



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society



**EVERY
CHILD
MATTERS**

**ORANGE SHIRT DAY
SEPTEMBER 30**

In recognition of the harm the residential school system did to children's sense of self-esteem and wellbeing, and as an affirmation of our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters.

Shi-Shi-etko Comprehension Strategies

Submitted by Bobbie-Jo Leclair, Indigenous Programming Support Teacher, Winnipeg School Division

Shi-Shi-etko by Nicola I Campbell

The ultimate goal in comprehension instruction is for students to be able to read a text and decide while reading, which strategy they need to use, in order to fully comprehend the text. It is also possible to go back and forth between strategies, Shi-shi-etko is an excellent model text. Several comprehension strategies can be taught when reading this picture book allowing for the students to make a purposeful connection between the Indigenous content and learning the strategies. If the students already know the strategies listed here, then having students keeping track of their metacognitive thinking while reading the book could be a great lesson. The focus of these strategies is on questioning or leading students to ask important questions about and doing some inquiry work around Residential Schools.

Second anchor chart

Before reading;	During reading;	After reading:
What I think know about residential schools:	New learning:	Misconceptions I had about residential schools:
Questions I still have:		

Anchor chart (On a chart paper)

Strategy Used:	Check mark for each time used
I had a <i>question</i>	
I visualized	
I made connections	
I inferred	



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Questioning

Before, during and after reading to clarify meaning, focus on the text, monitor their understanding – was my question answered? Does it matter if it wasn't answered? Do I still have more questions?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

(Have students record questions on chart paper)

Before Reading: Who is the little girl? What is she doing? Is she looking for something? What does Shi-shi-etko mean?

During Reading:

Why does she bury her special things? Why are they taken away in a cattle car?? Who takes them away??? Go back to the students questions to see if they have been answered and whether the answers changed their thinking

End of Reading:

At the end of the book the teacher should lead students to begin an inquiry– using questions such as: Why did this happen? Who allowed this to happen? Does this still happen? What happened to the families when the children were taken from them? Does anybody have the right to take children away? All of these questions lead to further investigation.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

(also known as using background knowledge or schema)

Good readers access their background knowledge before, during and after reading. They use their knowledge about their own world to make text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections. Good readers are able to decide whether these connections help them to understand the text better. In Shi-shi-etko there are many connections that children make such as their relationship with their mother, family gatherings or counting down the days to an event. Some children make the deep personal connection to stories their own families have told about being sent away to a residential school. When discussing the possible connections this text has to their own lives, it is important to ask students how these connection help them as a reader.

Visualizing

(Making a movie in your mind. Asking yourself what would I see, taste, feel, smell, hear)

Good readers use their connections to help them visualize. If they are reading about fishing and they have gone fishing, it is much easier to visualize what fishing is like. Visualizing helps readers interpret the author's message and also to remember what they read after they have finished, Visualizing is on-going somewhat like a movie the Images in the reader's mind change as more information is read.

Nicola Campbell uses such descriptive language in her book that it is easy to picture the story as it is told. Phrase such as "...watched the sunlight dance butterfly steps across her mother's face..." Even very young children are able to think about those words and how the sunlight is moving...

Tall grass swaying is easy to act out – younger students love to stand and sway and imagine they are grass thus visualizing that phrase. Senior students usually notice "determined mosquitoes" and make connections to being annoyed by a mosquito that won't go away, visualizing how Shi-shi-etko must be feeling.

Other powerful phrases include:

- "rhythmic sound of Yayah's cane"
- "...footsteps pitter pattered " for sound
- "Sky changing navy to brilliant blue" for sight
- "water exhausted sleep"
- "that squirmed between her toes" for feeling ..."
- "the path was dark and smelled alive with rain"
- "...wood smoke and scents of barbecuing sock eyed salmon" for smell

It is essential for students to visualize this story in order to properly understand the loss this little girl is about to experience. All the sights and sounds and comforts of nature and her culture are woven through this story.