

Part Three

Resistance and Change

Summary

Part three explores the beginnings of the road to reconciliation. Firstly, it acknowledges the protests and resistance that First Nations have expressed since the beginning of Indian Residential Schools. Students study several case studies with original documents from the Department of Indian Affairs files that demonstrate ways in which resistance was expressed. Next, some early signals of failure from other observers are considered, as well as the responses from the church and government. Then the postwar changes to public attitude and governmental policy are traced, along with apologies by the churches. Finally, the survivors who shared their stories during the road to reconciliation are honoured as heroes. It is important to understand that Reconciliation is a long term process, and we are just at the beginning.

Enduring Understandings

- First Nations people have endured a long journey to bring the hard truths about Indian Residential Schools to the attention of the Canadian government and society, and to see the start of a road to reconciliation.

Essential Questions

Big Question

What actions were taken to bring an end to the Indian Residential School system?

Focus Questions

1. In what ways did students, parents and communities resist the Indian Residential School system?
2. Why was the residential school system perpetuated even when it was recognized to be a failure?
3. How did First Nations action and changes in public attitude bring about an end to the system?

LESSON 3.1

Ongoing Resistance

Key Concepts

- From the outset of the residential school system, First Nations families and communities have protested and requested change.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Use critical thinking skills to analyse and interpret primary source documents
- Give examples of how First Nations children and communities protested and resisted the Indian Residential Schools

Resources

Case study Blackline Masters, page 71-page 96.

Suggested Activities

Case Studies: Student Resistance and Parent Protest

1. Introducing the Case Studies

In this activity, students analyse primary source documents that provide examples of protests against the school system. There are a number of ways to approach these resources:

- Students can work in groups to analyze all three case studies.
- Students can work in a group that focuses on one case study and then share their findings with the other two groups.
- The entire class can work together on one case study to model how to analyze primary sources, and then individually, or in small groups students can investigate one or both of the other two case studies.

Each case study has an introductory handout for students (with historical background and context), some suggestions for digging deeper into the research, discussion questions, and reproductions of the relevant documents from the Department of Indian Affairs School files.

- Before engaging in the discussion questions for their case study, have students read the background information given for their case study.
- Remind students when they are reading primary source materials that the documents are written from one person's perspective at a given time. The times in which they were written were very different from today, and people's beliefs and attitudes were generally much more overtly racist than today.

2. Analyzing Documents

In order to analyze each primary source included in the case study, invite students to read their document and answer the following questions about the nature of the document:

- Who created the document?
- What type of primary source is this? (*letter, photograph, legal document, diary entry, etc.*)
- When and where was the primary source created?
- Who was the intended audience of the document?

- Why was the source created? What was the motivation or goal of the person who created this source?
- What does this document tell us about resistance to Indian Residential Schools?

2. Sharing Evidence

After students have analyzed the primary source documents for their assigned case study, ask them to share and corroborate their evidence with the rest of their group. Invite students to have a discussion within their group about what their set of primary sources reveal about resistance to the system of Indian Residential Schools. When they are finished they should record their findings.

3. Discussion Questions

After students have analyzed all of the sources in their case study, invite them to work through the discussion questions for the case study they are working on. You may wish to have a class discussion on each of the case study discussion questions.

4. Putting it All Together

Invite each group to share their findings about what their case study revealed about the various types and examples of resistance to Indian Residential Schools. The following questions can be used to help guide the class discussion:

- What was the role of First Nations children and First Nations communities in resisting the Residential School system?
- What do the case studies reveal about resistance to the Indian Residential School system in general?
- What were the characteristics of the resistance? What methods were used?
- What evidence can you find that explains why these examples of resistance and protest did not bring about an immediate end to the Indian Residential School system?

5. Other Forms of Resistance

Discuss with the class other ways that students may have resisted the authority of the Indian Residential Schools. (*Possible responses: withdrawing, misbehaving, setting fires, stealing.*)

Case Study 1 Summary: Student Resistance – Running Away

This case looks at a specific incident at the Williams Lake Industrial School in 1902. A group of boys ran away that February, and one of them, Duncan Sticks, died before he could reach home or return to the school.

The documents include sworn statements by the boy's father and several students of the school, which uniformly point to the poor food and harsh punishment as the reasons for the repeated running away. There are also excerpts from a report by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for BC which seeks to dismiss the testimony and explain away the reasons for running away as foolish. Also included in this report is a recorded list of punishments from the register of corporal punishment, which most schools kept as a matter of form. Judging by the testimony, there was more corporal punishment administered than is recorded. The offenses do not seem serious enough to warrant such harsh punishment, even considering the widespread acceptance of corporal punishment at the time. They give additional evidence as to why students would want to run away.

The final document in the case is the principal's submission to the annual Indian Affairs report. It was printed and widely distributed as part of Canada's Sessional Papers, so it is not surprising that there is only a brief reference to the death of students, and no connection of Duncan Stick's death with the problem of running away. It does reveal other aspects of life in the Indian Residential School, such as the boys being made to construct their own playground. The principal, in his own words, does not seem "to find anything reprehensible in this."

Two uncommon words that might require explanation:

- guirt (Document 1) is usually spelled quirt. It is a type of a riding whip.
- twitted (Document 5) means teasing or taunting.

Discussion questions:

1. What was Johnny Stick's attitude to the Indian Residential School before this incident? What evidence is there for your answer? (*He supported the school. He said he was glad for him to be in school, and he returned both Duncan and Mary to the school when they ran away.*)
2. What reasons did the children give for running away? (*Two main reasons: poor quality and not enough food, and harsh punishment.*)
3. What reasons does Superintendent Vowell give to explain the runaways? Do you think there is any truth to his reasons? What are his attitudes towards these reasons? (*Girls wanted freedom from the discipline of the school and to play with boys; older boys wanted to earn money; younger children were teased, apparently falling to peer pressure to prove their bravery by running away. There is probably some truth to these reasons; after all, who wouldn't want to be free from the discipline. Vowell's attitude is that these reasons are "foolish"*)
4. What types of things were children punished for? (*For talking – answering a question about running away, not doing needle work – Mary; throwing rocks at fence – Francis; sleeping in trousers, concealing bed wetting, hitting another pupil, "impertinent" language, "neglecting sheet" (not clear what that means), banging bed around, fighting in class, not standing for punishment – Vowell's report.*)
5. Consider the offenses which Vowell listed in his report (Document 5). Why do you think these were thought to be serious enough to deserve strapping? What do they show about the school staffs' beliefs and attitudes? (*Sleeping in trousers – perhaps this suggested he was preparing to run away; concealing bed wetting – shows a lack of empathy and the belief that punishment would cure the problem, rather than understanding the causes; impertinent language, not standing for punishment and banging bed around – seem to be challenges to authority, which was not to be tolerated; hitting and fighting in class.*)
6. What evidence is there to suggest that these students were protesting their treatment in the school, rather than just showing bad or "foolish" behaviour? (*The children repeatedly ran away, even, as in this case, in the middle of winter; their reasons for running away consistently referred to bad food and harsh punishment.*)

Case Study 2 Summary: Haisla parents protest, Kitamaat, 1922

The documents include a number of official reports written after parents of students living at the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home refused to send their children back to the boarding home. The first report is by the Indian Agent Iver Fougner. The second is the RCMP report.

Discussion questions;

1. What triggered the parent protest? (*The death of Hanna Grant.*)
2. What action did the community take before they carried out the protest? (*A series of meetings were held involving the parents, the Council and the community; they interviewed some students about how they were fed.*)
3. What complaints did the parents have about the school? (*They believed their children were being neglected; they had poor food and clothing; did not have proper medical service; and communications with parents was poor. Many children had died at the home.*)
4. Comment on Indian Agent Fougner's statement, "Indian children, in such circumstances, from diffidence, seldom or never speak, when questioned by white people." (*The children were likely intimidated by the authorities.*)
5. Why do you think Corp. Clearwater added the comment, "I might mention here that [Edward] Grey is a very well educated Indian, and that he has some knowledge of the Law"? (*He might have been warning the authorities that he could cause some problems for the department.*)
6. What arguments did the Indian Agent and the RCMP use try to convince the Haisla people to send their children back to school? (*They threatened them with going to jail with hard labour; the Canadian government was very poor after World War One, and they had spent a great deal of money on educating them.*)
7. What conditions did the community demand before they sent their children back to the school? (*The principal to sign a paper agreeing to give children proper and enough food, sufficient clothing and the children would be cared for.*)
8. What evidence is there of the community's willingness to put their trust in the school? (*Community member Herbert McMillan indicated their desire to have their children educated as long as they were "treated right." The parents agreed to return their children to school if their conditions were met.*)

Case Study 3 Summary: Lejac parents protest, 1944-46

These documents relate to the protests and requests of parents in communities around Lejac school. They requested day schools so children could stay at home. As a community, they withheld students from school.

A few years earlier, a tragic incident occurred when four students ran away from Lejac and froze to death on Fraser Lake before they could reach home. This case has been widely written about and a web search will find many references (though not always accurate). A full collection of documents from the investigation into their deaths is available on the DIA School files, microform c-8767, pages 429-467.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the reasons the First Nations communities gave for wanting day schools on their reserves? What were their grievances against Lejac Residential School? (*Disease was spread at the school; poor quality of education; having to work on farm, too much religious education – “learn only to pray and milk cows.” They wanted them at home to “see they get the best education possible.”*)
2. What reasons did officials give for not implementing day schools? (*First Nations of area spend too much time away from reserves; perceived lack of discipline by parents.*)
3. What people did the First Nations communities in the Fraser Lake region contact to express their grievances? (*Indian Agent; School Principal; Member of Parliament Irvine - Document 2; lawyer P. E. Wilson - Document 5*)
4. Summarize the events of September 1946. What action did the parents take? What did the authorities do in response? (*One hundred children were kept home from Lejac at the beginning of the school year. In response the RCMP were sent out to round up the truants; issued summonses for arrest.*)
5. Comment on the feelings the parents must have had to cause them to take this action, and to have their children taken by the RCMP. (*Must have felt frustration, anger at the lack of action, determination to make a change; sadness and anger at having children apprehended.*)
6. What do you think Indian Agent Howe meant when he said the parents were “defeating their own ends by their present attitude”? (Document 5) Was he correct in this statement? (*Supposedly he thought the opposition and protest would work against the parents and interfere with the process that was slowly moving towards the opening of day schools. He was incorrect because the parents “opposition and antagonism” (Document 6) motivated the department to open at least one school - Stony Creek - as quickly as possible.*)
7. How did the Stony Creek Band demonstrate the importance to them of providing a school for their children in their community? (*They wrote to lawyer P. E. Wilson; “positively refused” to send their children back to Lejac; provided their recreation hall for use as a temporary school, which would have impacted on community events; built a teacher’s house on their own accord, without “authority or advice” from the Indian Agent.*)

Lesson 3.2**Recognition of Failure****Key Concepts**

- Indian Residential Schools were self-perpetuating systems that never functioned properly but were seemingly impossible to stop.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Give examples of times that the Indian Residential School system was publicly acknowledged to have failed
- Compare how the failure of the Indian Residential School system was viewed by First Nations and by officials of the Church and state

Resources:

- Blackline Master 10 Early Warnings, Elizabeth Shaw's Letter 1898, page 56
- *The Awakening of Elizabeth Shaw* DVD (optional)
- *They Came for the Children*, pages 16-20

Suggested Activities**1. Elizabeth Shaw Sounds a Warning**

Share with students the story of Elizabeth Shaw, a worker in the Crosby Home for Boys in 1898. She was so shocked by what she saw going on at the home that she wrote a letter to the Womens' Missionary Society in Montreal, which helped support the home financially. The Methodist Church undertook a half-hearted investigation, but no changes were made. When she learned that nothing was to change, Miss Shaw suffered a mental breakdown. She died in the Brockville Asylum in 1917. (Note: Shaw was not sent to a mental institution for writing the letter and protesting; it was the lack of action by the authorities to make any changes that contributed to her mental breakdown.)

- If available, view the video *The Awakening of Elizabeth Shaw*.
- Ask students to read excerpts from Shaw's letter on Blackline Master 10.
 - Ask students to outline the main charges that Shaw laid against the school management. Compare these with the charges discussed in the student and parent protests in the Case Studies.
(*Every minute of their lives was supervised and all their thinking was done for them; locked in dormitory at night; the slightest mistake brought about punishment, which was usually flogging; boys were kept in a chronic state of fear; no love or sympathy shown towards students; poor quality food fed them; a young woman was beaten and locked up in a room as punishment*)
- Discuss the following questions:
 - In what ways does Shaw's letter add to your understanding of how the schools were run and the conditions the children faced?
 - How does Shaw's perspective differ from the perspective of the children and parents in the case studies?

2. Recognizing Failure

Ask students to read *They Came for the Children*, pages 16-20 to find examples of times that church and government officials recognized that the Indian

Residential School was failing their intended goals. (1892- rising costs led to switch in funding system; Indian Affairs Minister Sifton thought the large industrial schools should be closed; health conditions were recognized to be dire; Indian Affairs minister Oliver concluded separating children from parents had been a failure; church officials opposed the campaign to end the residential school system)

3. Bryce Report on Residential Schools

Another example of a public demonstration of failure was in the medical reports of Dr. Peter Bryce in 1907 and 1922. Bryce was the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Indian Affairs and after a study of the residential schools in the prairies found extremely high rates of death from tuberculosis in the schools. His recommendations were largely ignored, and ultimately he was removed from the position. In 1922, after years of inaction and no change in the death rates, he published *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada*. His reports are available online:

- *Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories* (1907) available online at: <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/3024.html>
- *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada* (1922) available at: <http://archive.org/details/storyofnationalc00brycuoft>

See the Senior Secondary Learning Resources for more discussion and documents related to the Bryce Report. (Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation, Learning Resources for Senior Secondary, pages 26-27.)

4. Why Didn't They Stop?

Ask students to suggest reasons why the Indian Residential Schools continued despite the signals of failure.

Lesson 3.3**Road to Reconciliation****Key Concepts**

- Public attitudes towards First Nations people started to change after World War Two, and led to limited revisions of government policy which controlled the lives of First Nations people.
- The Road to Reconciliation could not have been taken without the contributions of survivors who were willing to share their experiences.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Document the changes in public policy which led to changes in First Nations education
- Research how the courage of Indian Residential School survivors to speak out resulted in the passing of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement

Resources

- *They Came for the Children* pages 80-83, 86
- 100 Years of Loss Booklet (download at <http://www.legacyofhope.ca/downloads/100-years-of-loss-booklet.pdf>)
- Blackline Master 11 Road To Reconciliation, page 58
- Blackline Master 12 Road to To Reconciliation Time Line, page 62

Suggested Activities**1. Road to Reconciliation**

In this activity students will analyse important events that contributed to public awareness of the need for reconciliation. Use Blackline Master 11. (Note that following the Blackline Master there are background notes for each of the events.)

- Discuss why events that do not relate directly to Indian Residential Schools are included in the list. (*Reconciliation involves dealing with all historic trauma, not just the schools.*)
- Divide up the events amongst individual students or groups and have them research information about them and write a brief description (who, what, where, when, why, and how?). Ask students to share their findings with the whole class.
- You may want to create a large time line in the classroom, and as students present their information, they could add their event to the time line. (See Activity 2 below.)
- Discuss as a class the significance of each of the events and make notes on the time line. You may want to do this as each group presents their information about the event, or do it as a follow-up.
- For additional significant dates and events, see the time line prepared by the Legacy of Hope Foundation, in their *100 Years of Loss* booklet.

2. Time Periods on the Road to Reconciliation

In this activity, students identify time periods suggested by the events in the Road to Reconciliation Time line. Students will divide the time line into at least three historical periods.

- Represent the events on the Road to Reconciliation on a time line to show the distribution of these events over the last 70 years. You may want to use the time line built as part of Activity 1, have the students construct their own time lines, or use the time line prepared on Blackline Master 12.
- Discuss with students how the time line shows that public attitudes have changed from 1945 to now.
- Ask if any of the events were more significant than others. Explain that these more significant events could be termed “turning points.” Explain that a turning point is an event in which a significant, notable, or decisive change takes place.
- Ask students to identify the main turning points in the Road to Reconciliation time line, individually or in groups.
- Have students divide the events into three or more time periods. Students should name each time period, justify why that is an appropriate label for the events in that time period, and highlight the common characteristics of the events in that time period.

3. Heroes

In this activity students consider the qualities required by people who broke the silence about Indian Residential Schools, and bravely decided to share their stories.

- Discuss with students this statement in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission conclusion: *The first point is that this story has heroes.*
- Discuss with students who the TRC was referring to as heroes. (*Survivors who broke the silence and shared their stories*). You may want to elaborate by reading the explanation, quoted below, or have students read the entry (*They Came for the Children, page 8*).

“This story has heroes. The work of truth telling, healing, and reconciliation was commenced well over two decades ago by the people who, as children, had been victimized by the system: They continue to do the heavy labour of sharing their stories, and, by so doing, educating their children, their communities, and their country.”

- Discuss the different modes that survivors have shared their stories:
 - Publications;
 - Gatherings such as community or regional conferences;
 - Legal testimony in proceedings such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the class-action lawsuits leading to the settlement agreement, and before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Ask students to write a personal reflection/ journal entry on why some people would be willing to share stories and why others would not want to share.

Part Three Assessment Activities

1. Turning Points

Ask students to decide which event was the most important turning point on the Road to Reconciliation, and support their decision with a strong argument.

- Recall with students that a turning point is a historical event in which a significant, notable, or decisive change takes place. Students should explain why the event they have decided is the most significant turning point on the Road to Reconciliation led to a decisive change in the history of Indian Residential Schools.
- Discuss with students what indicators of a significant turning point might be. Criteria may include: Turning points are moments when the process of change shifts in direction or pace. (The speed of change is an important criteria to note with students).

Suggested criteria for assessment:

- response focuses on one significant event from the time line of events on the Road to Reconciliation time line, which is clearly summarized
- response explains why the chosen event is the most important turning point on the Road to Reconciliation
- supporting arguments are well thought out and presented
- response demonstrates an understanding of how the chosen event fits into the history of the Canadian people

2. Recognizing Heroes

Students express in some form a recognition of those who are heroes on the Road to Reconciliation. This could be in the form of a letter, a poem, or another form of artistic expression.

- Discuss with students who the heroes are in this story. (*e.g. The students who survived; the parents and communities who protested; the survivors who broke the silence and shared their stories.*)