

Senses and Perception in Nature

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Name of Tribe whose culture is presented: Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

Introduction or Overview of what will be covered: The cultural unit will focus on what we learned in each lesson and how it relates to each other. Students will learn that the journey they go on is connected to the whole universe. With each step we take as individual we are connected to the Earth (Aki), Ishpiming (Air), Ishkote (FIRE), and Nibi (Water).

Glossary:

Earth (Aki)

Ishpiming (Air)

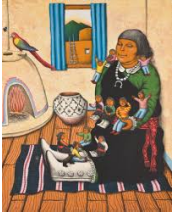
Ishkote (FIRE)

Nibi (Water).

Cultural Supplement Narrative: History of the tribe and how this was taught to me: Oral tradition is very important to us all but at times when we did not receive this, we learned it by listening to elders who knew the historical perspective. The Anishinabe/Ojibwa/Chippewa told by our elders that our genesis began along the St Lawrence River called the Great Sea water in the east. We migrated for many years across Canada and northern section of the US. Many of our people lived in the eastern shores of North America and travel to and by the Great Lakes: Lake Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan, Superior. The origins of the Pembina Chippewa are associated with the trading post established at Pembina in the northeastern corner of ND in 1801. This was the focal point for many Chippewa hunting and trading in the region. Native tribes have always had strong leadership systems and made treaties for peace or commercial trade. Tribes have always maintained constitutions and codes to govern themselves, but these doctrines were generally unwritten. Our treaties began in 1858-1863, Then in the mid 1880's President Chester A. Arthur issued three executive orders in reference to the Turtle Mountain Reservation.

As result of the McCumber Agreement, the traditional tribal form of gov. went through a transition. A committee of 32 was formed and recognized by US Gov., which specifically called for 16 full bloods, 16 mixed-bloods (Ojibwa/Cree/ Mitchif) and was headed up by Chief Kakenowash-maintained leadership for many years. And in 1930's Tribal Chairman Kanik-Walking with Thunder, became leader of the governance body of TMBCI. He also headed up an Advisory Council that adopted a written tribal constitution on 10/8/1932. Today, the TMBC which consist of 30,000 tribal citizens, occupies two townships in north central ND, about 7 miles south of the US/Canadian border.

Senses means: common sense, good judgement, intelligences, and having your right mind. Perception has a similar meaning: awareness around you, observations that you see, hear, taste, smell and feel, also experience. From the time we are born we learn about what is going on around us wither it in our home setting, in nature, or in our travels throughout our life. We learn many lessons of life and we acknowledge what has been taught to us on our path. This is what we will take with us on our journey. I am going shared with you about nature and what happens and what we learn on the journey.



Winter weather is a subject that our Anishinabe people knew a lot about. It was when the young ones learn about our way of life and the elders saw what the young ones were good at and began teaching them a skill. The young woman learned from the grandmothers, Aunties, about how to work, tan hides, cook, sew, do mending of the fishing lines, make moccasins, and how to make clothes. The Grandfathers, Uncles, took the position to teach the young men to be warriors, hunters, fishermen, protect their families, and also work with their canoes, these canoes were a big part of the men livelihood for their families, and how to work with the women when they were needed; they all worked together to keep the families safe, and were the teachers of all the children.

Weather and climate are things we deal with on a daily basis. Well, the Ojibwa lived mainly around rivers so most of the time, the climate was fairly cool. Because the land and the climate differed from the northern to the southern part of the Anishnaabe territory, the social structures adapted to fit the realities of life. We have spring, summer, fall, and winter and each of them carries lessons for us.



The climate in this habitat is the type to be adjusted to, from extreme winters to extreme summers. To begin with, the winters are usually harsh, cold and with plenty of snowfall. Pre-contact culture was heavily influenced by the natural terrain as the Ojibwa adapted their lifestyle to survive in a heavily forested land traversed by a network of lakes and rivers. The Ojibwa lived a seminomadic life, moving a number of times each year in order to be close to food sources.



So, we honor the ancestors, who, have been there and survived long enough to pass on their wisdom to those that wanted to listen. When we honor the ancestors, we honor ourselves. Our ancestors through the generation have taught us that our ways of life are learned through experience. Practicing the culture and the traditional ways is a way of life rather than something that you carry around as knowledge. Our ancestor taught us that learning occurs through observation, listening and doing. Our culture is taught through practice. As Anishinabek people we learned not just from their parents, but from their entire family. "There was no distinction between extended and nuclear family, everyone was family.



Long ago our Ancestors knew this by looking at the water and seeing what was wrong and would not settle there, due to the water coloration or seeing the effects of water also by smelling the water when they got there for a camp spot. Our Ancestors were very wise individuals, they had an education of the natural life of things, growth of plants as well as the animal kingdom, they knew what was available for eating in the lakes, streams and rivers. At that time the water ways were clean with no chemicals, bacteria, or garbage of any sort. Pre-contact culture was heavily influenced by the natural terrain as the Ojibwa adapted their lifestyle to survive in a heavily forested land traversed by a network of lakes and rivers. The Ojibwa lived a seminomadic life, moving a number of times each year in order to be close to food sources and water sources.



Food was hunted down, hauled from the water, gathered from the forests or plucked from shallow waterways. Farming wasn't an option because of sparse soil and the cold climate. Just as humans need oxygen to breath, aquatic life needs sufficient amounts of oxygen dissolved in water to survive. Dissolved oxygen depletion can occur for several naturally occurring reasons, most of which are highly preventable or treatable.



Water is Life: A long time ago things were very different than today. We honor all of creation that includes two legged, four-legged, winged animal, water animals, the smallest animals and all the plants, trees etc. As Nibi is necessary to human survival, Nibi is necessary to the life cycle of growth, rebirth and survival. Nothing can survive without Nibi.

Water teaches us about life, woman are the only species that can produce life, so the water come before and after a child is born.

Before birth, we are nourished, surrounded and protected by it and are considered Nibi babies. When Nibi calls to you: talk to it, and respect it.



At birth, that same Nibi precedes us into this World of Physical Things, opening the way, and preparing a safe entry for us.



Nibi is the symbol of women, and our Mother, the Earth. It is her Life blood. We use it as recognition of the All people; tribal affiliation & cultures share the same air, heartbeat, emotion and life's blood, water is used as a symbol of these universalities.

As we share the water around the Circle, we Honor it as part of Our Mother, the Earth. Bless the Nibi with compassion, laughter and joy which starts from within you.

Nibi replenishes, cleanses, renews, purifies. It is used in our ceremonies, for our drums to hear the sound of water within us. Unity and sameness that all People of Humanity share.



All things are connected in life. We are connected to the EARTH, AIR, FIRE, and WATER. This will not change as we get older and go to the next world. I look at this as a beautiful journey that we are on.

Author Biography:

Boozhoo, my name is Miigizi Ikwe, Wapski Makwa indoodem, Mikanock Wajii. My other name is Frances Allard, I'm from the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation in Belcourt, ND. I am Anishinabe Ikwe (Ojibwa)/Cree/Mitchif and the eldest of 8 siblings. I have two sons, an adopted daughter, a foster daughter and an adopted grandson. I have seven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. I raised two other young men as well; one lives here in Belcourt and the other lives in Colorado. My father was a marine, my mother was a beautician, and when I was a child, we traveled throughout the US/Guam/Japan before returning to the Turtle Mountain home of my parents in 1959 when I was 14 years old.

I have had a lot of educational experiences, both formal and informal. I graduated from Turtle Mountain Community High School in 1963; got an LPN degree in 1974 through the Lake Region Jr. college in Devils Lake, ND and was trained in Belcourt; completed a BA in Communication/Dance in 1985 (Missoula, Mt) during the summers I worked as a woodland fire fighter, added an AA in Chemical Dependency in 1993 and an AA in Child Abuse/Neglect in 1994 from Lummi Community College (which later became Northwest Indian College) in Bellingham, WA; and then went back to TMCC for an AA in Commercial Art/Graphic Design in 2005; and picked up many certificates along the way. During those years, I was educated also by many Elders

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from different tribal nations and finally came home in 1995 and began my studies with all the Elders in the Turtle Mountains. I learned a lot and was honored to sit with them and learn from them. I also went to Canada to learn from the other half of my blood line, the Cree Nation. My travels took me across the US/Canada and across the ocean to Guam and Japan, learning many cultures along the way. The very first teachings I learned were the Seven Teachings of the Ojibwa, which came from my Aunt Edna Cloud who began this journey for me.

While I was in college, I learned to do research and found that very interesting. That training has become even more useful now that I am a board member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribal Nations Research Group, a board that reviews and approves all research done on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation. There are individuals from various universities who want to do research with our Turtle Mountain people, and the board makes sure they are following the guidelines of the Tribal Nations Research Group. We are the protectors of our people in the research/data arena.

I learned to sew in high school and loved it. This is one of my gifts that I have. I design all of my regalia (the traditional clothing/accessories) that I wear for Ceremonies/Pow Wows/special occasions. Since I have moved home, I have designed and made regalia for my grandchildren and other young people as well as others who request it of me.

I am a Cultural Advisor for TMCC and ND EPSCoR. I work with 6-12 graders in ND EPSCoR NATURE camps during the summer months and ND EPSCoR NATURE Sunday Academies during the school year. I write cultural supplements for each of the STEM topics covered in the various STEM activities. If I am not familiar with the STEM topic, I do the research on the topic so that I can figure out which cultural information fits best with it. This I have been doing for 22 years. I work for TMCC as an instructor, and was asked by the TMCC president and vice president to develop an archive for our artifacts by our people (clothing, tools, baskets, sculptures, etc.) for the college, which I did for 6 years. I am also currently working for the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Heritage Center for the last 3 years as an archivist/assistant for our artifacts and the tour guide to explain the historical way of life of our people here on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation. I also do research on various artifacts in our collection to find the importance/year/geographic origin of the items. I realize that my passion is all about what I have learned and how to give back to our families, relatives, friends, and those who want to know who we are as Anishinabe people. I am grateful for the teachings of our elders, our young people of today and my children. I am also a sponsor for those who are struggling with alcohol/drugs on a one-on-one basis, as well in the sweat lodge. I work with the youth, adults, and the elders, outside this community in all four directions.

As I look at my journey throughout my life, my vision is to work with my people in any way I can to teach what I know, and pass it on to all that are interested in our Native way of life. I live simply so that I can live in peace and harmony in nature, which means I will follow the Seven Teachings in a good way. Those teachings came from my elders and I take the lessons they taught me seriously and to heart. So, my mission is to guide those who want the Seven Teachings in their life. The Seven Teachings are Love, Honesty, Humility, Bravery, Respect, Wisdom and Truth.

