



Fundamental Knowledge 101

[T]he word ‘Cree’ comes from the short form of a cross variation of the Ojibwa word “kistanowak”(people of the north) and the Jesuit equivocal word ‘kristinue’. This led to the néhiyawak’ to being called the ‘kris’ (Crees).” Nehiyaw is the most accurate name for the language. Read more about the dialect diversity below. Share this information with your students noting this diversity. Locate the regions with pushpins on your map as you share.

Eastern Cree and closely related Montagnais and Naskapi: east coast of Canada throughout Labrador and on the eastern side of Hudson Bay & James Bay respectively.

Attikamek Cree or the “R” dialect is spoken in Quebec.

Moose Cree or the “L”dialect is verbalized in Ontario along the James Bay and Hudson’s Bay region.

Eastern Swampy Cree is also oralized within the region just mentioned and through much of North Western Ontario. Swampy Cree dialect as a whole is known as the “N” dialect, differences between the eastern and western Swampy Cree, in Ontario and Manitoba regions are quite great and the differences are substantial.

Plains Cree or the “Y” dialect is spoken in southern Saskatchewan and through central Alberta.

Woods Cree, sometimes worded as the Rock Cree, is spoken in Manitoba and in north-eastern Saskatchewan, it is referred as the “Th” dialect.

The Cree language is also spoken in parts of north-eastern British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and in the state of Montana.” <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/heritage/sils/ourlanguages/plains/history/index.html>

Métis People are one of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. As long as Métis people have existed, Métis have called this land home. Unlike French people, whose French language is born from France or British people whose English language is born from England, Métis language was born from Métis people on this land called Canada, and the Métis Nation official language is Michif (refer to pushpins).

Métis people have always worked closely with many communities who spoke many languages. This included the French, the English, and nehiyawak (Cree People) and more. Just like there are many different dialects of nehiyaw, there are many different dialects of Michif.

In Alberta, the Métis language is Michif. Alberta Michif has influences from both nehiyaw and French, but it is a unique language that only other Michif speakers who speak that specific Michif dialect will fully understand.

This lesson explores the nehiyaw language. When learning about Michif it is helpful to know that influences of nehiyaw contribute to Michif language conventions.

Lesson Plan



Title/Unit: Ayikis – Frog Song Sing-Along	Time Frame: Approx. 40 Minutes
Grade: K-3	Topic(s): Learning About Language and Singing in Cree

Subject:

Arts Education – MUSIC

Social Studies

Métis Education Themes

- Languages
- Governance and Recognition
- Culture and Tradition
- Homeland History
- Métis in Alberta
- Métis Today

Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) connections

How does this lesson contribute to my knowledge in the following areas?

1. Fostering Effective Relationships
2. Engaging in Career-Long Learning
3. Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge
4. Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments
5. **Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit**
6. Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Vocabulary/Terms

Official – “Relating to an authority or public body and its activities and responsibilities.” (Oxford Dictionary) In Canada, then, the word “official” that precedes languages is specific to the Government of Canada. The omission of Indigenous languages from official status has means that Indigenous languages are not supported like the foreign languages that have been granted Official status. Despite this great challenge, Indigenous languages are still here today.

When teaching about the “Official” languages of Canada to this developmental level, it is sufficient to acknowledge that there were – and are – many Indigenous languages of this land. Official languages of Canada were agreed upon by the French and British governments – they told *each other* that both languages would be supported in Canada. Canada is a multicultural country where everyone is supposed to be able to speak the languages of their lands. It is very important that each group is able to speak their languages in their homeland or the languages won’t be spoken anymore. Because Canada is the homeland

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of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit it is critical that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit languages are supported/fostered here, especially if the goal is to conduct ourselves ethically as citizens of this globe.

In sum, there are two Official languages in Canada (English and French), but there are also Indigenous languages which include nehiyaw (Cree) and Michif.

Song Lyric Vocabulary/Cree Syllabic/English Translation:

niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci	σ̄ <i>ɪ</i> <L° σ̄ <i>ɒ</i> /r̄d̄> r̄	I see, with my eye
ayîkis ê-ay-apit	⟨īp̄n̄ v̄ī+īl̄v̄	a frog sitting
niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci	σ̄ <i>ɪ</i> <L° σ̄ <i>ɒ</i> /r̄d̄> r̄	I see, with my eye
ayîkis ê-kwâskohtit	⟨īp̄n̄ v̄b̄n̄d̄v̄	a frog jumping
niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci	σ̄ <i>ɪ</i> <L° σ̄ <i>ɒ</i> /r̄d̄> r̄	I see, with my eye
ayîkis ê-môwat ôcêsa	⟨īp̄n̄ v̄j̄ī> r̄	A frog eating flies
niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci	σ̄ <i>ɪ</i> <L° σ̄ <i>ɒ</i> /r̄d̄> r̄	I see, with my eye
ayîkis ê-kitot	⟨īp̄n̄ v̄p̄ɔ̄	A frog croaking

Resource:

<http://creeliteracy.org/2017/10/11/asani-ayikis-y-dialect-audio/>

Learning Outcomes/Curricular Connections/Concept Based

Arts Education – MUSIC

Essential Understanding: Artworks take form through the exploration and application of artistic elements and techniques to support expression.

Guiding Question: How can rhythm, melody, structure, and expression (elements of music) be explored?

Learning Outcome: Children explore the elements of music through various repertoire

Social Studies

Essential Understanding: Developing and affirming identity contributes to well-being and understandings of self and one another.

Guiding Question: How am I unique?

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Learning Outcomes:

- The child demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the multiple social, physical, cultural and linguistic factors that contribute to an individual's unique identity.
- Identifies and begins to demonstrate effective listening; e.g., actively listens and responds appropriately
- Appreciates that French and English are Canada's official languages

Understanding(s) Goals	Guiding Questions/Ticket Out
<p>Students will...</p> <p>Be provided basic knowledge about Michif language. Students will learn that Michif has influences from both French and nehiyaw (Cree). As students will likely have an understanding of what French is, it is important for them to understand what nehiyaw is. Therefore, students will learn a song in nehiyaw (Cree), one of the languages that informs Michif.</p> <p>Understand that language is important. They will understand the distinction between Official languages, Indigenous languages, and first languages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What language do we hear in the song? (nehiyaw; Cree is an acceptable response too) - Where was nehiyaw born? Show on the world map; Canada map (Here, on this land we learn on today) - Is this an Indigenous language, or an Official language? (Indigenous) - What does Indigenous mean? (from here; first here) - What languages are the official languages of Canada? (French and English) - Where were the official languages born? (France and England) - Languages that we learned about today spoken by Métis? (all: French, English, nehiyaw, Michif) - What is the official language of the Métis? (Michif) - What languages did we speak/sing in class today?(nehiyaw/Cree...)
<p>Assessment FOR Learning</p> <p>Students are introduced to the Official languages of Canada AND two examples of</p>	<p>Assessment OF Learning</p> <p>Are students able to keep the rhythm of the song when</p>

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<p>Indigenous languages of Canada spoken by Métis in Alberta (nehiyaw/Cree and Michif) AND identify their first language.</p>	<p>tasked with the percussion frog?</p> <p>When students take a turn at “niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci” (“I Spy”), the understanding of melody is demonstrated in student pitch.</p> <p>Students expression changes when asked to evoke a different response (how would the song change if you were afraid, etc.) demonstrating understanding of this music element.</p> <p>Students respond correctly to: “what part of the song is repeated?” and correctly to “what part of the song varies”? This demonstrates student understanding of structure (element of music).</p>
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Differentiation/Adaptations

- For visual learners, have the lyrics displayed – explain the letters when spelled in nehiyaw don’t always sound the same as in English
- Adapt as needed to fit your students

Critical Thinking Opportunities

- When the teacher is acting out the motions of the song without students knowing the translation for the lyrics, it is an opportunity to think critically.
- When students are to consider their own items to spy, they are encouraged to think critically.

Approx. time	Activity	Materials/Text References
Varies	Preparation	<p>For this lesson, you will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canada Map World Map Pushpins *use sticky tac at the pin side if you do not want to perforate maps Wooden Percussion Frog Ayikis – The Frog Song (by Asani, 2009) Speaking Stone <p>Listen to the song “ayikis” by Asani, and ensure you are able to pronounce and understand the lyrics. Hint: The Vocabulary section of this lesson may be helpful.</p>

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10 minutes	Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students if they know what the official languages of Canada are: English/French 2. Show students the world map. Inform them where they are located on the map right now (place a pushpin). Ask students if they have ever visited anywhere – show them on the map where that location is, in relation to where they are right now. 3. Inform students that the language French comes from France and the language English comes from England. Show them where these places are on the World Map, in relation to where they are right now (place pushpins). 4. Let students know that there have been languages spoken here for a long time, long before French and English people brought their languages to this land. Ask students if they know any of these languages. One of these languages is nehiyaw. nehiyaw is sometimes referred to as Cree. 5. There are many different kinds/dialects of Cree. In Alberta, most Cree speakers are speaking Plains Cree. However, there are other types of dialects. Share with students the information in the Foundational Knowledge section at the beginning of this lesson and mark the regions on the World Map and the Canada Map while sharing.
15 minutes	Sing/Play	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Today, we will listen, learn, and practice a song in nehiyaw. Ask students to go to the Circle (the space for Circle Time) 8. Tell students we will hear the song, “Ayikis” by Asani and explain that the song is about spying a frog doing things... Ask students: Who knows what a frog is? What does a frog look like? What does a frog do? What does a frog eat? What does a frog sound like? 9. Show students the wooden percussion frog and demonstrate the simulated frog croak. 10. Tell the students that the song will say, “niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci” and this means “I see, with my eye” and ask them to motion a search (i.e.

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		<p>imaginary binoculars) when they hear this line in the song. Have students practice saying niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci.</p>  <p><i>Image Source: https://childrencentral.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/shutterstock_32910574-1.jpg</i></p> <p>11. Ask students to pay attention to the teacher's actions and see if they can understand what the other lines in the song are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the song is playing, act out the motions of the song lyrics. I.e. Sit; Jump; Eat Flies; Croak <p>12. Review with students what each of the other song lines translate to in English. Ask students to repeat each song line after you.</p> <p>13. Play the song again and invite students to sing along. Instruct students to move with the lyrics when they hear the correct words.</p>
7 minutes	Closure	<p>Indigenous languages are very important to take care of. They teach us about the ways of living on the land that the languages are from. If we go to England or France, we can be sure that English and French are taken care of there. If visitors come to Canada, we should be able to say the Indigenous languages of this land are taken care of too.</p> <p>Ask students to suggest ways that we take care of language? (learning, talking, listening, playing, etc.)</p> <p>Ask students what language(s) they take care of.</p> <p>One way of taking care of languages is by using them, and having fun with the words. Ask students if they just had fun taking care of nehiyaw, the language of the nehiyawewin (Cree People) by singing.</p>

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	<p>Inform students that Michif is the language born from the Métis. Michif has qualities of both French and nehiyaw/Cree, but it is its very own distinct language, and it can sound different depending on where you go.</p> <p>Even though Michif is the language of Métis, in Canada the majority of Métis people who can speak an Indigenous language speak Cree. Ask students if they can guess what a “first language” is (language they have spoken since birth).</p> <p>Until transition time, play “niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci” (“I Spy”): Ask students to sing: “niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci...” and allow them to complete the statement talking/singing in one of the Official languages of the classroom and/or in an Indigenous language like nehiyaw or Michif if they are familiar, or in their first language.</p> <p>Ask students how they might change the way they sing if they were afraid to see the frog (nervous/scared tone?); how might they change the way they sing if the frog was doing something very funny? (hysterical/jolly tone?) What if the frog was sick? (concerned tone?) Invite students to sing with this expressive change. Invite student volunteers to try; highlight to students that you can change the way a song is heard by changing their expression.</p> <p>Ask students to provide an example of an official language; Ask them to provide an example of an Indigenous language. Ask each student to share what their first language is.</p> <p>Multilingualism is a Métis tradition, invite students to share their language and to teach their peers if they are able to do so. Other students are tasked with locating the spied item. Whoever sees the item first is up next for “niwâpamâw niskîsikos ohci”.</p> <p>Invite students to take care of any languages they decide to use.</p>
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Extension Activities:

If students **already have a basic level of nehiyaw**, ask them to complete sentences of another animal that they imagine seeing do something. This will extend their vocabulary and enhance their understanding about nehiyaw conventions.



Resources/Links/Videos

<http://creeliteracy.org/2017/10/11/asani-ayikis-y-dialect-audio/>

<http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/heritage/sils/ourlanguages/plains/history/index.html>

Credits

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Asani – Sherryl Sewepagaham, Sarah Pocklington and Debbie Houle

Our Languages, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre