

Pimootewin

The Journey Teacher's Guide

Teacher's Guide created by Leonie Hentschel for



Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Reference to the Curriculum	1
Suggestions for Lessons	3

Reference to the Curriculum

The Study Guide for the project *The Journey* refers to the Ontario Curriculum for Grades 5-8:

- The Arts: Music, Drama and Dance (main focus)
- Social Studies and Language (additional focus)

For example: In grade 6 the Social Studies focus on First nation peoples.

Concerning general goals in music, students should learn to “identify and perform music from various cultures and historical periods” and “understand music through “listening to, performing, and creating music”.

Curriculum Expectations Excerpts	Workshop or Study Guide involvement and proposals
The creative work involves creating musical compositions or an accompaniment for a story.	The workshop with Melissa Hui will involve a creative composition process. The Study guide proposes to create an accompaniment for the libretto of the new music drama <i>The Journey</i> . (Pre-concert activity)
The knowledge of Elements (especially of different kinds of tone colour) should get broadened.	The New music composed by Melissa Hui involves unexpected sounds and tone colours that can be discovered during the presentation and described afterwards. (Post-concert activity)
Create and perform a song based on a scene from a story.	The Study guide proposes to let the students take a role from the piece, to write a role card

	(to better understand/ imagine the character of the figure) and to recite (or sing) sentences that reflect the mood of the character (Trickster, eagle, dead soul, frog).
Students are supposed to communicate their feelings and thoughts about the music they hear using language and a variety of art forms.	The study guide proposes to draw a story board for deeper understanding of the plot of the music drama. After the concert students are asked to write down their emotions and impressions that were caused by the presentation. As the work has recently been composed, students will be confronted with music they have never heard before.
Critical thinking: students should be able to describe how changes in the texture alter the mood in a piece of music.	As the libretto has a drastic climax and includes a dramatic change (regarding the behaviour of the dead souls) there will be room to discuss this. (Students experience this change of atmosphere when they set the libretto to music themselves. After the concert, they should describe how this was realized by Melissa Hui.)
Identify the influence of music/culture on the society or the relationship between them. (This goes further than the Curriculum proposing to identify the relationship between the music industry and society.)	The project will discuss the social function of music and other cultural aspects in the Cree society. Further, it can be discussed which position New Music has got in actual Canadian society. The Study guide proposes to talk about Cultural heritage.
Interpret and communicate the meaning of legends from a range of cultures.	It is the purpose to examine intensively the Cree libretto of the piece and to make the students understand parts of the Cree mythology (as an example for Native Canadian mythology in general).
Create dances. Present a story through dance. Accrued from different cultures.	The workshop with Michael Greyeyes actively and creatively introduces the students to native dance vocabulary.
Solve problems presented through drama and dance and defend their analysis of a performance.	Students are asked to take roles from the music drama and to perform tableaux (freeze-images) that show the relationship of the characters. Students should analyze the performance, composition and choreography after having seen the performance.
Describe how different cultures use drama and dance.	The workshop with Michael Greyeyes will focus on native and contemporary movements.

Grade 8: review drama and dance performances.	Students should have to fulfill the task to write a short review of the presentation explaining their opinion.
<p>Social Science: Grade 6: positive and negative effects of early contact between First Nation Peoples and European explorers. Attitude to the environment of First Nation groups, key social and cultural characteristics of Algonquian and Iroquoian groups (arts, storytelling). Grade 5: values and beliefs of early civilizations, compare and respond to myth and legends.</p>	<p>The Study guide provides additional material to discuss about cultural change for the Cree in Quebec caused by colonialization.</p> <p>The study guide provides back ground information about Cree culture as an example of First Nations.</p>
Language: Analyzing texts.	The Study Guide proposes to examine the libretto through questions and through creative methods like painting and setting to music.

Suggestions for Lessons

Lesson 1

Title: Background information

Time	Content	Method/material	Objective/skills
5 min	The teacher divides the class in groups of 4-5 students and gives them short texts about different aspects of the Cree culture. (out of the Study guide)	Explanation and preparation	
10 min	Students read together, collect the main attributes of the text and write it on a big paper.	Group work, Big paper (size)	Working cooperatively, learning about Cree culture.
25 min	Students present the papers in front of the class.	Presentation	Presentation skills Learning about the Cree culture.
5 min	Oral summary of all the aspects The teacher asks what the students remember without seeing the posters.	Brainstorming	Remembering some aspects of Cree culture.

Lesson 2**Title: Talking about the afterlife**

Time	Content	method	Objective
15 min	Writing a myth about the afterlife.	writing	Using philosophical imagination.
15 min	Comparing the different myth ideas of the students.	discussing	Presenting own ideas.
15 min	Talking about what happens after death, what significance it has for living people (or additionally painting a trickster).	discussing	Seeing how many different beliefs exist.

Lesson 3:**Title: Oral interpretation of the libretto *The Journey***

Time	Content	Method/Material	Objective
5 min	Handing out the libretto and assigning roles to students.	Introduction/ Copies of the libretto	
15 min	Reading the libretto.	oral	First contact with the work
15 min	Asking questions about the libretto: Content, writing style, mythological elements, etc.	Question and answer period Describing stylistic elements.	Trying to understand and analyze the libretto. Recognizing stylistic elements.
10 min	Trying to read the Cree language and describing it.	Let the students think about language characteristics.	Trying to describe differences between the Cree language and the English language.

For example

Questions that the teacher may ask:

- Name the figures/characters.
- What is striking about the writing style?
- What is happening? Try to paraphrase the content.
- What is the climax of the story?
- What are the mythological elements of the plot?
- How would you describe the Trickster?
- Why do you think the Trickster changes his opinion?
- Which is the role of the narrator?
- What is the role of the chorus?
- Do you think autumn is symbolic, how?
- How does the story address the issue of death?

For example**Analyzing the libretto**

Characters: Weesageechak, Migisoo, narrator, (chorus), 4 spirit men, the frog, dead souls

Writing style: Tomson Highway uses a liberal mixture of Cree and English language.

Often the English language echoes the Cree sentences.

His objective is that a non-Cree-speaking audience understands the plot.

Content: Weesageechak wonders if he can bring the dead back to the land of the living. He travels to the land of the dead with his friend Migisoo. Four spirits take them over the river to the land of the dead. They see them dancing in the moonlight. They recognize their relatives and friends. Atheegis, the Frog holds the moon up to shine for the dancers. Weesageechak kills the Frog and slips into his clothes and keeps on lighting the place. Then he swallows the moon. It is dark and the singing and dancing of the dead souls start breaking down. So, Weesageechak and Migisoo gather them in a basket and travel back. The souls want to get out of the basket. Finally, they succeed in escaping. Weesageechak understands that it is impossible to bring them back to the land of the living. So, he lets them go back to the land of the dead.

Mythological elements: land of the dead, the river between the worlds, the trickster, the fact that the dead are in the land of the dead.

Role of the chorus: The chorus has two roles. At the beginning it comments, later it represents the dead souls.

Lesson 4**Title: Painting a picture story to visualize the libretto**

45 min	Putting e.g. six boxes on the paper, Painting the situations of the plot, such as 1.walking, 2.at the river, 3. dancing souls, 4.killing of the frog, 5.catching souls, 6.souls getting free.	Big paper, Pencils, colored crayons	Visualization of a topic and of concrete situations, developing images and imagination for a theatre play.
--------	--	---	--

Lesson 5 and Lesson 6**Title: Setting the libretto to music**

Time	Content	Method/Material	Objective
5 min	Building groups. Preparing instruments. Providing each group with a part of the libretto.	Introduction	
20 min	Thinking about how to set the libretto to music.	Group work	Developing sound ideas.
20 min	Using a language of signs to write the sound ideas down in a linear sequence.	Group work, paper	Creating an own notation, building a connection

			between sounds and symbols.
15 min	Rehearsing the piece in groups. Reading and making sounds to accompany the text.	Rehearsing, Various instruments	Setting to music.
30 min	Putting the work together with all the groups. The whole class performs the created piece together.	performing	Performing a self created work.

Lesson 7

Scenic interpretation of the libretto *The Journey*

Time	Content	method	Objective
5 min	Allocating roles to the students.	Introduction	
10 min	Students are asked to write a role card: finding attributes/ adjectives for the role.	Writing	Imagination of a character
5 min	Trying to walk like you imagine the character moving, search for different styles of movement.	Learning about how to approach a new role.	Interpreting a role.
5 min	Trying to figure out how your character says the sentences (loud, quiet, aggressive) and what movement it might use.	(The frog has no lines, so the student could imagine what he could say.)	Interpreting a role.
5 min	Getting together in a group with one of each of the other characters and building up a freeze-image that shows the relationship among them.	Thinking about relationships.	Interpreting a role.
15 min	The class comes together and watches the results of the groups and the individuals.	Interpreting what the other students meant.	Having an opinion about dramatic work.

Example for a role card (Students should use their imagination)

Role: Weesageechak

Character: courageous, clever, carefree, pig-headed, attentive, able to change shape

Colour that describes the character: red because he has a strong will

How does the character move: big steps, knows where he goes, confident

How would you describe the relationship to the other characters:

To the eagle: The eagle is a good friend of him.

To the frog: He feels powerful and dominant and disregards the frog.

To the dead souls: He thinks he can give them a better existence, but loses his power.

Write down two sentences from the libretto that characterize your character best:

I will swallow the moon.

Let it be, my friend.

Lesson 8

Title: Creating a stage setting

Time	Content	method	Objective
5 min	Introducing the task	Introduction	
10-15 min	With all the background knowledge the student should imagine a stage setting.	Writing	Developing a stage setting.
10 min	Draw a sketch/draft of the stage for one scene.	Drawing	Interpreting a role.
15 min	Presenting the ideas to the classmates.	Understanding and comparing different ideas.	Having an opinion about dramatic work.

Example

Stage-setting

What do you want to express?

Which aspect of the plot is most important to you?

How many and which items/objects do you need on stage?

What is difficult to bring to a stage?

How real or abstract can a stage setting be? How abstract is your idea?

Make a plan about how often you would change the setting according to the plot.

Paint/ Draw a stage design for a specific scene.

Explain your ideas in a few sentences. What do you want the audience to see/understand?

Lesson 9:

A theoretical lesson about New music, musical forms and Hui's Music

Time	Content	Method/material	Objective/skills
5 min	The teacher divides the class in groups of 4-5 students and gives them little texts about Canadian music, opera, oratorio, Melissa Hui, Lawrence Cherney (out of the Study guide).	Explanation and preparation	
15 min	Students read together, collect the main attributes of the text and write it on a big paper.	Group work, Big paper (size)	Summarizing new information.
20 min	Students present the papers in	Presentation	Training the

	front of the class.		presentation skills.
5 min	Oral summary of all the aspects Teacher asks what the students remember without seeing the papers.	Brainstorming	Remembering

Post-concert**Lesson 10: Talking about the concert and writing a review**

Time	Content	Method/material	Objective/skills
5 min	The teacher asks about the students' impressions of the concert.	Introduction	
15 min	Students are asked to write a review of the concert.	Expressing emotions, describing impressions.	Training the skills of critical examination.
5 min	Discussing the impressions.	Discussing in a circle, trying to ask questions and answer other students.	Making a founded/ justified judgment.
10 min	What was different from the ideas that the students had before?		
5 min	Searching for adjectives that can describe the music.		
5 min	Collecting statements about the whole project.		Having a reasonable opinion.

Additional questions (additional lesson):**Questionnaire**

How would you describe the music of *The Journey*?

Try to find adjectives for the listening experience in general.

How would you describe the music at the beginning of the work?

Which musical elements are characteristic for Weesageechak?

Which musical elements are used for the eagle?

How did the composer express the river?

Which music characterized the dance of the dead souls?

How did the composer set the act of killing to music?

How did the work end?

How would you describe the choreography?

Which light effects were used?

How did you experience the role of the narrator?