Tata and Saln: A Readers' Theatre

Overview

Emphasizing the skills of observation, and conveying Mi'kmaw knowledge and relationships to the land, this Learning Experience engages learners to observe seasons and cycles through Mi'kmaw perspectives. "Tata and Saln," a readers' theatre written by Melody Martin-Googoo, demonstrates that Mi'kmaq understand themselves to exist within the natural world, rather than outside it looking in. Learners are asked to think carefully about what it means to see themselves this way.

Learners will…

- Understand that the Mi'kmaw worldview places humans within the natural world, rather than outside it.
- Understand that relationships of respect and honour are what ties msit no'kmaq together in spirit.
- Be introduced to a Mi'kmaw approach to science: observing, memorizing and comparing.
- See the natural world as a place that contains stories, knowledge, and memories.
- Explore how significant seasonal cycles and natural events are to the Mi'kmaq.
- Understand that ceremony and practice are part of what keep relationships strong and in balance.

Focus

This reader's theatre explores an important Mi'kmaw worldview by demonstrating how it is learned through the eyes of a young boy learning from his grandfather.

Further suggestions on how to set up this LE can be found in the script. Roles are assigned to individual learners, with some roles requiring more or less content as noted in the text (to accommodate various reading levels). Educators can choose to include props or simply to read from the text.

If learners find the text challenging, the following strategies could be employed:

- Have more than one cast and ask the casts to take turns presenting their own versions.
- Read several scripts in small groups then choose one to perform for the class.
- Split the narrator roles into more than one person (e.g., first half and second half).

PE!

It is important that learners have a clear understanding of the following content:

- The Mi'kmaq as the indigenous people of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region.
- Mi'kma'kik as the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq.
- The concepts of netukulimk and msit no'kmaq. (See LE F4)

Additional Resources

- For additional resources, see the digital version of this LE at **Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre website**:

  http://mikmaweydebert.ca/f5

Tata and Saln

Narrator 1: It is almost summer in Mi'kma'ki. The sun is shining, birds are singing, the trees are vibrant and bursting with energy.

Narrator 2: A young boy, walks with his grandfather in the woods. The two are comfortable, relaxed and smiling, because the day is new and promises adventure.

Grandfather: Saln, we're almost there. Let's stop here and take off our socks and shoes.

Grandson: Chuckles to himself. I never stopped in the middle of the woods to take off my socks and sneakers before, but I trust you. I gotta warn you, my feet probably stink.

Grandfather: Your feet stink? My feet are seventy eight years full of stink!

Narrator 1: The Elder playfully messes up his grandson's hair. The two sit on a fallen log to remove their "stinky" socks and sneakers.

Narrator 2: The boy zips open his back pack and helps his grandfather with his shoes and socks. He shoves the items into the bag and zips it closed again.

Grandson: Takes a deep breath and sighs. It's peaceful here Tata.

Grandfather: I used to play here when I was a boy. I know these woods like the back of my hand. I know every tree, brook, path... I wandered the woods with my friends all the time when I was your age.

Grandson: Wow. It must've been fun when you were a kid. I never go into the woods.

Grandfather: Salnji'j, when was the last time you ever explored the woods?

Grandson: Never! Unless you count that 5km Zombie run I did with mom one year. I got a wicked medal for finishing that one. Oh ya! And a new running shirt too.

Narrator 1: Grandfather shakes his head to himself, and stares up into the trees. He looks around and takes a minute to observe what he sees.