metawe ᒣᑕᐧ *to play*
Drama with Curtis Peeteetuce

Strand:	Drama
Grades:	3 & 4
Content:	45 minute broadcast + hands-on activity

Overview

It means to play. As humans, one of our first mandates is to play. As we grow we can lose that gift. Our imaginations let go of the happy adventure worlds we spent hours in as children and form the basis of our view of the world. Playing shapes our identity. If lose play, we lose some of our identity.

Language, culture and history are the foundations of identity. The experience of Indigenous people in Canada has for the most part been one of genocide. The disconnect from language, culture and identity are at the root of ongoing impacts of colonialism and residential schools in our communities. The products are felt today with our children, who are our future.

'pako tahakamik pikiskweyak oma ka-nehiyawewin'
We must continue speaking our Cree language.

The revitalization of language and culture are vital to the rebuilding of community. In this workshop, educators and students will revisit our mandate for play. Interactive elements include familiarizing ourselves with voice and body as we explore animal play of the treaty 6 territory. These include bear (maskwa) eagle (kihew) and buffalo (paskwa-mostos).
Language will also be incorporated from a beginner level. As we choose to listen to the words and meanings of select Cree terms, we begin to understand how language is vital to identity.

The workshop culminates in students playing animals and characters in an excerpt from Curtis Peeteetuce's youth play *kiwek,* which is inspired by the film Jumanji. A talkback with students will allow for post-mortem discussion among the students and a chance to share what was learned.

Artist Bio

Curtis Peeteetuce is from the Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation. Since 2001, he has had the honour of working with many talented artists in theatre, radio drama, music and film. Selected highlights include Theatre Prospero/Theatre Akpik (*Pawakan Macbeth*), Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan (*Richard III, Twelfth Night*), Globe Theatre (*Salt Baby*), Persephone Theatre (*A History of Breathing*) and GTNT (*Where The Blood Mixes, Thunderstick*). Curtis is the recipient of the Saskatoon & Area Theatre Award for Outstanding Male Performance and the Henry Woolf Award for Outstanding Achievement. He is also a grass dancer, storyteller and the playwright for the popular rez Christmas story series and the recently published plays *nicimos, Popcorn Elder* and *kihew.* Curtis dedicates all his efforts and accomplishments to his son Mahihkan.

Saskatchewan Curriculum Outcomes:

Grade 7

CP7.5 Use drama elements, strategies, negotiation, and collaboration to help shape the direction of the drama and/or collective creation.

CP7.6 Express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationships to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural environments) in drama and/or collective creation.

CR7.2 Investigate and identify ways that the arts can communicate a sense of place.

Saskatchewan Curriculum Outcomes:

Grade 8

CP8.4 Demonstrate how dramatic characters interact in relationships within the drama and/or collective creation.

CP8.5 Investigate how theatrical elements (e.g., story, character, design, space) are combined to achieve dramatic purpose.

CR8.1 Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works through the creation of own arts expressions.

CH8.1 Research and share insights about arts expressions that incorporate social commentary.

Classroom Setup:

Students will need room to move around and stand in a circle.

Broadcast Program (45 min)

- Artist Intro/video bio
- Introductions around the circle
- Artist Lecture - “Storytelling & the elements of culture, language and identity”
- Body & Voice Awareness Activities
- Artist Presentation - “kiwek”. Students will act out characters and assist Curtis with performance
- Wrap up and questions

Curriculum Aims & Goals

Creative/Productive:

Students explore and use creative forms of expression. They will inquire, create, and communicate through movement, drama and voice.

Critical/Responsive:

Students will use critical thinking, research, creativity and collaborative inquiry. They will develop understanding through demonstration, interaction, repetition and discussion.

Cultural/Historical:

Students will investigate the content and aesthetics of the arts within culture, historical, and contemporary contexts and understand the connection between the arts and human experience.

Post-Broadcast Teacher Guided Activities

Prepare for the activity:

- Print off the list of Cree words provided in this document.
- Print off the .pdf script for **kiwek**
- Open the Cree dictionary online, there are a few different options for sites, and you may need to download adobe flash player. http://www.creedictionary.com/search/?q=&scope=0&submitButton.x=31&submitButton.y=18
- Turn on your speakers so students can listen to the pronunciation of the words.
- This is another great resource: http://giftoflanguageandculture.ca/glcp/Plains%20Cree%20learning.htm

Set up your room:

- Move around your furniture so that you have space to form a circle with students.

Proposed activity schedule:

1) Form a circle and open the circle (described in broadcast) with all students and teachers.

2) Warm up (we encourage you to revisit the body and voice activities that were practised in the broadcast. This is a good way to warm up and get the students comfortable.)

3) Encourage play

4) Give each student will get a word or phrase from the *kiwek* script (English or Cree). Selected by the teacher.

If the students want to know a word that is not in the cree dictionary, the teacher can type the word into the cree dictionary: http://www.creedictionary.com/search/?q=&scope=0&submitButton.x=31&submitButton.y=18

5) One at a time, going around the circle, encourage the student with the word to say the word out loud and ask the circle to speak it back. Then the student will playfully act out the character of the animal. If a student is shy, they can “tap” other students to be part of their herd/flock/gander/etc. Once everyone has had a chance to participate, move to next activity.

6) Time permitting, the teacher can read an excerpt from Curtis Peeteetuce’s, kiwek. Students are encouraged to physically act out what they are actively listening to.

7) Close the circle (described in broadcast).