

TEACHABLE BOOKS

Indigenous Voices: Facets of Courage

By Monica Berra

GRADE LEVEL: Primary (K-3)

THEME: Indigenous Voices

SUB-THEMES: Courage

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will connect to the understanding that courage has many faces and is reflected in nature as nature is reflected in ourselves. The First Peoples Principles of Learning grounds this understanding while acknowledging that pedagogy is “both dynamic and culturally specific.”

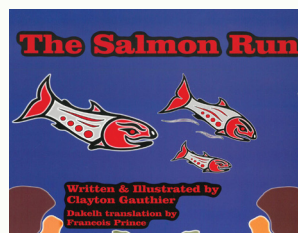
“Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experimental and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).”

“Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.”

“Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.”

“Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.”

FEATURED BOOKS



The Salmon Run by Clayton Gauthier, Dakelh translation by Francois Prince (Theytus Books, 2016)



The Thing Lou Couldn't Do by Ashley Spires (Kids Can Press, 2017)



LEARNING EXPERIENCE

MINDS ON PROVOCATION

Open a conversation with students as to what courage looks like in their world. Allow for all answers with probing questions. Does courage look the same for all of us?

Read the book “The Thing Lou Couldn’t Do” by Ashley Spires. Have students connect to how they have developed their personal strengths and abilities. Who supported them and why did they need to develop this courage? Who was relying on them to have this courage? Chart the responses or have the students reflect and add to understandings with their own drawings and pictures. This open-ended provocation requires time and active participation to support the big ideas of the lesson. There can be great personal connection in this activity and even humour. This may be the first time the student has operationalized a definition of a word and may require support and modelling.

READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

Title of Lesson: Courage is a Lifelong Journey.

“The Salmon Run” by Clayton Gauthier is 12 phrases long and provides an opportunity to build understanding, connection and identity with thought-provoking strategies. It would be a wonderful time to point out that the story has been translated into Dakelh.

Before:

Discuss how courage can be found in nature, how we can see ourselves in nature and how the actions of every living thing can have consequences to other living things. “We are one with all things.” (Clayton Gauthier)

Here is a really hard question and I want you to place your hand on your heart when you know your answer. Think of an animal that has to have great courage every day. “How do we hold and walk with courage like the animals?” (Clayton Gauthier)

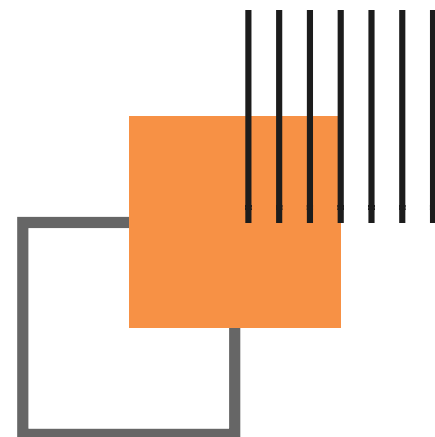
Let students share in groups of three, encouraging them to share their reasoning.

When we think of salmon do you think of courage? Discuss.

When we eat salmon do you think it was thinking of you? Discuss.

First Read:

While reading “The Salmon Run,” pause and give students some time to think before reading the next page. Do not point out the artwork or discuss what is happening. Let the students experience the story at their own level of understanding.



Second Read:

Read the second paragraph of the introduction by Clayton Gauthier: “The salmon’s journey came to light and I pictured the artwork in my mind before the vision came to life. In this book I wanted everyone to see and feel the salmon journey and to have a better understanding and respect for salmon as they bless us and feed us every year to live a long and healthy life.”

Share with the students that this story belongs to the salmon and Clayton Gauthier is telling the story from the salmon’s perspective.

Remember that Clayton Gauthier had the pictures in his mind before he had the words to describe the salmon’s story. Why might this be?

As you read the story stress words that describe nature and make the students feel “the warmth of the sun,” the energy it takes to swim through the barriers, the support of where “the water speaks,” the encouragement from “feeling the rapids of the sacred water” and the relief of knowing the “the moon tells us we are almost home.”

Stress the words that relate to self, family and community like “helping my sockeye brothers and sisters,” “following my ancestors,” “our true color comes out from within” and “work hard for our children.”

Third Read:

Do you think salmon have courage? Discuss in groups of three.

This time when you listen to the story, I want you to visualize that you are the salmon telling the story. When you feel the warmth of the sun how might you show it? In your own way without saying a word, tell the story as I read it. How will you show when you are being courageous?

Read the phrases to allow time for thinking, reflecting and responding. Like the salmon in the story, the students are on a journey.

Fourth Read:

We have connected to the author, the salmon and each other. As we read it again let’s look carefully at the pictures and see the story that Clayton Gauthier saw before he had the words. When you see the story in the illustration place your hand on your heart. This will be different for every one of us and even different every time we read “The Salmon Run.” “We all see and feel the world with our own hearts and minds, no one’s heart and mind are better or smarter... we all have lessons and blessings to bring to this world.” “We share this place with all things.” (Clayton Gauthier)

MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

Create a quilt of the salmon's journey in honor of its courage. This activity will also honor Clayton Gauthier's journey of creating this story. On a piece of paper the approximate size of the book, with only red, brown, black, gray and blue, the students will illustrate from the point of view of the salmon the courage it took to return home.

The display will be a collage of illustrations representing connection, truth, understanding and personal connections to the themes of this lesson.

In the oral Dakelh tradition of storytelling, the students will share their piece of the quilt connecting nature, humans and story.

REFLECT AND CONNECT

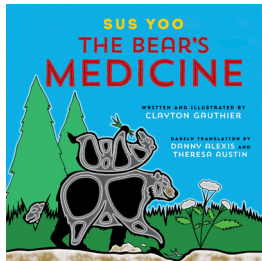
The strategies built into the lesson support assessment as learning. The sharing with peers and personal connections shown through body and facial expression support just in time understanding and connection to text. The illustrations and sharing of their "story" allow for probing questions and the opportunity to learn from others while growing communication skills.

ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS AND BOOK LISTS TO SUPPORT THIS SUB-THEME

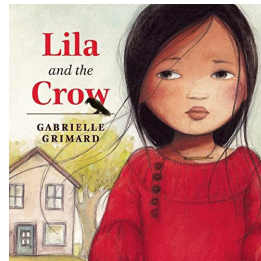


SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A FOX
Danielle Daniel

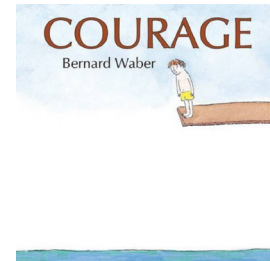
Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox by Danielle Daniel (Groundwood Books, 2017)



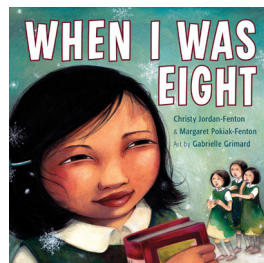
Sus Yoo / The Bear's Medicine by Clayton Gauthier, Dakelh translation by Danny Alexis and Theresa Austin (Theytus Books, 2019)



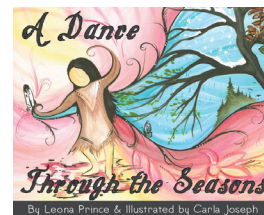
Lila and the Crow by Gabrielle Grimard (Annick Press, 2016)



Courage by Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002)



When I Was Eight by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard (Annick Press, 2013)



A Dance Through the Seasons by Leona Prince, illustrated by Carla Joseph (Fireweed Canada, 2019)



When We Were Alone by David A. Robertson, illustrated by Julie Flett (HighWater Press, 2016)

BOOK LISTS

- [K - 3 Indigenous Literature for Classroom Use](#) (Empowering the Spirit)
- [10 Beautiful Indigenous Children's Books To Add To Your Library](#) (CBC Parents)
- [20 Canadian books for kids and teens to read for National Indigenous History Month](#) (CBC)

ADAPTATIONS FOR THIS LESSON

The strategies and progressions in “The Salmon Run” can be applied to “Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox” by Danielle Daniel.

This lesson approach can easily be adapted to: Positive Personal and Cultural Identity, Social Awareness and Responsibility

- Exchanging the theme of courage for the themes of gratefulness, well-being, recognizing personal values, cultural context and valuing diversity can be applied to “Sus Yoo / The Bear’s Medicine.”
- A natural progression of discussing the themes of courage, gratefulness, well-being, recognizing personal values, cultural context and valuing diversity can be applied to “A Dance Through the Seasons.”

Additional areas for learning:

- Identifying personal strengths and abilities
- The interconnection between living and non-living things in the local environment
- Caring for the environment
- Stories connect us to ourselves, families and communities
- Local actions have global consequences
- Stories can be understood from different perspectives
- Traditional and contemporary Indigenous artists connect our experiences to the experiences of nature and others

MORE RESOURCES

- Focused Educational Resources: [BC K-12 Evaluated Resource Collection](#)
- [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#)