

## PART THREE

# Research Project

In this section students undertake an in-depth project examining one aspect of the Indian Residential School system history and the reconciliation process. Depending on your course and unit organization, you may have students work individually or in small groups.

### 1. Guidelines for Research Project

1. Develop research questions
  - Reflect on previous knowledge gained from parts one and two, and questions generated from those studies
  - Consider appropriate themes and concepts according to course and interest
  - Decide on research questions
2. Conduct Research
  - Locate and evaluate primary and secondary sources
  - Begin with suggested resources, and documents from part two if applicable.
  - Identify information that helps to answer questions
  - Select main ideas and substantiating evidence contained in the research
  - Look for new questions that arise that can lead to further research
3. Product Creation
  - Organize data collected.
  - Choose an appropriate format for the final product, such as digital video, power-point or slide show presentation; research essay; creative writing (story, play, poetry); oral presentation, collage, scrapbook
  - Complete final product and share in appropriate manner
  - Evaluate with teacher and student-set criteria

### 2. Themes

These are some of the major themes that underlie the study of Indian Residential Schools, their legacies, and the renewal process occurring today.

#### A. Colonialism and Post-Colonialism

How have the beliefs underlying colonialism and its policies impacted Canadian society, including First Nations and non-First Nations, and how is decolonization occurring?

#### B. Canadian Society and our Government

The Government of Canada is elected by and represents the broad Canadian society. How have government policies in the past reflected the society, and how are citizens responding today to government actions?

#### C. The Courts

What impact has the judicial system had on the changing relationship between First Nations and other Canadians?

#### D. Social Justice

How can causes and the results of the Indian Residential School system be viewed through the lens of social justice?

#### E. Cultural Survival

How have First Nations people and cultures been able to survive through the many injustices they have endured?

#### F. Intergenerational Trauma

How is the trauma resulting from the often unseen and hidden effects of the losses suffered by First Nations transmitted from generation to generation, and how can the cycles be stopped?

#### G. Reconciliation and Healing

What actions are being taken and need to be taken by all Canadians to bring about real reconciliation and enduring healing?

## Research Resources

In this section, students are more engaged in finding the documents and other research materials that apply to their project. Some types of resources available are listed below.

### 1. Newspaper articles

- Many newspapers, both archival and current, can be searched on the internet.
- The British Colonist is an excellent source for early BC history. Digitized papers from 1858 to 1920 are on line at britishcolonist.ca.
- Community libraries or archives may have microfilm copies of local newspapers.

### 2. Survivor Accounts

- Read survivor accounts in books such as Bev Sellars, *They Call Me Number One*, or the compilation books like *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School*. For a list, see page 52 in the References and Resources section.
- View video testimony of survivors. See videos at the TRC website. Search Youtube.
- The Survivors Speak. (260 pages) Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Available on line at www.trc.ca. Includes discussions of witness testimonies, with many excerpts.

### 3. Academic Papers

Recently there have been many academic studies done on the effects of Indian Residential Schools, and also the recent processes around the government's apology and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some suggested articles are:

#### 1. Experimenting on Students and Communities

Ian Mosby. Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Bio-medical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952. *Histoire sociale / Social History*, vol XLVI, n 91 May 2013

This paper led to a great controversy when it was published in 2013, and led to wide public awareness of the injustices carried out in the name of science.

2. Melanie Lang. An Analysis of Canada's Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission Undergraduate Transitional Justice Review, vol 4, Iss 1, 2013, 34-50.
3. Aboriginal Healing Foundation. There are a number of good articles published on the Aboriginal Healing Foundations site, all of which are accessible.

#### 4. Websites

There are a great variety of websites available on the subject of Indian Residential Schools, from historical documents to inflammatory blogs.

Some starting points include:

- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Many resources pertaining to the effects of the Indian Residential Schools. <http://www.ahf.ca/publications/residential-school-resources>.
- Archive.org. This is an extensive digitized library of old publications. For example, it contains many volumes of the Sessional Papers of Canada, which include the yearly Department of Indian Affairs Reports.
- Department of Indian Affairs School Files. See a full index and description of usage in the Resources section, page 56.
- First Nations Leadership Council. See their *Backgrounder: History of Canada's Indian Residential School System*. [http://www.fns.bc.ca/pdf/Backgrounder\\_ResidentialSchoolHistory.pdf](http://www.fns.bc.ca/pdf/Backgrounder_ResidentialSchoolHistory.pdf)
- Indigenous Foundations, UBC. See their summary of the Indian Residential School System. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-residential-school-system.html>
- The Native Voice. Some issues of the Native Brotherhood of BC newspaper, *Native Voice*, are available to download. [www.nativevoice.bc.ca](http://www.nativevoice.bc.ca).
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs. This site has many historical documents. See the Historical Time Line From 1700s to the Present, a time line of history of contact and relationships with First Nations and newcomers. [http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/time\\_line.htm](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/time_line.htm)

#### 5. Multimedia

A variety of videos analyzing videos developed by students available on Youtube, and other sites such as:

- UVIC Centre for Youth & Society Resistance to Residential Schools: Digital Stories [www.youth.society.uvic.ca/TRC](http://www.youth.society.uvic.ca/TRC)
- Interview with Bev Sellars (CBC interview, Sunday Edition) [www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/The+Sunday+Edition/ID/2388708567/](http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/The+Sunday+Edition/ID/2388708567/)

## *Sample Topics*

### **The Contemporary Conversation**

What are people today saying and doing about the relationship between First Nations and other Canadians? Are attitudes being changed? Are old stereotypes still out there?

- Investigate recent events and movements, such as the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Idle No More Movement.
- How does social media reflect or influence the relationship?

### **Court Cases**

How did class-action lawsuits by Indian Residential School survivors advance changes in government policy and public opinion?

- Investigate how court cases fit into the events of the road to reconciliation.
- Survey the findings of several of the major court cases.
- The Canadian Legal Information Institute is a searchable online database of Canadian court cases. Search for terms such as “residential school” to locate relevant cases. Online at [canlii.org](http://canlii.org).

### **Food**

Examine the role of food in the Indian Residential School experience, and how the delivery of food reflected the broader damaged relationship between First Nations and other Canadians.

- Some topics to consider:
  - a typical menu of a school at different time periods. Did it change?
  - the quality of food provided students, compared to what they would have with their families at home
  - the quality of food given students compared to that fed the staff
  - the funding of supplying food to students
  - the effects of food on the health of students
  - the process of producing food at the schools, and the involvement of the students
  - the use of food in scientific experiments on Indian Residential School students

### **Evaluating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Compare the intended goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its work and achievements.

- What barriers impeded its ability to work?
- A good resource is “An Analysis of Canada’s Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” by Melanie Lang. (Undergraduate Transitional Justice Review, vol 4, Iss 1, 2013, 34-50.)

## Following Up on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

As part of its Final Report, the TRC released the document *Calls to Action* listing the Commission's 94 recommendations. Students could investigate to see if any action has been taken on any of the recommendations, and if not suggest reasons for inaction.

Download *Calls to Action* at [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca) under Findings.

## The Bryce Report on Indian Residential Schools

Students will investigate Dr. Peter Bryce's original report in 1907, the government and public response, and his subsequent publication in 1922.

*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>

*The Story of a National Crime: Canada's First Chief Medical Officer and the Aborted Fight for Aboriginal Health Care*. Adam J. Green. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXVI, 2(2006):211-228. available at: <http://www3.brandonu.ca/library/cjns/26.2/01green.pdf>

Crusading for the Forgotten: Dr. Peter Bryce, Public Health, and Prairie Native Residential Schools. Megan Sproule-Jones. *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, vol 13: 1996 p. 199-224. (Can be downloaded. Search for title.)

## Creative Writing

Write a short story that illustrates the intergenerational effects of the Indian Residential School system.

## History of an Indian Residential School

Do an in-depth examination of one particular Indian Residential School in British Columbia, probably the school that most First Nations from the local community attended.

Some research resources:

- Department of Indian Affairs school files.
- Published sources of histories and survivor accounts
- Online sources

Some aspects of the topic to investigate:

- What was the time span of the existence of the school?
- What role, if any, did the local First Nations have in beginning the school?
- What was the physical school like?
- What were some experiences of students who attended the school?

## **What Happened to the Indian Residential School Buildings?**

Research the disposition of the original institutional buildings. Some have been demolished, while others have been re-purposed.

Find out what community discussions took place when the decisions were made (or are being made).

This will be largely an internet-based research project, unless you live near a previous Indian Residential School site, in which case you may be able to interview community members. Local newspapers may have articles and opinion pieces.

The project could be:

- a survey of what has happened to all the buildings from BC Indian Residential Schools
- a comparison of two schools that had different ends, i.e. one that was repurposed and one that was demolished
- an in-depth investigation of one school building (ideally one you are close too.)