

Tool 3.2



Learning from Indigenous Peoples

CLARITY Competence Area:

Embracing values that sustain the lives of all living beings

GreenComp Competence Area:

Embodying sustainability values

Why use this tool?

This tool is meant to support reflection on the historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples face, and to encourage respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems and practices when it comes to growing climate resilience and fostering ecosystem regeneration.

It is essential to note that Indigenous Peoples are communities who have been experiencing colonization, in most parts of the world. Yet, they still carry a deep sense of responsibility for the lands they have inherited from their ancestors, which includes ecosystems that have been exploited and those that have remained intact. While colonization is often associated with empires exploiting territories and people overseas, it has occurred within Europe as well. The Sámi in Sápmi, present across parts of four countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia) and the Inuit of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland – a self-governed territory within the Kingdom of Denmark) are examples of Indigenous Peoples who still suffer from the burden of European colonization.

Today, one of the biggest challenges faced by many Indigenous Peoples is "Green" or "Climate colonialism" as a result, many Indigenous Peoples see their territories once again plundered for rare minerals or to install wind power, now with the excuse of saving the planet. It is important not to exoticize Indigenous Peoples' cultures, while recognizing their knowledge as vital to our shared journey towards a more climate-resilient world.

Activity 3.2.1

Listening to recorded stories narrated by Indigenous Peoples

Overview

This activity consists in listening to life stories narrated by Indigenous Peoples. Those could be stories of daily practices of taking care of the Earth, accounts of their history and/or stories introducing spiritual beliefs or nature rituals. Listening to recorded stories told by Indigenous Peoples directly is critical. Some resources for such stories are in the reference section below.

Curriculum linkage

History, Geography, Science (biology), Civics & Social Studies and Sustainability & Climate Education.

Competences built

Self-reflection, perspective taking and humility

Prep

Read about local Indigenous Peoples, if any, environmental racism, authors working on decolonial studies (see references), so as to explore your own representation, assumptions and biases about Indigenous Peoples.

Select a story (or film) narrated by an Indigenous person or community, which is relevant to your context and/or the questions you would like to address

Competences/activities to practice first by the teacher:

The Listening tool (3.3.), particularly Deep Listening (3.3.2) Moving to reduce climate anxiety (1.3.)



BASIC INFO

Age range:

7+

Duration:

From 20 minutes to 2-3 hours

Group size:

Flexible

Level of difficulty:

Advanced - many questions and challenges need to be considered when engaging with Indigenous Peoples and/or when sharing their stories or studying their arts and other cultural expressions. Numerous biases, and assumptions also need to be addressed.

Materials/space required:

Tools to play the video/recording

Location:

Indoors

Engagement of external stakeholders:

None



Steps in the activity

1. Introduction
2. Listening
3. Dialogue

Step 1: Introduction

1. Introduce the exercise to your learners by highlighting three basic facts: (1) over 80% of the world's biodiversity is located on territories cared for by Indigenous Peoples, hence many of them have a precious understanding of how to care for the Earth, and (2) Indigenous people are very diverse and live different lives both in urban and rural areas today, and (3) most Indigenous Peoples have been oppressed and continue to be oppressed by governments in various ways over the past centuries, and exploring this history is essential to better understand their own stories.
2. Introduce the story or the film that you have selected for the learners by giving some details about the ecosystem in which the Indigenous people are located. Dive into the characteristics of the local fauna and flora; of the topography including the presence of mountains, rivers or the sea; and show images of the settlements or buildings in which Indigenous people live in this area, especially if they are not shown during the story. This will give a glimpse into the local ecosystem from which the knowledge is derived, as well as into the reality of today's life for many Indigenous people. Depending on the age of the learners, you can also dive into the history of oppression of this specific Indigenous People, and any political struggle they may still be part of today.
3. Highlight that this activity is about listening to a story that may not feel familiar to the learners and could introduce concepts or ideas they have never heard before. It is important to listen with curiosity and an open mind, knowing that there will be a time for questions afterwards. In case a concept or an approach makes them feel critical or uncomfortable, let them know that there will also be space to discuss those emotions afterwards. If they feel sad, angry or any other overwhelming emotions during the recording, let them know that they can breathe deeply or practice any other movement-based practices (5.2.), and that those emotions can be addressed after listening to the story.



Step 2: Listening

1. Play the recording or the movie. It is critical to share recordings or movies made by Indigenous people and or in close collaboration with Indigenous people. Please check the resource section for ideas or references.
2. Invite learners to take note during the recording if a question comes up, so that they can write it down and free their mind to continue listening deeply.



Learners in a Norwegian classroom, watching a recording from the Sámi people.

Photo: Marte Maurabakken/Climate Creativity.

Step 3: Dialogue

1. Start with inviting learners to express the emotions they have felt while listening to the recording or watching the film, if any. If needed, suggest some movement-based activities for the whole group (1.2.).
2. Encourage learners to share some questions they may have on any aspects of the story. When they have comments, invite them to turn them into a question so as to dive deeper with the group.
3. Give learners the opportunity to reflect on themes, topics or questions that emerged in the story:
 - a. What were they surprised about?
 - b. Did they notice a different relationship to nature?
 - c. Did they notice a different relationship between members of the Indigenous community than the ones they are used to in their community?
 - d. Did they notice a different relationship to climate change?
 - e. What would they like to further explore or research individually or as a group?

Dos and don'ts

Do:

- Prepare well about Indigenous Peoples in general and the Indigenous People from which the storyteller is before the class.
- Question and address your own assumptions and biases before the class.



Don't:

- Don't assume you know a lot about Indigenous Peoples because you have done some research. Acknowledge that there is a lot you may not know nor know in an embodied way, including when answering questions by learners.

Adaptations:

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent learners, please note it is not about treating others how *you* want to be treated, but how *they* want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.

Resources

For children:

You can check the following selection of Indigenous-made animation films. For each film, you can find a short synopsis and a suggested age-range for the viewers:

<https://www.nfb.ca/channels/indigenous-made-animation-films/>

This playlist is for children 9-11: <https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/indigenous-cinema-classroom-ages-611/#6>

This playlist is for children 12-14: <https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/unikkausivut-sharing-our-stories/>

This website also offers multiple animation and documentary videos:

<https://firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html>

For 6 - 10 years old: [The flight of the hummingbird](#)

For 12-18 years old: [Three thousand](#)

For older learners:

This website offers multiple animation and documentary videos:

<https://firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html>

Here is an Indigenous Stories playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyBdAUI4LX9jeCbaIOPkxNuoYGPBL0_Sj

Suggestions: [Four faces of the moon](#)

2 videos about the Sámi people – for ages 10 and older

Two videos that complement each other well. The first video shows reindeer herding traditions, told by an 83 years old Sámi woman. In the second video, a young Sámi woman talks about Sámi people's current challenges. (Use YouTube's automatic caption function to get subtitles in a language your learners understand.) These two videos work well for learners from 10 years old and older:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=rBU25yAyeI>



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Mm4eY0Tk7-k>

References

Activity designed by One Resilient Earth.

Important references when preparing for this activity:

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures \(GTDF\)](#) is an arts/research collective that uses this website as a workspace for collaborations around different kinds of artistic, pedagogical, cartographic, and relational experiments that aim to identify and de-activate colonial habits of being, and to gesture towards the possibility of decolonial futures.

[Protocol for non-Indigenous people working with Indigenous people](#)

Podcasts and writings by Indigenous Knowledge holders

A podcast by Cherokee reporter Rebecca Nagle: [There is no Climate Justice without Indigenous Sovereignty](#)

A podcast by Sherri Mitchell, (her name in her language is Weh'na Ha'mu Kwasset), an indigenous rights attorney from the Penobscot Nation and the author of a wonderful book, [Sacred Instructions](#). The podcast brings together indigenous lessons, teachings and guidance she has been moved to share with the wider world, on behalf of the elders in her community: [No Place Like Home](#)

[Writings and Interviews](#) of Robin Wall Kimmerer, a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She is the author of [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants](#), which we also highly recommend.

[Sand Talk](#), a book by Tyson Yunkaporta, who looks at global systems from an Indigenous perspective



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