Indian Affairs Branch makes payments to the schools in which Native children attend. Those amounts are in most cases greater than the dollars paid for non-native students.

4. Native people own lots of land.

Just go into any Band office and ask to see all their reserve land. Much of it has right of way encroachments or is on rocky or steep slopes therefore unusable. Under the Indian Act 'land is held in trust for the use and benefit of Indians'. The 'use and benefit of' is subject to the Indian Act.

Reserve land cannot be used as collateral for business or other loans. Neither the Band nor the individual can hold title to land. We have to await approval from the Indian Affairs Minister in order to hold land on reserve, lawfully. Trying to develop on reserve is a lengthy process many developers do not wish to even deal with.

5. Native people 'depend' on welfare.

Some do because of the lack of employment. The unemployment in most Native communities ranges from 50-80%. Many individuals out there depend on seasonal employment. And some need welfare to supplement their unemployment benefits, if in fact they are eligible for benefits.

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Interview Questions

With your partner, you will create 4-6 suitable questions to ask the person you will be interviewing. Keep in mind that the interviewee may have limited time to share with you. If you do not get an answer to your question, then try another source. Don't give up immediately. Record your most important questions first. Be conscious of the reality of this misconception when you plan your questions. The purpose is to seek truth and not offend anyone. Remember to introduce yourself and explain your assignment to the interviewee first before you launch into questions.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

RESOURCE OPTIONS

Website Addresses

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/>

<http://www.abo-peoples.org>

<http://www.afn.ca/>

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

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed>

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

<http://www.cier.ca>

<http://www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborl.htm>

<http://nlc-bnc.ca/8/26/index-e.html>

<http://arcbc.tripod.com/>

<http://www.afn.ca/>

<http://www.indigenous.bc.ca>

<http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/index.htm>

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/ftno/index_e.html

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca>

<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca>

Use these websites to locate an organization that can help you get in contact with a potential candidate to interview.

Misconceptions – Research Notes

Name _____

Partner _____

Due Date _____

Popular Misconception _____

Collect information in point-form notes below. These points will be used to help you and your partner design your oral presentation. Ensure that you balance your information based on both points of view. Keep track of your sources and include them in your presentation.

SECTION 1 ORIGIN OF MISCONCEPTION



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SECTION 2

FACTUAL INFORMATION THAT PROVES AND/OR SUPPORTS THAT YOUR TOPIC IS INDEED A MISCONCEPTION

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SECTION 3

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER

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