Building Bridges
By Building Understanding Through Current Events

Level 1
Grade 5 & up

2021/2022: Issue 1
Every Child Matters page 9
Residential Schools page 18
Orange Shirt Day page 28

LesPlan
Teachers Serving Teachers Since 1990
Mission Statement:

• LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students’ engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.

Building Bridges:

• allows for differentiated learning. Building Bridges is available in two levels, and in English and French, to meet your students’ varied learning needs.

• is tech-friendly. Project each month’s pdf on your Promethean or Smart Board to read articles together. Our pdfs also work seamlessly with assistive reading technology, and the Word version of the articles can be uploaded to Google Classroom and similar online platforms.

• is easy to use. Easily access links referenced in Building Bridges by visiting www.lesplan.com/en/links.

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We acknowledge, with respect, the lək̓ʷəŋɑ̓n-speaking First Peoples, known today as the Esquimalt, Songhees, and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, on whose traditional territory many of us create this resource. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with and honour the peoples whose historical relationships with this land continue to this day. We offer our heartfelt condolences and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and specifically with the families and communities who have suffered the loss of children through the genocidal practices of Indian Residential Schools in Canada.

About the cover design:

“[This design shows] two hands, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, working together through reconciliation with a ring of cedar surrounding them to represent the medicine to help through this process.” – Coast Salish artist Brianna Bear, August 2018
An Overview

Many educators across Canada have been responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action through their planning and practices. As a non-Indigenous teacher, I know that this work means I will make mistakes. I also know that I can’t know everything. Thank goodness! This work isn’t about knowing more; this work is about learning and asking questions alongside your students. It’s also about learning to ask the right questions in a humble way, and to imagine bridges through our colonial past. But how do we engage in the work of reconciliation alongside curricular learning outcomes in an authentic and meaningful way?

This series of lesson plans is designed to invite you and your students into the complex dialogue that is crucial to any work around reconciliation. By teaching students the tools to ask thoughtful questions, and to think carefully and critically about the questions they ask, we begin the hard work needed to build better relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

In this publication, current events and issues will be presented as opportunities for informed discussions and classroom inquiry that ultimately encourage students to ask the bigger questions that affect the societies we live in: Is this right? Is this just for all? What is better?

Setting the tone

Setting a positive and empathetic tone in your classroom is essential to the exploration of Indigenous issues. For instance, at the root of exposing Canada’s investment in the Indian Act and residential schooling is the discussion of what constitutes racism and discrimination. These topics are, and should be, sensitive for your students to enter into. A classroom environment that invites perspectives, and critically examines inherited belief systems, must first establish a set of rules to live by.

Also, keep in mind that our colonial history includes some very painful memories for many Indigenous families and communities, and care must be taken to enter into and exit conversations in ways that do not cause unintended emotional upset or harm. Indigenous students should never be called upon to speak to culture or Indigenous politics in the classroom unless they have initiated the input or it is precipitated by private conversation with students and their parents.

**Action:** Ask your students to come up with a list of body language, words, attitudes, and behaviours that constitute a positive classroom environment. Keep these posted in the classroom as a baseline criteria for entering into the subject of Canada’s treatment of Indigenous Peoples.
Creating learning environments that reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning

Aim to nurture a learning environment that embodies the First Peoples Principles of Learning. As the First Nations Education Steering Committee expressed, these principles are not rigid terms or isolated lessons, but more, a way of being with your learners and a way of viewing learning in general. Each Nation may have its own perspectives around learning and teaching, but these principles can be seen as generally agreed-upon starting points that invite all teachers and learners to view learning through an Indigenous lens. I have these posted in my classroom, and I refer to them often.

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Action: Ask your students to describe, in their own words, what the FPPL look like, feel like, and sound like in the classroom setting. Have them list their thoughts, words, and feelings on sticky notes and post their responses under each principle. Leave these up on your wall to set a tone for all learning across the curriculum.

You can learn more about these principles at:


https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com

Notes on assessment: Moving beyond empathy

We are trained as teachers to measure learning in students. I feel it is important in this particular endeavour that we don’t reduce students’ learning to a grade or a percentage. What you can measure is the depth to which your students are able to think critically about an issue, and the degree to which they can communicate their thinking through listening, speaking, and writing. Try using self-assessment tools, or a current events portfolio with an oral interview, as assessment strategies. Focus on speaking and listening as important indicators of a student’s thinking and communication skills. Use dialogue, discussion, and reflection as a way for each student to express his or her own entry point and degree of critical analysis of each current event. Keep the focus on the quality of questions asked, as opposed to coming up with solutions or answers.

Watch each student’s learning unfold, at his own pace, in her own words, and encourage ways to stretch individual learning.

Tasha Henry, Victoria, B.C.

Action: Ask students to keep a reflection journal to record their thoughts after each lesson. Make sure they understand that the journal is for your eyes only. Encourage them to make connections to their own life, stories, and experiences. Make sure you don’t use evaluative language when responding to their journal. A simple “thank you” for allowing you to witness their journey is sufficient.
About This Issue

With the discovery of unmarked graves next to many former Residential Schools across Canada and the growing awareness in this country of the damage caused by the Indian Residential School System, citizens and communities are grieving with those who continue to be impacted by this colonial government policy. At the same time, educators are asking how to help children comprehend the devastating evidence of child mortality as well as the current outrage and grief gripping the communities who feel that, despite the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 recommendations, their calls to justice have not been answered.

This issue focuses on the current discussions about the impacts of the Indian Residential School System in Canada. As the numbers of unmarked graves being located climbs, we offer this curriculum as a starting point for the bigger question, “What needs to happen?”. Government-sanctioned cultural genocide is a difficult reality to learn from. Teachers are called on to teach the ‘truth’ in regards to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action in a way that is accessible to all learners and sensitive to the retraumatizing effect of this shared history and painful truth.

As you work through this difficult topic in your classroom, please inform your students and families that they can contact the crisis line at the Indian Residential School Survivors Society for support 24/7: 1-800-721-0066.

Learning Outcomes:

I can:
• make reasoned, ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and determine appropriate ways to remember and respond.
• determine which causes most influenced particular decisions, actions, or events, and assess their short- and long-term consequences (cause and consequence).
• recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives, past and present.
• think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts and personal stories.
• make connections between historical, social, and cultural causes and effects.

(Adapted from the B.C. Grade 6 & 7 Language Arts and Social Studies Curricular Competencies)

Skills:

I can:
• demonstrate reading strategies (deciphering textual clues, visuals, graphics, maps through questioning, analyzing, predicting, summarizing, inferencing).
• demonstrate oral communication strategies (listening, expressing with clarity, staying on topic, taking turns, perspective taking, story-telling).
• decipher main ideas from supporting ideas in a given text and provide evidence for each.
• analyze concepts with reference to different perspectives.
Big ideas:

• The goal of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) was to assimilate “Indians” into non-Indigenous society.

• The Canadian government declared Indian Residential Schools mandatory for all Indigenous children in 1920, in partnership with the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, among others.

• The Canadian government was financially invested in and legally enforced the maintenance of the Indian Residential School System.

• Survivors of Residential Schools and their families and communities have been impacted by this legislation in extremely traumatic ways.

• New technology has exposed the exact numbers of children who perished at Residential Schools.

• “Every Child Matters” is a response to the systemic racism embedded in the Indian Residential School System.

• Many non-Indigenous Canadians are expressing increased awareness of the truth behind the Indian Residential School System.

• Nations are asking for reparation, repatriation, and criminal investigations in regards to the deaths of loved ones in the Indian Residential School System.

Essential questions:

• What does an orange shirt symbolize?

• What are the impacts of Residential Schools on Indigenous communities?

• What is the ripple effect of intergenerational trauma?

• What factors have impeded federal responses to the Calls to Action?

• How does this new evidence surrounding unmarked graves spurn criminal investigations with some Nations in Canada?

• Why might the discoveries of unmarked and undocumented graves be retraumatizing for many Survivors of Residential Schools?

A note on pronunciation:

For non-Indigenous teachers and students, pronunciation of Indigenous words can be challenging. While it’s preferable to consult with Indigenous language speakers about proper pronunciation, sometimes this isn’t possible. Consulting online pronunciation guides may be helpful. But when neither of these sources are feasible, it may be best to be honest about your inability to pronounce Indigenous words and use anglicized versions instead (they are usually in brackets, following the Indigenous spelling.) However, make students aware that Indigenous Peoples have their own preferred names, and consider learning, with your class, the pronunciation of the preferred name for the local Indigenous people, and the name of their language.
Acknowledging the traditional territory of First Nations is a respectful practice that honours the First Peoples who have lived, since time immemorial, on the land that we now occupy. The act shows respect and recognizes First Peoples’ ongoing presence on the land.

A Territory Acknowledgement is usually given at the beginning of an assembly, meeting, performance, or other public gathering. It is also an appropriate way to start your lessons.

The following resources may help you write an appropriate Territory Acknowledgement with your class:

1. Find out whose traditional territory your school or community is built on. Use this interactive map of traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples across Canada developed by Native Land to help you: https://native-land.ca/

2. Learn more about the protocols for acknowledging territory by reading the information shared by Native Land at: https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/

3. Look at examples of acknowledgements by various post-secondary institutions across Canada on the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) website at: https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory
Talking Circles

Talking Circles, and other circles such as learning and healing circles, originated with First Nations leaders. They were used to ensure that all leaders in the tribal council were heard, and that those who were speaking were not interrupted. Usually the Chief would begin the conversation. Then, other members would respond and share their own thoughts and feelings.

It is appropriate to use Talking Circles to structure discussions based on the curriculum in this publication. The format highlights how everyone is connected. It also ensures that everyone taking part has an equal voice.

Before conducting a Talking Circle, students must understand and respect the process. Here are some guidelines:

- The group sits in a circle so that everyone can see each other.
- One person introduces the topic for discussion – this is usually the teacher or group leader.
- An object, like a talking stick or feather, may be passed from person to person during the Circle. Only the person holding it may speak. Any item that is special or has meaning to the class is appropriate, as long as it is only used during Talking Circles.
- Everyone listens respectfully. This means giving the speaker their full attention.
- Everyone is given a chance to speak. However, participants may pass the object without speaking if they wish.
- It is respectful to introduce oneself before speaking. Speakers should use ‘I’ statements and ‘speak from the heart’, stating what they are thinking or feeling. They should avoid commenting on what other people have said.
- When everyone has had a chance to speak, the object can continue to be passed around until the discussion concludes.

Consider giving students time to reflect following the discussion. They can think about how the discussion influenced their opinions or ideas. They can also assess how they felt during the activity, what they learned, and what they might do differently next time.

Sources:

- The Circle Way: http://www.thecircleway.net
- First Nations Pedagogy Online: http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/circletalks.html
Every Child Matters

On May 27, the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation made a very sad announcement. The remains of 215 Indigenous children had been found in unmarked graves. They were found on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) final report noted 50 deaths that occurred at this school. However, many community members knew that more children had died there.

Definitions

**Indian Residential School:** church-run, government-funded school that was a part of a system of schools in operation between the late 1880s and 1996. Indigenous children were taken from their families and forced to live at these schools, which aimed to educate, convert, and integrate them into Euro-Canadian society.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission:** a three-person panel established by the federal government in 2008 to find out what happened at Indian Residential Schools and inform all Canadians.
That’s why this spring, the Nation’s Language and Culture Department hired a specialist to search for unmarked graves. The search was conducted using radar. It was carried out with help from Ceremonial Knowledge Keepers. They ensured that the work was completed in a respectful and appropriate way.

In the Nation’s statement, Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir said, “To our knowledge, these missing children are undocumented deaths... Some were as young as three years old. We sought out a way to confirm that knowing out of deepest respect and love for those lost children and their families, understanding that Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc is the final resting place of these children.”

**Widespread impact**

The Kamloops Indian Residential School was run by the Roman Catholic Church between 1890 and 1969. It was one of the largest Residential Schools in Canada. Chief Casimir noted in a statement that “…up to 500 students [were] registered and attending [the school] at any one time…”

Many of these children came from First Nations communities across B.C. Some came from outside of the province.

Harvey McLeod attended the school in the late 1960s. He responded to the devastating news: “I lost my heart, it was so much hurt and pain to finally hear, for the outside world, to finally hear what we assumed was happening there.”

Why were the graves unmarked? Why were the deaths undocumented?

“There may be reasons why they wouldn’t record the deaths properly and that they weren’t treated with dignity and respect because that was the whole purpose of the Residential School...to take total control of Indian children, to remove their culture, identity, and connection to their family,” explained Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond. She is the director of the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia.

**Not an isolated incident**

Sadly, more discoveries followed the Kamloops announcement.

On June 24, the Cowessess First Nation announced that it had located 751 unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan. The Roman Catholic Church operated this school for nearly 100 years. The school closed in 1996.

Bobby Cameron is the Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN). After the discovery at Marieval, he said that what happened in Canada’s Residential Schools was “a crime against humanity”.

Both the FSIN and Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe called on the federal government to search all of Saskatchewan’s former Residential School sites.

“There are thousands of families across our Treaty Territories that have been waiting for their children to come home. Saskatchewan had the highest number of Residential Schools and highest number of Survivors,” stated Chief Cameron.

**Definitions**

*undocumented:* not supported by documentary evidence (paperwork)
Kootenay Residential School

On June 30, the Lower Kootenay Band announced that it, too, had located unmarked graves – 182 in all. They were found in a cemetery near the former Kootenay Residential School at St. Eugene Mission. That’s just outside Cranbrook, B.C.

Lower Kootenay Band Chief Jason Louie is a member of the Ktunaxa Nation. He said, “We were robbed of future elders. Those children, if they had not passed away, could have been elders and teachers in our communities, the keepers of knowledge. It’s devastating.”

More to come

The Penelakut Tribe was the next to announce the discovery of unmarked, undocumented graves. In mid-July, the tribe posted online that it had found 160 graves where the former Kuper Island Residential School was located. This school was on Penelakut Island, off the southeast coast of Vancouver Island.

Murray Sinclair, the former chair of the TRC, warned that searchers may eventually find that as many as 25,000 children died at Residential Schools. That’s far more than the 4100 deaths estimated by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation based on death records.

The news was shocking to many Canadians. It was also retraumatising for many Residential School Survivors and their families. Yet the discoveries also proved that the stories Indigenous Peoples have always told about the schools were true.

“Over the past years, the oral stories of our elders, of our Survivors and friends of our Survivors have told us stories. We knew these burials were here,” stated Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmas Delorme about the graves located at Marieval.

Responding to the discoveries

In response to the discoveries, on August 10, the federal government announced that it would spend $321 million. The money will be used to help Indigenous communities search burial sites at former Residential Schools. It will also go towards supporting Survivors and their communities.

About $20 million of this money will be set aside to build a national monument in Ottawa. The monument will honour Survivors and all the children who were lost.

However, it’s not just the government who must take action. Every Canadian can play a role in healing the hurt caused by Residential Schools. During a virtual news conference over the summer, Cowessess Nation Chief Cadmas Delorme explained how: “All we ask of all of you listening, is that you stand by us as we heal and we get stronger. And that we must put down our ignorance and accidental racism of not addressing the truth that this country has with Indigenous people.”
Before Reading

1. Project to the class an image of the illustration on page 9. Ask students to carefully study the illustration. Then, invite them to describe what they see. Record their suggestions on the board or whiteboard. Challenge students to be as specific in their observations and descriptions as possible.

2. Ask students to complete a personal reflection (e.g., a 5-minute silent write or silent sketch) on the artwork. What do they see, and what does it mean to them? What story does this illustration tell?

3. Read the title of the article, “Every Child Matters”, to students. Ask students what this title means to them. How might it relate to the illustration? What predictions can students make about the article based on the illustrations and the title?
After Reading

A. Discussion

1. In what ways was the announcement of the discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children in unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School significant?

2. At the time, why did the Roman Catholic Church not document the deaths of Residential School children?

3. Why might the discoveries of the gravesites be retraumatizing for many Survivors of Residential Schools?

4. How can Canadians take ownership and be accountable to the communities and families that are impacted by the discoveries cited in the article?

5. What do these discoveries show us about the degree of trauma endured by Indigenous Peoples?

6. You may wish to revisit the illustration by asking students how their understanding of the artwork has changed after reading the article. What does this illustration say to them now? Consider sharing with students Coast Salish artist Brianna Bear’s explanation of her work:

   “New beginnings”

   The meaning around this image is a new beginning. With the findings of our young ancestors we lost to Residential Schools, a lot has come to surface from stories, hurt but new light, as represented with the sun. The fire is there to represent the healing and ceremony that comes with the findings, a lightness and truth that has only been told to a few. The Residential School image is also in behind the fire to show the responsibility of these schools where our young ancestors have been found. The hills are there to represent the grounds that our ancestors are being found in; ground that holds stories, hurt, and a new healing. Then finally our young ancestors are represented as the 7 generations before us, hence why there are 7 silhouetted figures. — Brianna Bear

B. Exploration and Reflection

In the following activity, students will be asked to respond thoughtfully and respectfully to one (or more) of the quotes shared in the article.

1. Begin by brainstorming with the class a “recipe” for responding respectfully to someone’s experience, opinions, and/or feelings shared via quotes in an article. (For example: Accept, don’t judge or criticize, the person’s perspective; aim to understand what is shared and why it’s important; think about how the words impact you and/or others.)

2. Distribute a copy of Reflections on the Discovery (p. 15) to each student. Read the directions aloud.

3. If needed, write the following sentence stems on chart paper to guide students’ responses:

   • From my perspective, what’s important is... It shows...
   • ___’s message tells us...This is important because...
   • I think... because...
   • I feel...
   • I hope...
   • I wonder...?
You may find it helpful to work through the following example together, using the class-generated criteria as a guide (Note: The quote is taken from ‘Phyllis’ story’, included in the article ‘A National Day of Truth and Reconciliation’, p. 29):

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<th>Quote</th>
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<td>“When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t give it back to me, it was mine!” ~ Phyllis Webstad</td>
<td>From my perspective, what’s important is that Phyllis’ shirt was taken from her without her consent and not returned. It shows me that the nuns at the Mission School did not respect Phyllis or her feelings; that they saw her as ‘less than’ non-Indigenous people. I think the feelings of worthlessness that Phyllis experienced were justified because no one takes something of value from another if they respect that person. I wonder what the nuns who stripped Phyllis and others of their clothes felt as they were doing it, given her reaction?</td>
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Reflections on the Discovery

Directions: Choose one (or more) of the following quotes to respond to. Use the class’ recipe for a respectful response to guide your thinking.

Quotes from the article “Every Child Matters”:

“To our knowledge, these missing children are undocumented deaths... Some were as young as three years old. We sought out a way to confirm that knowing out of deepest respect and love for those lost children and their families, understanding that Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc is the final resting place of these children.”
~ Rosanne Casimir, Kukpi7 (Chief) of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation

“I lost my heart, it was so much hurt and pain to finally hear, for the outside world, to finally hear what we assumed was happening there.”
~ Harvey McLeod, Kamloops Indian Residential School survivor

“There may be reasons why they wouldn’t record the deaths properly and that they weren’t treated with dignity and respect because that was the whole purpose of the Residential School... to take total control of Indian children, to remove their culture, identity and connection to their family.”
~ Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Director of the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at UBC

“There are thousands of families across our Treaty Territories that have been waiting for their children to come home. Saskatchewan had the highest number of Residential Schools and highest number of Survivors...”
~ Bobby Cameron, Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)

“...what happened in Canada’s Residential Schools was ‘a crime against humanity.’”
~ Bobby Cameron, Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)

“Over the past years, the oral stories of our elders, of our survivors and friends of our survivors have told us stories. We knew these burials were here.”
~ Cadmas Delorme, Chief of Cowessess First Nation

“We were robbed of future elders. Those children, if they had not passed away, could have been elders and teachers in our communities, the keepers of knowledge. It’s devastating.”
~ Jason Louie, Chief of the Lower Kootenay Band, Member of the Ktunaxa Nation

“All we ask of all of you listening, is that you stand by us as we heal and we get stronger. And that we must put down our ignorance and accidental racism of not addressing the truth that this country has with Indigenous people.”
~ Cowessess First Nation Chief Delorme
## My Thinking

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Extensions

1. Listen to this short video by author Monique Gray Smith about how to listen and talk to kids about Residential Schools: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebOJ_IMCvvk For older students, watch the video together as a way to talk to younger siblings/kids about Residential Schools. Encourage kids to think about what they would say to a younger student, sibling, or cousin about Residential Schools in an age appropriate way.

2. Read more about the discoveries of hundreds of unmarked graves in Residential Schools across Canada and the movement called the 215+Pledge. The number “215” is a symbol of the start of these discoveries. Visit the website to learn more about the unmarked graves and to show your support and solidarity by signing the #215Pledge: https://www.215pledge.ca/

3. Read the blog by Indigenous educator and author Jo Chrona “You ask what you can do?” at https://luudisk.com/2021/06/01/you-ask-what-you-can-do/ At the end, she lists achievable tasks for educators, activists, and citizens. Which one will you commit to? Why?

4. Kona Williams, an Indigenous forensic pathologist, discusses more on how to investigate the remains found at former Residential Schools in this article: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jul/26/canada-indigenous-forensic-pathologist-unmarked-graves What do you learn about the recovery process from her reflections?


What do public protests like these do to raise awareness of issues related to the Residential School legacy and the TRC’s Calls to Action?
The Difficult Truth About Residential Schools

In the 1880s, the federal government began taking Indigenous children from their homes. The children were sent to Indian Residential Schools against their wishes, and against the wishes of their families.

Residential Schools were paid for by the government. They were run by churches.

The last Residential School was located in Regina, Saskatchewan. It closed its doors in 1996.

In all, about 130 Residential Schools operated across the country. They were found in every territory and province except Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick. Some 150,000 children attended these schools over the years.
The aim of Residential Schools was to educate, convert, and integrate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian society. The government believed that it would be easiest to assimilate First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children if they were taken from their parents and community and kept in school for most of the year.

This government policy was based on a colonial world view. According to this way of thinking, Euro-Canadian society and Christian religions were superior to Indigenous cultures.

Today, the government acknowledges that this policy was wrong. Indigenous children should never have been taken from their families. The government should never have tried to wipe out Indigenous cultures.

Life in a Residential School

Residential Schools were more like violent prisons for inmates than schools for children.

Students were bullied and abused. They were harshly punished if they spoke their Indigenous languages. Letters home were written in English, which many parents couldn’t read. When the students returned home, they often found they didn’t belong anymore.

The schools were crowded, dirty, and cold. Thousands of children died there. Diseases such as smallpox, measles, flu, and tuberculosis were responsible for many of the deaths.

The individual stories are heartbreaking.

Michael Cachagee was four years old when he was sent to a Residential School in northern Ontario. He spent 12 years there. During that time, he never celebrated a birthday. He was never hugged or praised. Instead, he was beaten and abused.

It took years for him to come to grips with what happened to him. Sadly, his younger brother never did. He was just three when he arrived at the school.

“He came out when he was 16 and the rest of his life was just a mess with alcoholism. He never had a chance – all because he was sent off to a Residential School,” says Mr. Cachagee.

Ken Young was taken from his home at the age of eight in the 1950s. He remembers public beatings at the Prince Albert Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan. Children who tried to go home had their heads shaved. They had their legs shackled in pyjamas. The school felt like a prison.

“I thought it was normal because I was just a young guy,” says the Winnipeg lawyer today. “Later, I realized how bad that was that adults would treat children like that.”

It took a long time to get rid of his anger. “I was ashamed to be who I was because that’s what we were taught.”

Intergenerational trauma

Many of the problems faced by Indigenous people today are rooted in their painful experiences at Residential Schools. Students were left with feelings of low self-worth. They were filled with anger. They were resentful.

Some developed addictions to cope with their pain. Some ran into trouble with the law.

Definitions

assimilate: to make similar to
colonial: relating to a system or period in which one country rules another
convert: to persuade someone to change his or her religious beliefs
integrate: to make someone become a full member of a group or society and be involved completely in its activities
shackle: to prevent from moving with shackles (restraints)
Later generations have also been impacted. “The destructive beliefs and behaviours of many students have been passed on to their children as physical and mental health issues,” explains the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report. As well, Indigenous youth who were not raised in their own homes didn’t have the chance to learn how to be caring and responsible parents to their children.

The result? Canada’s Indigenous population now has high poverty rates and unemployment. It suffers higher levels of poor health and higher death rates than the population as a whole.

Yet Indigenous people are very resilient. The people and cultures were badly damaged by years of injustice. However, they continue to exist. Many Survivors are strong and courageous. They are determined to heal and move forward.

**Reconciliation**

The word ‘reconciliation’ means the reestablishment of a broken relationship. For that to happen in Canada between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, “there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour,” says the TRC.

In recent years, many church organizations involved with the schools have apologized.

“I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were a part of a system which took you and your children from home and family,” said the Anglican Church.

A letter from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops read, “We face the past and sincerely ask for forgiveness.”

The federal government is taking steps, too. In 2007, it announced $1.9 billion in compensation for those who were forced to attend Residential Schools. And in June 2008, then-prime minister Stephen Harper made a historic apology to Residential School Survivors.

For his part, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to fulfill all of the Calls to Action outlined in the TRC report. In 2018, he announced that the government will change Canada’s legal system. The reason? To strengthen Indigenous Peoples’ rights. That will give them greater control over their own destiny.

“Reforms are needed to ensure that – among other things - Indigenous Peoples might once again have confidence in a system that has failed them all too often in the past,” the prime minister said.

**Definitions**

- **atonement**: something that makes up for an offense or injury
- **compensation**: money given or received as payment for a service or loss or injury
- **destiny**: a person’s overall circumstances or condition in life
- **resilient**: able to become healthy, happy, or strong again after an illness, disappointment, or other problem
All Canadians have a role to play

Today, Canadians can learn about what went on in Residential Schools. We can begin to understand the harm that these schools caused. But once we know the truth, what do we do about it?

According to the TRC report, non-Indigenous Canadians need to start by exploring their own biases. They need to look at the stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples that they were brought up with.

“The most harmful impacts of Residential Schools have been the loss of pride and self-respect of Aboriginal people, and the lack of respect that non-Aboriginal people have been raised to have for their Aboriginal neighbours,” says the TRC report. “The beliefs and attitudes that were used to justify the establishment of Residential Schools are not things of the past.”

That means that the path to reconciliation won’t be easy, or quick. But it is very, very important that Canadians begin to walk down this path.

“All of the recommendations of the TRC report are intended to help all Canadians think about what they can do to reconcile with Aboriginal peoples,” says the TRC. “The most important thing is to begin to think about reconciliation and change in the way that all Canadians can.”

The Witness Blanket

The Witness Blanket is a 12-metre-long work of art. It was created to recognize the atrocities of the Indian Residential School System.

The project was inspired by the idea of a blanket, which offers warmth and protection. It resembles a giant “quilt” made out of hundreds of objects from Canada’s Residential Schools.

The objects were gathered from across the country. They include old doors and pieces of stained glass, belts used to punish Indigenous children, a child’s shoe, braids of hair, a hockey trophy, a doorknob, a photograph of a child, and a letter from parents asking that their children come home. Visitors can use a mobile app to learn more about each item.

The artwork toured the country for four years. In the spring of 2018, the tour was suspended. It was causing too much wear and tear on the exhibit. In May 2019, a new tour was launched using a true-to-scale reproduction.

The artist is master carver Carey Newman. He is of British, Kwagiulth, and Salish descent. He calls his piece “a testament to the human ability to find something worthwhile, even beautiful, amidst the tragedies, memories, and ruins of the Residential School Era.”

Definitions

atrocity: a cruel and violent act
bias: an attitude that makes people treat someone in a way that is unfair or different from the way they treat other people
equitable: fair and reasonable because everyone is treated in the same way
reproduction: a copy of something, especially a work of art or an antique
stereotype: a very firm and simple idea about what a particular type of person or thing is like
testament: strong evidence for something
Before Reading
Many students across Canada have more understanding of and experience with the history of Residential Schools in Canada than adults. Outline – using words or drawings – what you already know and what experience you already have with this part of history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>After Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the purpose of Indian Residential Schools?</td>
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<td>Who created Indian Residential Schools?</td>
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<td>What were Indian Residential Schools like?</td>
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<td>How was the government able to make children to go to Indian Residential Schools?</td>
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<td>When did the last Indian Residential School close?</td>
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<td>What does the word ‘reconciliation’ mean?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada?</td>
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After Reading

A. Discussion

Invite students to return to their Before Reading organizer and to add any new information they learned in the After Reading column. Then, engage students in a class discussion based on the following questions:

1. What do you suppose happens to people who are not permitted to celebrate their culture?

2. Residential School Survivor Ken Young says, “I was ashamed to be who I was because that’s what we were taught.” As you see it, in what ways might shame hinder a person’s development and feelings of happiness?

3. Why do you think that some Indigenous leaders, when speaking of Residential School trauma, would also like the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples to be noted and celebrated?

4. What is your understanding of the term ‘reconciliation’? What would reconciliation look like, if and when it is achieved? Explain.

5. Why do you suppose reconciliation is a process directed at non-Indigenous Canadians? What does reconciliation mean to you? Your class? Your school?

6. How has the Canadian government attempted to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples? Use two concrete examples from the article.

7. Respond to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s announcement that the government will overhaul its legal framework with Canada’s Indigenous Peoples. As you see it, what is the significance of this announcement? Explain.

B. Exploration and Reflection

Just as ripples expand across the water when something is dropped into it, a ‘ripple effect’ is the continuation and spreading of the results or impact resulting from an event or action. Use the information in the article to speculate on the ‘ripple effect’ Residential Schools had on Indigenous children, their families, and their communities. Focus on one specific event or action, such as:

- removing children from their families;
- bullying, punishment, and/or abuse received by children from the Residential School staff;
- reduction in or removal of freedoms while at the school, such as not being allowed to go home, or having to cut their hair or wear a uniform;
- poor living conditions;
- not being allowed to speak their native language;
- being ‘Christianized’—forced to learn about Christianity;
- being taught that their culture is inferior.
Where possible, speculate how the various events or actions might have also impacted Canada or Canadians as a whole, and consider how the event or action may have impacted one or more of the following aspects of well-being:

- cultural (freedom to speak first language and carry out cultural traditions/practices);
- social (strong connection to others);
- political (adequate influence, self-determination);
- economic (good jobs/education, stable income, good standard of living).

Document your thinking on the Consider the Impact organizer (p. 25). Start by considering the impacts on the individual level. How might the specific event or action have impacted a child? Then consider how that specific event or action would spread out to have impact at the family, community, and country level.

For example, removing a child from his/her family (the action) impacts his/her social and cultural well-being. It may result in sadness, anger, loneliness, or confusion for the child (individual level) but also reduces the relationship he/she has with family (family level). He/she doesn’t get to know his/her parents, extended family members or ancestors, and their histories or values, which results in a loss of identity, culture, and connection. At the community level, the child will not get to know community members or participate in community events which results in a loss of belonging and a diminishing of cultural understanding. And, at the level of country, Canadians would not benefit from learning about Indigenous cultures, which makes it challenging to understand the richness and uniqueness of these cultures. This may impact Canada’s perceptions of, attitude towards, and treatment of Indigenous Peoples.
Consider the Impact

Event or action: ______________________________________________________

Impact on well-being:  □ cultural  □ social  □ political  □ economic

Country

Community

Family

Individual
1. Invite students to study Coast Salish artist Brianna Bear’s illustration on page 18. Then, using a **Think, Pair, Share** structure, have them discuss the following:

- What feelings does this image evoke?
- How are the two figures in the image (*the hoop dancer and the little boy*) interacting?
- What do you suppose the hoop colours (*yellow, red, white, and black*) might represent?
- What reasons can you suggest to explain why the dancer is transparent?
- What are the two objects lying at the feet of the boy? What might they symbolize?
- What is the coloured (*yellow, red, white, and black*) wheel on the back of the dancer? What might it symbolize?
- Brianna says of her illustration: “I thought I would honour my brothers and sisters in the interior [of B.C.] who use Pow Wow and the Medicine Wheel as their way of connecting with their roots. I did leave the little boy more transparent so the hoop dancer behind him can be seen as our people’s strength and resiliency, and especially as a reminder that we have culture still inside us, despite the trauma of Residential School.” Respond to Brianna’s explanation. As you see it, how does art tell a story?
- Research the significance of the Medicine Wheel and Pow Wow for specific First Nations. Then, consider: Why do you think Brianna chose these images to help you think about the history of Residential Schools in Canada?


3. Explore the website “Where are the Children?” found at: [http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/](http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/). Preview the Survivor testimonies and choose several that would be suitable for your class or age group. Have students listen to the stories of Survivors.


- What do you observe in these videos?
- As you see it, what is the work of reconciliation?

6. How can students see themselves actively involved in reconciliation? Encourage them to view the following website to gain more information about reconciliation and the role they might play: https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-reconciliation-is-and-what-it-is-not
Then, invite students to complete the following statement on a piece of paper to show the personal commitment they will make towards reconciliation: #MyReconciliation includes...
For example: #MyReconciliation includes the government recognizing First Peoples in Canada regardless of the issues being discussed; going beyond words and taking actions towards education and change; support, compassion, and inclusivity for everyone.

7. You may wish to enrol your class (Grades 5-12) in a 5-day national virtual event taking place during Truth and Reconciliation Week (September 27-October 1, 2021). The event “will provide historical workshops, exclusive video content, and activities for students — all supported by artistic and cultural performances by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists.” To learn more about the program and to register your class go to: https://nctr.ca/education/truth-and-reconciliation-week/

8. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) has created three Teacher Resource Guides for Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation. Download the one most appropriate to the grade you teach for additional lesson plans and activities:
• Gr. 5: http://www.fnesc.ca/grade5irsr/
• Gr 10: http://www.fnesc.ca/grade-10irsr/
• Gr 11/12: http://www.fnesc.ca/grade-11-12-indian-residential-schools-and-reconciliation/
A National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

In July 2021, the federal government passed Bill C-5. This legislation established a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. It will take place on September 30 each year.

This new statutory holiday is meant to honour Residential School Survivors, their families, and communities. It also acknowledges the painful experiences that Survivors had at the schools. And it provides an opportunity for people to talk about the schools’ impact.

“By recognizing a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, all Canadians will be able to reflect, learn, grieve, and take collective action towards reconciliation. Today, we are taking another important step forward as we walk along this shared path together,” said a statement by Daniel Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs.

Orange Shirt Day: One child’s story

The new holiday falls on Orange Shirt Day.

Orange Shirt Day was inspired by Phyllis Webstad. Phyllis belongs to the Stswečem’c Xgat’tem First Nation. In 2013, she shared her experiences of Residential School at an event. She explained how in 1973, at six years of age, she was excited about her first day at St. Joseph’s Residential School in Williams Lake, B.C. Her granny had bought her a new, bright orange shirt for the occasion. But when she proudly arrived at the church-run Residential School, she was stripped of her clothes. Her hair was cut. Her new shirt was taken away, and she never got it back.

“The colour orange has always reminded me of that, and how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared, and how I felt I was worth nothing,” said Phyllis, forty years later.

Definitions

legislation: law, or proposed laws
reconciliation: the reestablishment of a broken relationship
statutory: controlled by a law or statute

Learning about the past, changing the future

This September, on the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, people across the country will wear orange shirts or other orange pieces of clothing. They are sending the message that “every child matters.”

“[September 30] is a day for Canadians to hope for a better future as we acknowledge a shameful past... Let us honour the children who survived Residential Schools, and those who did not, by working together toward a renewed partnership,” said a statement by Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services.

For her part, Phyllis Webstad is thrilled that the younger generation is learning about the past.

“[September 30] is a day for Canadians to hope for a better future as we acknowledge a shameful past... Let us honour the children who survived Residential Schools, and those who did not, by working together toward a renewed partnership,” she said.

“I am blown away and I am humbled and honoured how it has taken off.

Phyllis’ story

I went to the Mission for one school year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission school. I remember going to Robinson’s store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting – just like I felt to be going to school!

When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t give it back to me, it was mine! The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared...

I am honoured to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other Survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.
Before Reading

1. Have students work with a partner to brainstorm everything that an orange t-shirt symbolizes for them. Encourage them to consider terms, slogans, and specific names of people and communities. Invite partners to record their list on the paper t-shirt cutout (p. 31). Pin students’ t-shirts on the bulletin board or tape them on the door.

2. Ask students to consider: What is the power of symbols? In what ways can symbols further a cause? In what ways can they distract from it?

3. Read the title of the story and the article’s subheaders aloud. Invite students to use the title, subheaders, and their discussion to predict what the story is about.
After Reading
A. Discussion
1. How might hearing Phyllis’ story make other Residential School Survivors more comfortable to share their stories?

2. What does an orange shirt symbolize the loss of?

3. ‘Every Child Matters’ is the slogan for Orange Shirt Day. For what reasons is it an appropriate slogan?

B. Exploration and Reflection
Use the Changes to My Thinking organizer (p. 33) to reflect on how your understanding of Orange Shirt Day, reconciliation and/or Residential Schools has changed from reading the article.

Note to teachers: You may wish to have students add on to their charts after reading the other articles in this issue. Encourage them to explore how their understanding of the topic(s) changes—deepens or expands—as a result of reading, thinking about, and discussing additional texts.
# Changes to My Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I used to think</th>
<th>I now think</th>
<th>My hope is...</th>
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Extensions

1. Victoria, B.C.-based Indigenous artist and carver Douglas “Bear” Horne (Tswaout) created this design for Orange Shirt Day t-shirts in 2016 as a gift to Victoria Orange Shirt Day event organizers Eddy Charlie and Kristin Spray:

An Orange Shirt Day pamphlet in which this design appears states: “Horne’s design features: a bear to help us follow the right path, an eagle to help us have a vision of a bright future, a hummingbird to keep our mind, body, and spirit healthy, and a flower to feed the connection of all these elements.” Respond to this quote. As you see it, what are the teachings of Bear’s design in relation to Orange Shirt Day? Explain.

2. Phyllis Webstad said, “I am honoured to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other Survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.” Read between the lines: What is the intention of Phyllis’ sharing? What is the ripple effect of her testimony? How can listening to testimony be seen as a bridge to learning? Draw a bridge and outline your thoughts in words and images, or write a reflection to communicate your thinking.


5. Eddy Charlie, Residential School Survivor, together with Kristin Spray, helped organize Victoria, B.C.’s first Orange Shirt Day event. There are several videos on this website pertaining to Orange Shirt Day, including: Xe Xe Smun Eem (Sacred Children). View the following video to find out more about Eddy and his friend Kristin’s initiatives at: https://victoriaorangeshirtday.com/sacred-children-orangeshirtday/.


To what extent does this bill meet the TRC’s Call to Action #80, which calls upon the federal government, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday? What more might be needed to ensure the legacy of Residential Schools is never forgotten?
Growing up, my two sisters and I never heard my father, Basil Johnston, talk about being sent to Residential School with his little sister, Marilyn. We attended a Catholic school in Richmond Hill, and we didn’t learn about Residential Schools in Social Studies class, either. I can only recall from my grade school education that explorers came to Canada to trade with the First Nations, who shared their land with the settlers.

It wasn’t until 1988, when my father wrote Indian School Days, that I learned about his experience at the Garnier Residential School. I couldn’t put the book down. I read his first-hand account from cover to cover in about three days. I was 21, and it was the first time I realized what my father and my aunt had lived through.

The Garnier Indian Residential School was located in Spanish, Ontario. The small town of Spanish is about halfway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

My father was about nine years old when the Indian Agent showed up one day to take him and his sister Gladys to school. But Gladys had gotten poison ivy a few days before so the Indian agent took his younger sister, Marilyn, instead. She was only four years old!
old! She was still a baby, not even old enough to go to school.

This past July, I asked my Auntie Marilyn what she remembers about that day. Marilyn is now 86 years old. “I just remember I was going somewhere, there was a bit of excitement but it wasn’t supposed to be me. It was supposed to be my sister Gladys... But the Indian agent said she can’t go, and he pointed at me. ‘She’s old enough to go, get her ready,’ he said.”

My father recalled in his book, “Mother and Grandmother were both appalled. ‘No! She’s too young,’ they wailed. ‘She can’t go to school yet, she’s only four. No!’ But the agent knew how to handle Indians, especially Indian women. ‘Well! If you don’t want her to go, we’ll take the whole family. Now! Get her ready. Hurry up!’”

I can only think how sad this was for my grandmother and great-grandmother.

The Indian agent lived on Cape Croker, now called Neyaashiinigmiing. My father sat with his sister on the ferry boat ride across Georgian Bay. The trip to Manitoulin Island took about two hours. He offered Marilyn what comfort he could.

When they arrived at the Residential School, Marilyn recalled, “I think we went over to the boys’ school first, and I saw all these children just surrounding us, while we were looking at them. I didn’t know what was going on, what was coming next. All I knew is I was in a different place.”

After they dropped Basil off at the Garnier Residential School for Boys, Marilyn recalls she did not see him again for a long time. “We were allowed to see our brothers once a month on a Sunday for an hour, I think.”

Across the road was St. Joseph’s Residential School for Girls. It was run by the Daughters of Mary, a Catholic order of nuns. That would be Marilyn’s home for the next 13 years.

My Auntie Marilyn only spoke Anishinaabe at that time. She did not speak English. She had no way of knowing that she would only see her mother once during her time at the school, nor that she would forget how to speak Anishinaabe while at St. Joseph’s.

She recalls that she wasn’t even old enough to attend classes when she got there. She stayed in a room and slept with a few other very young children who were also too young to go to class.

Marilyn recalls, “I was kind of young to be going to school, so they sat me at the back with a chair and a box of sand. But we had no toys, I never had a toy growing up at all... they didn’t have any dolls, nothing there to play with.”

Marilyn described the environment as very harsh. “I got the strap many times. I don’t know why. That great big black leather thing and it was so thick. That’s what she used on the girls. Everyone called it the cat-of-nine tails.”

Marilyn recalled other punishments. She remembers her teacher, Ms. Annie Berrigan. “She had the run of the whole place. And if you were punished, you got in this little cubbyhole, and you were locked in there. I was locked in there before. Sometimes she didn’t like the choir singing in the chapel. And she pulled me out in front of her one day and she said, ‘Why aren’t you singing?’ I said, ‘I’m singing.’ ‘Don’t answer me back!’ she said. And she pulled me by my collar and put me in that cubbyhole.”

The teacher tried to get Marilyn to sing and memorize a hymn called ‘Daily, Daily, Sing to Mary’. She said, “It doesn’t matter how long it takes, one month, six months, you’re not leaving there till you sing that hymn!” “Oh, after I couldn’t do it, I was put back in that cubbyhole, taken out, put back in, taken out. Oh yeah it was a horrible place. No love in there, nothing.”

Over her years at St. Joseph’s, Marilyn would only get a few visits from her father Rufus, whom she did not really know. “And he came to the school to visit maybe three times a year, he was in the army then... and when he came, I was brought up to the parlour to visit with him. Well, I didn’t know who this man was. I looked at him, then I sat down. I put my head down, I never looked at him.”

It’s sad that my Auntie Marilyn did not get to know her own father. I got to know him, I remember his kindness to me. I remember sitting on his lap. I remember my Grandfather Rufus speaking to my father often in Anishinaabe when we visited. I remember my grandpa always calling me “Geobblynaw”.

“They gave us each a number, I hated it, I was number 18,” Marilyn said. “I had that for 10 plus years.
If they called you or anything, they called you by your number. Not by your name.” She recalls the number was put on all of her clothes, too. Even my father had a number; it was 49.

Marilyn attended school to grade 8 and went on to high school. She remembers the day her mother visited. “She came once to see me, and we had an outing for maybe two hours and we had to go back to the gate. And she used to write letters to me but every letter that came into the school was read by whoever was in charge. She sent me two dollars one time, she must have worked really hard for that two dollars, and the principal came over to me and said, ‘We’re sorry your mother wrote your letter and said she sent you two dollars but the mail was opened so it wasn’t in there.’”

Marilyn stayed at St. Joseph’s to grade eleven. “I went to high school, and I just couldn’t take it anymore. And I told my brother one day, ‘You know it was hard living in there, not knowing your parents, not knowing your grandparents, nobody...’ But I was trying to get out of there any way I could. So when I got to grade 11, I thought there’s no way I can stay here any longer, I just can’t.”

Later, Marilyn’s two younger sisters went to St. Joseph’s Residential School, too. “My sister Gladys was able to go there because she had gotten over this poison-ivy... and Ernestine. Janet was the only one that didn’t go.” Marilyn also found out her younger cousin went. “I didn’t even know Berdina went.”

Reflecting on her faith and growing up Catholic, Marilyn says, “I prayed all my life, I sort of clung to the Roman Catholic faith, but since these children were found out west in graves, massive [sic] graves, I don’t know now what to believe, I don’t.”

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Before Reading

1. Write or project the phrase “Truth and Reconciliation” in the centre of the board, a piece of chart paper, or on a screen. Facilitate an A/B Partner discussion, asking pairs to talk about what the words mean, how they are related, and what connection they have to Residential Schools and/or the other articles in this issue. Record their thinking by branching their ideas out from the central phrase.

2. Next, read the title of the story aloud. Invite students to use the title and their discussion to predict what the story is about.
After Reading

1. Start by asking students to complete a **personal reflection** (e.g., a 5-minute silent write or silent sketch) in response to what they learned about Marilyn’s experience at the St. Joseph’s Indian Residential School. What do they understand, think, and/or feel about her experiences?

2. Then, introduce the words *explicit* (clearly stated and in detail) and *implicit* (not clearly stated, but suggested – you have to use the clues in the text and your background knowledge to figure out what is happening). Suggest to students that they will work with a partner to uncover the explicit and implicit truths about Marilyn’s experiences at the Garnier Indian Residential School.

3. As a class, work through an example of each concept, from the introduction:
   - **explicit truth** – *The first time the author learned about his father’s and his aunt’s experiences at Residential School was when he read his father’s book at the age of 21.*
   - **implicit truth** – *The author’s father didn’t like to talk about his experiences at Residential School because they were too painful.*

4. Next, distribute a copy of the story to each pair of students and direct them to look for and mark (with an E and an I) both explicit and implicit ‘truths’ about Marilyn’s experiences. These truths could be about the students, the staff, and/or the lessons that Marilyn learned about herself, her family, or her culture as a result of her experiences there. Invite groups to share their findings.

5. Finally, invite students to add on to their previous reflections and make connections between the phrase “Truth and Reconciliation” and the importance of witnessing (hearing or reading) Marilyn’s story (her truths) and the stories from other Residential School Survivors.
Students want to know what’s happening in their world – but the news can be difficult and time-consuming to teach. **WE HAVE THE SOLUTION.** (Five, actually.)

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✓ Comics  
✓ Map assignments  
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✓ Online interactive resource  
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**Building Bridges**

✓ PDF/Word resource  
✓ Builds understanding of current events that impact Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians  
✓ Two theme-based articles and lesson plans  
✓ Background information  
✓ Consistent with First Peoples Principles of Learning  
✓ Encourages a respectful, reflective, empathetic, and inquiring frame of mind  
**Product details:** 5 issues. Variable page length. Available in English and in French, and in two reading levels, for grades 5 and up.

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... that each issue of Building Bridges includes a PDF file (complete document) and a Word file (articles and questions only)

Students can complete assignments directly in the Word file. Teachers can email the file to students or post it on the Internet. The Word file also allows teachers to:

- easily modify and format content including changing fonts and text sizes
- create a PDF document and use Adobe Reader’s ‘Read Out Loud Mode’
- save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment
- promote and encourage students’ computer skills

Password Security

There are three ways to access data from a Word file that is password protected:

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- LibreOffice is a free alternate to Microsoft Office and offers the same functionality. It’s easy to install and use. See: www.libreoffice.org
# 2021 – 2022 Publication Schedule

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