Journey Toward Reconciliation

**Film Synopsis**
In 2014, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada held their seventh and final national event in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (known as Edmonton) to gather testimony from Indian Residential School Survivors. This nation-wide acknowledgement of the atrocities that took place in these schools was a difficult but important step towards healing in a journey of reconciliation in Canada.

Miyo Pimatisiwin Productions supported a group of Indigenous youth in their personal journeys as they learned about the history of the residential schools and their personal connection to the legacy. Through the lens of a camera, these young people explore intergenerational trauma, Indigenous resistance and resilience.

The youth engaged in an act of reclamation in Edmonton's Grandin LRT Station, under the mentorship of artists Aaron Paquette and Sylvia Nadeau. The handprints of Indigenous youth are immortalized in the station to remind citizens that they are still here. And so began their Journey Toward Reconciliation...

### 3 Journeys Toward Reconciliation

*The film starts with the story of 2 murals:*
In 1989, x commissioned artist Sylvia Nadeau to create a mural to commemorate the historical contributions of Bishop Grandin, the subway stations' namesake. The resulting mural represents the Church’s role in residential schools benevolently. Some First Nations people who ride the subway started to avoid the station, and protests began. The mural eclipsed the impacts of residential schools on “the children who were taken, the parents who were left behind, and the children who came after.” In 2007, the city commissioned Aboriginal artist, Aaron Paquette, to create a second mural to redress this issue.

The resulting mural represents the sources of cultural and spiritual strength generations of First Nations have drawn from to survive the horrific abuses that occurred in residential schools. Just as Sylvia and Aaron collaborated for two years on the second mural, the two murals now face one another in the station. They expose powerful cultural narratives and create a space, in the subway station and in the mind, in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians can face the truth of one another’s experiences and form commitments to reconciliation.

This film traces 3 journeys toward Reconciliation: the stories of the murals, residential school survivors, and young First Nations learning about this history for the first time. As the film gradually weaves these journeys together, viewers are invited to reflect on where they are in their own journey.
Essential Questions Posed by Film
Two powerful questions surface in the documentary – questions which unsettle conventional approaches to teaching and learning about this issue:
1. Is reconciliation possible in a country which remains colonial?
2. How do we decolonize our minds, individually and collectively wean them from the colonial narratives which characterized Aboriginal peoples as “inferior, savage, and irrelevant” and non-Aboriginal people as “superior?”

Supports for Teachers and Students
The screening will begin with an honour song. Elders will be present to provide support and counsel, if needed. The directors will be present to engage in a question and answer session with the audience after the screening.

While the film does not specifically address the Calls to Action, it leads us there. The activities that follow support you and your students in your learning and engagement before, during, and after the documentary.

Curricular Connections
- This film is relevant to many subjects, outcomes, and indicators, including: ELA, Social Studies, History, Native Studies, Psychology, and Art.
- Learning activities related to the film can meet Treaty Education outcomes and indicators and cultivate students’ development in Broad Areas of Learning and Cross-Curricular Competencies.

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission Essential Citizenship Competencies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th>ENLIGHTENED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical events have an impact on today’s decisions and today’s understandings impact our perception and interpretation of historical and current events.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th>EMPOWERED</th>
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<td>Governance and public decision-making reflect rights and responsibilities, and promote societal well-being amidst different conceptions of the public good.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th>ETHICAL</th>
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<td>Canadian citizenship is lived, relational and experiential and requires understanding of Aboriginal, treaty and human rights.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th>EMPATHETIC</th>
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<td>Diversity is a strength and should be understood, respected and affirmed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th>ENGAGED</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Each individual has a place in, and a responsibility to contribute to, an ethical civil society; likewise, government has a reciprocal responsibility to each member of society.</td>
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Previewing Activity 1: Anticipating Content, Technique, and Style

A. Content / Concepts

Speakers in this film refer to the following terms / concepts which you and your students can define based on prior learning or discover through inquiry (teacher librarians of the world unite!):

- Residential schools
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Calls to Action
- Epistemicide
- Treaty Relationship
- Genocide
- Holocaust
- Crime against humanity
- Colonial
- Post-colonial
- Intergenerational (trauma and survival)
- Dispossession
- Systemic

B. Documentary Film Technique: Brainstorm & Reflection

A. Invite students to brainstorm the features which distinguish a film as “a documentary”? Categorize items in the list they generate, and invite them to share examples from documentaries they know. You may wish to show a clip from a documentary to spark or extend the brainstorm.

B. Invite students to consider the features which most directly and powerfully appeal to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logos: the audience's reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pathos: the audience's emotion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethos: the audience's moral sensibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kairos: the audience's belief in / impression of the historical importance of the content</td>
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*Why is it important for a documentary to appeal powerfully to all four? Support answer with examples.

C. Storytelling and the Truth-Telling Process

Consider sharing Connie Fife's poem, “Dear Webster” with students. In it, a litany of speakers share their truths of being Indigenous in Canada. You can find it in the Saskatchewan anthology, Sundog Highway, published by Coteau Books.
Pre-Viewing Activity 2: The Power of Art: Get Ready To Debate

(suitable for middle years & secondary students; could also be used as a post-viewing activity)

This activity is designed to immerse students in learning described in Saskatchewan Education’s Arts Education Curriculum as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arts Ed Curriculum, 10,20,30</th>
<th>The Cultural Historical Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>This component deals with the role of visual art in culture, the development of visual art throughout history, and the factors that influence visual art and artists. This component includes the historical development of visual art but also focuses on visual art in contemporary cultures. Students will explore popular culture and be provided with opportunities for various cross-cultural studies. The intention of this component is to develop students' understanding that visual art is an integral aspect of living for all people.</td>
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The Resolution: “The 1989 Grandin Station mural should be removed.”

The following articles contain information about the murals in Grandin Station, Edmonton. I suggest posing the following inquiry question to students: “Given the controversy it has caused, should the 1989 mural in Grandin Station should be removed?”

The articles give students “room to move” with this inquiry question. Some supporting arguments for each side are stated explicitly; others are implied.

Equipping students with a graphic organizer for their research can help them to record and categorize the information and arguments they find. A two-column T-chart might be enough to start – arguments in favor of keeping the mural; arguments in favor of removing the mural.”

When they are done their research, students can communicate their conclusions in a variety of ways, which might include:

- Formal debate
- Informal debate
- Socratic circle
- Mock “call-in radio show”
- Editorial
- Mock TV news, including interviews with diverse Edmonton citizens

To extend their inquiry, students might investigate other works of art, monuments, and historical artifacts that have generated similar controversy.

Links to Inquiry Articles

http://www.edmontonjournal.com/life/Mural+becomes+signpost+journey+toward+reconciliation/7096176/story.html
http://www.wcr.ab.ca/This-Week/Stories/entryid/5302
http://www.davidmckie.com/edmonton-mural-sparks-dialogue-on-residential-schools/
http://www.pressreader.com/canada/edmonton-journal/20110301/282613144277668/TextView
After the Show: Post-Viewing Discussion Questions

To get students back “in the zone” for a post-viewing discussion, consider showing this short film, in which youth share their reactions to a day of learning about residential schools in Canada.

Educating Our Youth (a short film from The Project of Heart website)
https://vimeo.com/75812900

NOTE: Various discussion strategies would work well here, from Think-Pair-Share to Socratic Circle.

CONTENT
- What did you learn from this documentary?
- What new understandings did you develop as you watched the documentary?
- For you, what is the most memorable scene or idea from the film?

STRUCTURE & STYLE
- How would you describe the structure / organization of the documentary?
- Aristotle suggested that 3 things are needed to persuade a person: ethos, logos, and pathos.
  Which of the film’s techniques appeal to each of these three things?
  - Ethos: Is the documentary credible and convincing? What makes it so?
  - Pathos: What emotions did you feel as you watched? What triggered them?
  - Logos: What new insights or truths did the documentary offer you?

PURPOSE
- What are the purposes of the documentary?
- Do you think that the documentary achieves these purposes?
- Why or why not?
- How do you know?

IMPLICATIONS
- How is this film significant to you? To our class? To our school community? Our city?
- What is it gently or boldly asking us to do?
Post Viewing Activity For All Grades: Become Involved in Project of Heart

Project of Heart is an inquiry-based, hands-on, collaborative, inter-generational, artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada. Its purpose is to:

- Examine the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada and to seek the truth about that history, leading to the acknowledgement of the extent of loss to former students, their families and communities;
- Commemorate the lives of the thousands of Indigenous children who died as a result of the residential school experience;
- Call Canadians to action, through social justice endeavors, to change our present and future history collectively.

The Project of Heart Inquiry Process

- **Step 1** – Investigation into the History and Legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada
- **Step 2** – A Closer Look at a Specific Indian Residential School, the People upon Whose Territory the IRS is Located and the Children Taken to the School
- **Step 3** – Create a Gesture of Reconciliation
- **Step 4** – Survivor Visit
- **Step 5** – Social Justice Action
- **Step 6** – Finishing up Project of Heart

Project of Heart: http://projectofheart.ca/
Post Viewing Inquiry: The Calls to Action

Calls to Action
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

This would be an exciting inquiry for a class to complete collaboratively.

The Challenge

- Imagine that the Calls to Action have been realized. What does a “reconciled”
  Canada look like?
- Create a brochure or public service announcement describing what Canada is like
  after the Calls to Action have been fully embraced and realized.

Critical Thinking Challenge: In the text that you create, acknowledge the most significant
challenges Canadians had to overcome to make the changes required by the Calls to Action.

The Calls to Action are divided into the categories listed below. A teacher could assign
small groups to each Legacy Category and individual students to each Reconciliation
category. Students could collaborate on a GoogleDoc to:

- Paraphrase and organize the material assigned to them.
- Re-present the Calls to Action in the form of a brochure or script (or other suitable
text type).

LEGACY: Calls to Action 1-42
A. Child welfare
B. Education
C. Language & Culture
D. Health
E. Justice

RECONCILIATION Calls to Action 43-94
1. Canadian Governments and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
2. Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation
3. Settlement Agreement Parties and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
4. Equity for Aboriginal People in the Legal System
5. National Council for Reconciliation
6. Professional Development and Training for Public Servants
7. Church Apologies and Reconciliation
8. Education for Reconciliation
9. Youth Programs
10. Museums and Archives
11. Missing Children and Burial Information
12. National Center for Truth and Reconciliation
13. Commemoration
14. Media and Reconciliation
15. Sports and Reconciliation
16. Business and Reconciliation
17. Newcomers to Canada
# Rubric for Student Learning from The Scene Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viewing Skills and Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Consistently and ably uses a range of strategies before, during, and after the viewing process.</td>
<td>Uses a range of strategies before, during, and after the viewing process.</td>
<td>*Uses some basic strategies before, during, and after the viewing process.</td>
<td>Uses few strategies before, during, and after the viewing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>*Demonstrates thorough and insightful understanding of ideas, information, concepts, and/or themes in visuals.</td>
<td>Demonstrates clear understanding of ideas, information, concepts, and/or themes in visuals.</td>
<td>Demonstrates some understanding of ideas, information, concepts, and/or themes in visuals.</td>
<td>Demonstrates limited understanding of ideas, information, concepts, and/or themes in visuals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Explains the relationship between the explicit and implicit messages in the visual text.</td>
<td>Identifies the explicit and implicit messages in the visual text.</td>
<td>Identifies the explicit and some of the implicit messages in the visual text.</td>
<td>Identifies explicit messages but has difficulty identifying the implicit messages in the visual text.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explains in a thorough and insightful way how ideas are portrayed and how key visual elements/techniques have been used for effect.</td>
<td>Explains how ideas are portrayed and how visual elements/techniques have been used to achieve particular effects.</td>
<td>Explains in a simple way how ideas are portrayed and how visual elements/techniques have been used to achieve particular effects.</td>
<td>Has difficulty explaining how ideas are portrayed and how visual elements/techniques have been used for effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>* Responds critically and thoughtfully to visual text.</td>
<td>Responds personally and thoughtfully to visual text.</td>
<td>May need assistance to respond from personal viewpoint.</td>
<td>Needs assistance and prompting to respond from personal viewpoint.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responds personally with a high degree of detail and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Responds personally with considerable detail and support.</td>
<td>Responds personally with some detail and support.</td>
<td>Responds personally with limited detail and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responds critically with a high degree of analysis and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Responds critically with considerable analysis and support.</td>
<td>Responds critically with some analysis and support.</td>
<td>Responds critically with limited analysis and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes connections with other texts with a high degree of understanding.</td>
<td>Makes connections with other texts with considerable understanding.</td>
<td>Makes connections with other texts with some understanding.</td>
<td>Makes connections with other texts with limited understanding.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Identifies and explains overt and covert bias; avoids and actively challenges bias in visual texts.</td>
<td>Identifies and explains overt bias in visual texts.</td>
<td>Identifies personal bias only.</td>
<td>Shows a limited awareness of personal bias in visual texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Saskatchewan Online Curriculum; "Assessing, Evaluating, and Reporting Student Progress*