**FNMI Peoples - Role Play Lessons**

**Ahead of time** - have your character packages prepared, set up the room with LED candles and start the music, put your signs on the door & find a bunch of photos you can show your students to go with each job (It’s easy to underestimate how important this is.)

**1st- Naming Ceremony**

**-** put a sign on the door notifying the students that they will be travelling to northern B.C. (put a map on the door too) and going back in time 6,000 years

- have the students enter, in sock feet, a LED candle-lit room to FNMI music (such as from the Katlodeeche First Nations drummers CD or the Sounds of Vancouver 2010 Aboriginal Welcome)

- explain a little about their tribe, village and its geography (I used Garage Band to join the music and my introduction together this year but you don’t have to)

- in certain locations, you may be able to smudge the students with sage here, but I would double-check this first

**2nd** - Turn on the lights and **pass out a student character package** to each child and keep one for yourself and any EAs (these include: a character card, a description of their role/job, a blank paper and a coloured construction paper colour-coded for their clan)

**3rd** - **Students put together their character cards**. (I’ve found it useful to have ipads/ laptops available during this time so they can check see images of what their name means.)

To Set Up the Character Cards students should:

- paste the ID on one side of a blank paper

- write their First Nations name in block letters at the top of the page and its translated meaning at the bottom

- draw an image associated with their name

- glue this sheet on to the coloured paper

- glue their job description on the back of the coloured paper and write their name there

- have them hand it in to you so it can be laminated and a string attached

4th - **I go over the vocations with them**. I show pictures to go with each vocation and act out the job as one of the students reads their job description. Half the class gets up and acts out the role while the other half watches and then they switch roles. I wouldn’t try to go through all the job descriptions in a single sitting. [[1]](#footnote-1)

5th - They **read and answer questions** about the vocations. My favourite book for this is From Time Immemorial: The First People of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Diane Silvey. Email me if you would like a copy of the questions and answers I devised to go with this text.

6th - Next, they can do some **Drama.**

* each job group acts out their duties together, shows it to the class and brainstorms rwhat they might do in a skit
* clans put together skits to perform for one another
* another class may be an audience for the final performance and play a game of guessing roles and giving reasons why
* my narratives turn into the Typewriter game where students act out what is being described by the author
  + some students may also produce narratives that could work this way too - be sure to check them first though

**A few other activities I like to do include:**

- show videos of creation stories (refer to youtube resources)

- show video which explains the scientific theory of how FNMI peoples came to North America

- read the legends to go with each of the different jobs (many good ones in Time Immemorial book)

- have students **write narratives** as their character - reflecting how they feel about their position in the community and begin describing events or making up stories about other members in their village

- can include illustrations and demonstrations when presenting

- 2-4 students/ Writing class present all or part of the narrative they have been creating

**Visual Art**

* teach them to draw some commonly used shapes and explain what is represented in their formation (split U, reverse U, ovoids, and formline)
* make ceremonial masks
* First Nations scenes through dioramas or felt pictures

**Dance**

* teach male and female dance moves and have students try them out with music
* clans choreograph (with support) dance movements associated with their animals (have them explore their animals/ plants movements on the iPads first)
* job groups meet and choreograph some dance moves together
* perform all dances at the potlatch[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Debate**

* last year, as part of the Nuu-Chuh-Nulth tribe, my students debated about whether the whale hunt should continue
* as part of the Gitxsan tribe they will debate the merits of the Alternative Governance Structure they’ve proposed and whether the Northern Gateway Pipeline should be built through their land

Celebration Activity - **Potlatch**

* I bring some blueberry bannock and students bring snacks to share
* we meet with another class divided in the same way and perform dances together
* ends with the chiefs giving out copper, raising the status of a few individuals and making an important announcement (such as that we are moving camps)

**Introduction to Conflict with the Europeans and Residential Schools**

* I do a slightly abridged version of the **circle activity** presented by Brad Marsden at the Delta Professional Learning Day in the Tsawwassen First Nation Longhouse in April 2015
* gradually many of the students in the child, elder, mother and father circles get sent back to their seats due to smallpox, war, going to jail or being sent to a residential school

(This was powerful for students but upsetting too as most of their characters died out.)

I **read** the picture book Shi-Shi-Ekto and the uplifting narrative The Journey of Hope in Time Immemorial but student still remained fairly subdued for about a day and a half. [[3]](#footnote-3)

1. Presented by Natasha Morley, Walking a Mile in their Moccasins, Oct. 21/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Presented by Natasha Morley, Walking a Mile in their Moccasins, Oct. 21/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Presented by Natasha Morley, Walking a Mile in their Moccasins, Oct. 21/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)