

Anowarakowa Kawennote

Objective: As called for in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action¹, learn about the Treaties which govern the place you live and go to school. Learn some words in a language indigenous to the lands you live on.

Materials: Computer and projector with speakers

Theatrical Context

Head à Tête was first produced in 1989. The characters try to overcome a barrier to their communication: language. Please speaks English and Moitié speaks French. Head à Tête was written by Canadian playwrights and Roseneath Theatre founders David S. Craig and Robert Morgan. Since the Battle of the Plains of Abraham and 1763 Treaty of Paris, the question of whether Québec should be independent, part of Canada, or something else entirely has been fought over. The first production of Head à Tête premiered between the 1980 and 1995 referendums on the subject in Québec. Although both independence referendums were defeated, the 1995 vote was extremely close. Today, there is still a strong independence movement in Québec. The cause is supported by political parties: the Parti Québécois and Québec Solidaire at the provincial level and the Bloc Québécois at the national level. The drawing of lines between French and English speakers was and is politically charged. The play also continues to appeal for its ability to connect with audiences in both official languages of Canada. However, these languages alone do not speak to all of Canadian history nor our present context. Before colonization, there many languages spoken on the lands now called Canada. Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway), Kanyen’kéha (Mohawk) and languages from the Cree family (such as Nehinawewin) are some of the most spoken in Ontario.

No Indigenous languages are federally recognized official languages. This is a historic and ongoing act of colonization. Connecting with and supporting your local Indigenous communities can be an act of allyship and some of the learn below has been identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action as necessary for reconciliation.

Note to Teachers: The best way to decolonize and Indigenize your teaching practice as a school community is in partnership with the local Indigenous community. Many school boards have employees who can guide teachers in respectful partnerships and many boards maintain lists of

¹ The full list of the Calls to Action can be found at:

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

The complete collection of reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada can be found at: <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

The website for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation can be found at: <https://nctr.ca/>

Indigenous speakers. Inviting an elder or knowledge-keeper to work with students and ensuring they are properly compensated is a best practice.

Directions:

1. Find Your Treaty

The colonization of Anowarakowa Kawennote² took place in a number of ways. In the words of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s *Final Report* “the activities of explorers, farmers, prospectors, trading companies, or missionaries often set the stage for expansionary wars, the negotiation and the breaking of Treaties, attempts at cultural assimilation, and the exploitation and marginalization of the original inhabitants of the colonized lands” (2015, 44). While the Government of Canada has broken and failed to honour many treaties, they remain important in establishing the duties of the Government of Canada to many First Nations and Inuit peoples. Research into the history and modern context for treaties with Métis peoples is ongoing (Chartland et al., 2019).

The treaty process is also ongoing in Canada and Ontario. The largest land claim currently under negotiation in Ontario is titled the Algonquin land claim (Ministry of Indigenous Affairs,

² Anowarakowa Kawennote is a Mohawk term translated as Great Turtle Island (Alfred in Hallenbeck, 2015, 350), one of many names used by Indigenous peoples to describe what is called North America in dominant geographical and political discourses. The term comes from the Seneca belief that the world was created on the back of a turtle (King, 2003). This belief is shared by other members of the Haudenosaunee or Six Nations Confederacy: Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora. According to Flick (1999) the Cherokee have a similar tale about Star Woman (Flick, 1999 in Gruber, 2012, 191). Using the term Great Turtle Island or simply Turtle Island to describe these lands is important for a number of reasons. It gives value and weight to descriptions of the land that precede colonization, reminding us that the history of these lands is much, much longer than the 150 years that Canada recently celebrated. The Teiohâte/Two Row Wampum is over 400 years old (Hallenbeck, 2015, 350), according to colonial knowledge Great Turtle Island has been occupied for 15,000-130,000 years (Holen et al., 2017), and according to many Indigenous communities since the beginning of their people. It also helps historically contextualize the events being described: the land had names when colonizers arrived and neither Canada nor North America was one of them so it is historically inaccurate to describe the land that way. It reminds us that current methods of separating lands and people are historically specific, arbitrary, and changeable. Finally, it demonstrates that colonial descriptions of the land are not final; they are contested, an ongoing conflict between colonial cartography and Indigenous ways of understanding and representing the land (Hunt and Stevenson, 2017). Many Indigenous people do not recognize the artificial division of Turtle Island into Canada, the United States of America, and Mexico. This is reflected in Indigenous territories which span the Canada-US border and which those First Nations have the right to travel by the Jay Treaty. However, this right is contested and forcibly limited by the Canadian government (Quan, 2015), demonstrating that defining the land, its borders, and controlling the movement of people across them is an ongoing process. Decolonizing our language is a step toward building solidarity with Indigenous peoples (Boudreau Morris, 2017, 464).

2019). It would be the province’s first modern day treaty sought by some nations since 1763. However, the treaty is opposed by other First Nations in Ontario and Québec. Some Ontario First Nations take issue with the eligibility of Algonquins of Ontario voters, the vast majority of whom do not have Indian Status (Martin, 2016), the legitimacy of the Algonquins of Ontario to represent the Algonquin Nation, and the effect of the agreement to extinguish competing claims such as a claim of the Mohawk Nation (Garlow, 2016a; Garlow, 2016b). Some Québec First Nations also take issue with the claim as the border between Ontario and Québec did not exist prior to colonization (Melnitzer, 2017).

In addition to understanding this complex history, it is important to understand the treaty or treaties which apply to the place where you live and learn. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action 62 demands that we teach this history and contemporary context in our schools (TRC, 2015, 331).

Steps:

- Share the above information with students in an age-appropriate manner
- Look up your school’s address at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves>
- Start a research project to learn more about your treaty, local First Nations, and the languages Indigenous to your area.
 - If your school does a land acknowledgement during announcements, it may make a good starting place.
 - If your school does not conduct a land acknowledgement, consider advocating for one.
 - Acknowledgements for locations Roseneath Theatre tours to are available in the Roseneath Theatre Land Acknowledgements document below.
 - Regardless of which you use, it is important to understand the acknowledgement, to know the history of the nations and treaties it refers to, and to connect with local nations today.
 - Land acknowledgements should recognize Indigenous peoples’ historical and enduring care for the land and waters. It is important that students understand the present-day realities and leadership of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people so they do not view Indigenous people as historical objects.

2. Learn the Language

The United Nations has declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages. As with any language, it is important to learn Indigenous languages from fluent speakers. To avoid colonization of Indigenous language teaching, it is important to learn from someone who is a

member of that community. To listen to some reflections on learning Indigenous languages as a settler, click through to an episode from the CBC’s [The 180](#) (Marlow, 2017).

Note to Teachers: The best way to decolonize and Indigenize your teaching practice as a school community is in partnership with the local Indigenous community. Many school boards have employees who can guide teachers in respectful partnerships and many boards maintain lists of Indigenous speakers. Inviting an elder or knowledge-keeper to work with students and ensuring they are properly compensated is a best practice.

For extra practice following the lesson(s), consult resources provided by the elder or knowledge-keeper or one of the resources below.

Indigenous Language Resources

- NewJourneys.ca
 - A website created by the National Association of Friendship Centres³ which includes resources for learning Cree, Ojibwe, Mohawk, Inuktitut, Mi’kmaq, Blackfoot, Haida, Atikamekw.
 - Search “resources for learning” + your local Indigenous language(s)
 - Website also includes a page dedicated to Two-Spirit⁴ groups and resources.
 - <https://newjourneys.ca/>
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
 - The provincial body representing Friendship Centres.
 - Website with various provincial resources and a tool to find your local Friendship Centre.
 - <http://www.ofifc.org/>
- National Association of Friendship Centres
 - The national body representing Friendship Centres.
 - Website with various national resources and a tool to find your local Friendship Centre.
 - <https://nafc.ca/>
- First Voices

³ Friendship Centres are located across the country and provide services to Indigenous people living off-reserve.

⁴ Two-Spirit is a term coined in 1990 at the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference for use as a common term across many languages and cultures. Some nations still had third-gender words in their language, while some had been lost or replaced with derogatory words such as “berdache” due to colonization. The term Two-Spirit is used by Indigenous people to recognize gender and sexual diversity and to recognize their uniquely important historical and ongoing roles in their communities (New Journeys, 2016; Rainbow Resource Centre, 2014)

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- A website created by the First Peoples’ Cultural Council to teach and archive Indigenous languages. Though based in British Columbia, it contains resources for some languages spoken in Ontario.
- Select “Choose A Language” at the top of the page
- <https://www.firstvoices.com/>
- Deepening Knowledge: Resources for and about Aboriginal Education
 - Webpage created by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto with links to many language resources.
 - [https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Curriculum_Resources_\(by_subjects\)/Indigenous_Native_Languages.html#ojibwe](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Curriculum_Resources_(by_subjects)/Indigenous_Native_Languages.html#ojibwe)
- Indigenous languages—Learning and teaching resources
 - Webpage created by the Government of Canada with links to resources for learning and teaching Indigenous languages
 - <https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/ressources-resources/autochtones-aboriginals/apprentissage-learning-eng>

Extension:

- Learn how language shapes the way we think:
 - How Language Shapes the Way We Think: A TED Talk by Lera Boroditsky [Runtime 10:24]
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/lera_boroditsky_how_language_shapes_the_way_we_think/transcript?language=en#t-216745
- Learn how Indigenous languages provide different ways of thinking:
 - An Interview with Jeremy Dutcher
 - <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/24/650563184/jeremy-dutcher-the-newest-lig ht-in-canadas-indigenous-renaissance>
 - Listen to Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa, Jeremy Dutcher’s 2018 Polaris Prize-winning album sung entirely in the Wolastoqiyik language.
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJKOaVjfHus&list=OLAK5uy_ITVcQG CCQN2TsRtwyvjqb6UaQIBMfqk7w

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