

Grade 8 Language

Media Literacy

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Perspectives in Aboriginal Media

Students analyse and compare the perspectives in Aboriginal media texts.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006*

Specific Expectations

Understanding Media Texts

- 1.2 interpret increasingly complex or difficult media texts, using overt and implied messages as evidence for their interpretations (e.g., compare the coverage of a lead story in a morning newspaper to the coverage of that story on the evening news; compare the order in which news stories are reported on two different television stations and suggest reasons for the differences; compare the treatment of a historical figure in a movie to his or her treatment in a print biography)
- 1.6 identify who produces various media texts and determine the commercial, ideological, political, cultural, and/or artistic interests or perspectives that the texts may involve (e.g., a music company's interest in a recording may be different from that of the artist; the company that produces a video game and the game's creator may have different views on how the game should be promoted)

Aboriginal Context

Ontario's three most prominent First Nation newspapers – the *Anishnabek News*, *Wawatay*, and *Turtle Island News* – have distinctly different proprietors. The *Anishnabek News* is published by the Union of Ontario Indians, an organization representing 42 Anishnabek First Nation communities throughout the province that describes itself as a “political advocate” for these communities. *Wawatay* is owned by the Wawatay Native Communications Society, an organization formed by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation of Northern Ontario to serve the communication needs of the Ojibway, Cree, and Oji-cree First Nation communities in the area. The society meets these needs through its newspaper, radio, and television services and its multimedia website. Its mission, according to the website, is to “preserve and enhance indigenous languages and cultures of Aboriginal people in Northern Ontario”. *Turtle Island News* is privately

owned and published weekly in Ohsweken, Ontario, by the Grand River Territory of the Six Nations. It reports on regional and national news and events that pertain to First Nation peoples in Canada and the United States, but focuses specifically on the local Six Nation and surrounding communities in southwestern Ontario.

Teaching Strategies

- Divide the class into small groups and have each group find a different print or online media text produced by an Aboriginal group, community, or organization, ensuring that each text is different by having each group look for texts on different topics or produced by different entities.
- Have the groups analyse the text, telling them to support their analyses with information about the text's creators and publishers and with examples from the text.
Teacher prompts: Who produced the text? Where are they located? What is the mission statement or purpose of the media text? Who is the intended audience? How do you know? Whose interests are reflected in the text? Is a political viewpoint evident in the text? Is more than one evident? What cultural information is evident in the text? What artistic expression is evident?
- Have the groups exchange the media text they have analysed with one studied by another group and have them analyse the second text as they did the first one.
- Have the groups compare what they learned about the viewpoints expressed in each text and present their findings to the class, citing supporting evidence.
Teacher prompts: What similarities and differences in perspective did you discover? How do you account for these differences? Do the media texts meet the needs and interests of the intended audience? If so, how do they meet them? If not, how are they not meeting them?

Resources

The following recommended resources and web links were accurate at the time of publication. Teachers are encouraged to check that these reference listings remain current.

Aboriginal Canada Portal: Media and Multimedia.
<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en-frames/ao26714.html>
Contains an extensive list of Aboriginal media outlets and links to them.

Aboriginal Multi-Media Society. <http://www.ammsa.com/ams/amscanadapubs.html>
Website of the publisher of Aboriginal publications produced across Canada for various audiences, such as *Windspeaker*, *Raven's Eye*, *Ontario Birchbark*, *Buffalo Spirit*, and *Alberta Sweetgrass*.

Mondo Times: The Worldwide Media Directory. <http://www.mondotimes.com/>
Contains links to Canadian and international media sources that can be viewed online; includes demographic information and circulation statistics for the sources.

Turtle Island Native Network. First Nations/American Indian/Native Peoples/Aboriginal Media.
<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/news-media.htm>
Provides links to Aboriginal radio and television stations.

Making Community Connections

- Use media texts produced by a local Aboriginal group or organization to learn about issues of importance to the group or organization and get to know its perspective on these issues.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

