

Aboriginal Issues: Diabetes, the Pandemic

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Tips for Teaching Controversial Issues

The teaching of value-laden issues has generated much controversy. There is some basic consensus on the fundamental moral and ethical values in our society and that these values can be taught in a meaningful way.

It is assumed in Canadian Studies that there are fundamental values on which there is agreement. It is also assumed that there are many disagreements and that students need to learn to deal with controversy. The social studies and history curricula provide students with learning experiences that will help them identify some of the fundamental value positions of society and how these arose. This curriculum deals with controversy, even invites it. However, it does not suggest that any belief is as good as any other belief. Therefore, this curriculum makes no attempt to be objective in the sense of being value free.

Canadian Studies gives students opportunities to examine controversial issues. Debating these issues will provide students with the opportunity to apply concepts and higher order thinking skills in organizing, interpreting and communicating information meaningfully. In this process, students can begin to understand the role of values as the basis for making inferences, that values provide us with evaluative criteria, and that we depend upon the traditions of Canadian society to provide us with guidelines. These criteria include: human dignity, basic rights and responsibilities as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and respect of, and tolerance for, individual differences.

There are many methods to teach controversial issues in the classroom. As these issues touch personal beliefs and trigger emotional reactions, these methods are sometimes difficult to conduct in an orderly fashion.

The following ideas may assist teachers:

- Recognize the general legitimacy of controversy as a part of society, and that students must learn to discuss the issues and problems presented.
- Establish ordered ways of proceeding: discussions, debates, take a stand, continuum, mediation, etc. Create and agree on effective rules.
- Concentrate on evidence and valid information.
- Represent the opposing positions accurately and fairly.
- Make sure to clarify the issue, so that everyone understands where there is a disagreement and where there is agreement (to avoid simultaneous monologues).
- Identify core issues.
- Avoid the use of slogans.
- Talk about concrete issues before raising the discussion to a level of abstraction.
- Allow the students to question your position.
- Admit doubts, difficulties, and weaknesses in your position.
- Teach understanding by re-stating the perspective of others. Have participants paraphrase what they hear to gain this skill.
- Demonstrate respect for all opinions.
- Establish means of closure: examine consequences and consider alternatives.

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Ontario Ministry of Education Guidelines:

HFA 4M - Grade 12 Nutritional Science

- identify the social conditions that contribute to the incidence of illness and disease (e.g., improper nutrition, the pressure of daily living, stress) pg. 62
- explain the relationship among lifestyle, food choices, and nutrition-related illnesses and diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, anorexia nervosa, tooth decay, osteoporosis) pg. 62
- explore employment opportunities in areas relating to food and nutrition sciences, such as, health and medicine, hospitality services, agriculture, and food technology and production; pg. 63
- describe a selection of the wide variety of tastes and food preferences displayed by societies around the world; pg. 64
- plan, prepare, and serve (using available ingredients and technology) specific foods prepared in the style of a variety of ethnic and/or Native cuisines, and draw comparisons among them; pg. 64

Main Idea

Rates of diabetes among Aboriginal people in Canada are three to five times higher than those of the general Canadian population. Aboriginal children are also now being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, a condition that in the past occurred mainly in older persons (Health Canada, 2006). Programs which emphasize holistic approaches and strive to be culturally appropriate are now in place across the country.

The incidence of diabetes is not only increasing in the Aboriginal population but in all populations. *“Diabetes is an American epidemic. One in three Americans born in 2000 is projected to develop diabetes. Diabetes is a pandemic. In 2003, 194 million people worldwide, ranging in age from 20 to 79 years, had diabetes. By 2025, this number is projected to increase by 72% to 333 million, and nearly 80% of these cases will be in the poorer industrializing countries”* (Clinical Diabetes, 2005).

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Gain an understanding of the diabetes disease process, with the ultimate goal of disease prevention.
2. Gain experience in the area of Aboriginal holistic, traditional teaching and ceremonies.
3. Gain an understanding of the Medicine Wheel.

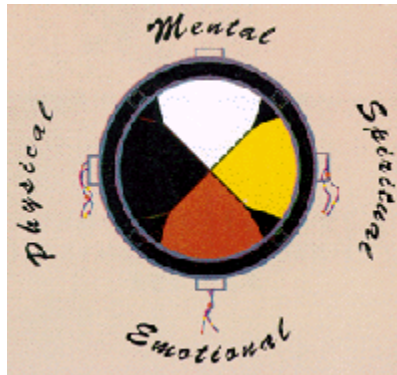
Tips and Resources

- Aboriginal Organizations in Thunder Bay - located on page 30 of the resource document *Aboriginal Presence in Our Schools: A Guide for Staff*
- A definition of holistic education that reflects the Aboriginal approach to the concept is expressed by theorist and teacher Ron Miller who says, “Holistic education nurtures the development of the whole person... recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit.” It is rooted in the belief that one cannot nurture only one aspect such as the mind and ignore the body, emotions and spirit.

The Circle/The Medicine Wheel:

Aboriginal people enjoy a strong affinity with the circle because it symbolizes and resembles many cycles in the natural world. Some Aboriginal people believe the power of the world works in circles such as the shape of the world, sun and the moon, the wind as it whirls in circles, birds as they make their nests in circles, etc. In other Aboriginal communities it is also a symbol of equity where no one person has an elevated position at a certain area of the circle.

As illustrated by the Medicine Wheel, mental health results from the balance of: Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional components of the wheel:



- The White Nation sits at the North of the Wheel, and their gift to humankind is Mental, this is also where the Elders of the community sit;
 - To the East is the Yellow Nation and their gift to humankind is Emotion. The Children also sit to the East and are taught by the Elders;
 - The Red Nation sits at the South and their gift is Spirituality—they are the protectors of Mother Earth. The Youth, who are spirited, sit here and mentor the Children;
 - To the West is the Black Nation, whose gift is the Physical. This is where Adults sit and mentor the Youth.
- Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/diseases-maladies/diabete/index_e.html
 - National Aboriginal Diabetes Association <http://www.nada.ca/>
 - Turtle Island Native Network <http://www.turtleisland.org/healing/mhealth.htm>
 - Clinical Diabetes <http://clinical.diabetesjournals.org/cgi/content/full/23/2/51>
 - Canadian Diabetes Association <http://www.diabetes.ca/>
 - American Diabetes Association <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>
 - Dietitians of Canada <http://www.dietitians.ca/>

What Teachers Do	What Students Do
<p>Before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a lesson on the Aboriginal Medicine wheel and holistic approach to health prior to conduction this lesson. • Contact a local Aboriginal organization and/or diabetes education centre and arrange a guest speaker or a field trip to their site. • This community has a Diabetes Education Centre run through St. Joseph’s Hospital, as well as, Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Health Access Centre. 	
<p>During:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the guest speaker. • Aid the speaker as required throughout the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will listen to the quest speaker appropriately. • Students will have time to ask questions.
<p>After:</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Learning Skills Checklist. • A sample listening skills rubric is attached. • Students will be on the unit end diet and disease test and culminating activity on diabetes and diet. <p>Lesson Extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will plan, prepare, and serve Native cuisine in a subsequent lesson. • Suggest contacting a Native Friendship Centre or an Elder for the subsequent Native cooking experience. (See page 20, <i>Invitation of Elders Protocol</i>, and page 30, <i>Aboriginal Presence in Our Schools: A Guide for Staff</i>, for local Aboriginal Organizations in Thunder Bay.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students listened, participated and applauded in an appropriate manner.

Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Title of Work: _____

Skills	Criteria				Points
	1	2	3	4	
Listener focuses attention on speaker.	<i>None</i> of the Time	<i>Some</i> of the Time	<i>Most</i> of the Time	<i>All</i> of the Time	_____
Listener responds appropriately to comedic and/or dramatic moments of the reading. Demonstrated by body language, laughter, and/or silence.	<i>None</i> of the Time	<i>Some</i> of the Time	<i>Most</i> of the Time	<i>All</i> of the Time	_____
At the conclusion of the reading, the listener is able to:	Answer factual questions such as names of characters, settings within the story, and the theme of the story.	Summarize the beginning, middle, and end of the story.	Reveal the sequence of event, providing details on dialogue, and motivation of characters.	Retell the entire story with a sense of value that relives the tale for other listeners.	_____
Total Points					_____

Teacher Comments: