

FORT POINT TRINITY: AN ELEMENTARY EDUKIT

Emphasis on Inquiry and Local Study

This EduKit provide teachers with learning activities designed “to encourage authentic inquiry and to promote in students the development of higher order and analytic thinking abilities”. Through a specific focus on the history of Fort Point and Trinity, Newfoundland and Labrador, Teachers will “engage students in a range of inquiry-related competencies within the social sciences:

1. Ask questions for various purposes
2. Locate and select appropriate sources
3. Access ideas from oral, written, visual, and statistical sources
4. Uncover and interpret the ideas of others
5. Assess options and formulate reasoned opinions
6. Present ideas to others
7. Act cooperatively with others to promote mutual interests

(Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, page 14-17)

“It is important that students be afforded the opportunity to consider issues that have local as well as national significance.” *(Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, page 34)* This EduKit provides opportunity for students to “explore local/regional history” (that is likely of personal interest) and asks them to utilize the “methods and skills of history as a discipline”. In so doing, it is intended that the knowledge and understanding they gain will reinforce their “pride in their cultural identity and heritage”.

This EduKit provides opportunity for teachers and students to address the concepts and processes which are used in the social sciences as a whole:

- to use an inquiry model to create, explore and resolve significant questions;
- to analyze events, ideas, issues, patterns and trends; and
- to make judgments based on appropriate criteria

The learning activities have been designed to provide students opportunity to become proficient in applying these concepts and processes, and to develop capacity to transfer these concepts and processes to real life situations.

(Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, pages 16-17)

This EduKit also addresses an aspect of education for sustainable development (ESD) in that it asks students to consider *environmental protection* as both an important goal for the future and an economic benefit for particular locations in Canada (in this instance, Trinity Bight, Newfoundland and Labrador).

Emphasis on Literacy Development

This EduKit supports students' literacy development. It "promotes the student's ability to comprehend and compose spoken, written and visual texts that are commonly used by individuals and groups to participate, critically and effectively in society." Students will

- use various strategies to gather and process information;
- use writing, speaking, and other ways of representing to communicate what they know about a particular topic;
- develop critical literacy by examining evidence for stereotyping, cultural bias, author's intent, hidden agendas, silent voices, and omissions (recognizing that texts are constructed by authors who have purposes for writing and make particular choices when doing so); and
- participate creatively and critically in community problem-solving and decision-making

(Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, pages 16-17)

Focus of this EduKit

This *EduKit* is a local study and has direct links to specific curriculum outcomes for Grade 5 Social Studies, (Unit 1: Exploring the Past) and the Introduction (Integrated Concepts and Processes) in Newfoundland and Labrador's education system, however by the nature of the inquiry and instructional strategies recommended, it can be utilized by students and teachers across Canada as they engage in learning in the social sciences.

This *EduKit* forms part of an online educational virtual exhibit that examines the history of Fort Point as a military location and its importance to the community, with a specific focus on the period leading up to and the time of the War of 1812 between Canada and the United States. This online educational component will assist the larger intent of the project: to preserve the local history of the former fort and light house station for our local youth while also informing the world about the history of this site and encouraging visitors to Trinity.

It is anticipated that students and teachers who utilize these educational resources, either in part or in their entirety, will come to understand the strategic importance of Newfoundland as a colony, and Trinity as a key economic interest, during the period of ongoing conflict between Britain, France and America. The story of a small fort in a small British colony during the period between 1760 and 1815 becomes historically significant when examined in the context of global economic and military developments.

Nature of the Learning Activities

This *EduKit* does not expect students to learn facts in isolation. The emphasis is placed on critical and creative thinking applied to primary sources, and informed decision making based on analysis of available evidence. The activities expect students to take an inquiry approach to their learning. They will develop questions; retrieve, evaluate, and synthesize information from a range of primary and secondary sources; and draw conclusions that are supported by evidence.

The learning activities (lesson plans) that follow draw upon current research regarding historical thinking. The learning activities encourage students to engage in deeper critical thinking and inquiry as they connect with the content surrounding the developments at Fort Point. A particular emphasis is placed on the development of process skills that can be applied across all social studies courses.

The instructional strategies and learning activities give students opportunities to apply the “tools for historical understanding” in their examination of events surrounding one small fort within a huge British Empire, and role of key individuals in the course of events. In this regard, the *EduKit* incorporates the current research in Canada regarding historical thinking by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013). The Big Six considers historical significance; evidence; continuity and change; cause and consequence; historical perspective; and, ethical dimension. The lesson plans also apply the “dimensions of historical thinking” outlined in *Teaching About Historical Understanding* by Mike Denos and Roland Case (Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press, 2006). It is intended that the application of historical thinking concepts will deepen students’ understanding of the historical period as well as their thinking about history generally.

As they progress through the Learning Activities, students will be encouraged to write journal entries that demonstrate their acquired knowledge and their questions. (Grade 5 teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador can review Appendix G: *Student Response Journals* in their *Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, page 171*.) They will also be asked to maintain a portfolio of their work as a demonstration of their learning. At the end of the Unit, teachers will examine students’ portfolios and provide feedback in the form of a grade and comments. (Grade 5 teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador can review Appendix H: *Portfolio Assessment* in their *Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, pages 173-175*.)

Students are also encouraged to build a school or class website. This website could contain a selection of products students generate during their studies and provide an avenue of sharing with other schools and the broader community.

As they engage in the learning activities in this *EduKit*, students will bring parts of the community (its history) into the classroom. Their work will also bring the classroom (the students) into the community. This can be accomplished through guest speakers who

have significant knowledge of this period in our history. As well, visits can be arranged to the sites under study. It is also anticipated that the products students create may be shared with the community.

Overview of Learning Activities

Each learning activity follows the same template that includes:

- **Specific Curriculum Outcome(s)** to be achieved.
- The **Learning Goal**, which provides the overall goal or intent and a brief description of the activity.
- A **Planning and Preparation** section, which provides a listing of materials required (sources and resources; references) and a breakdown of the activity.
- A **Strategies for Completion** section divided in the following instructional categories:
 - Activation
 - Connection
 - Consolidation
 - Extension
- An **Assessment and Evaluation** section, which highlights aspects of the activity that may be assessed and suggests tools or methods to use.

Note: Throughout the learning activities there is mention of images from the Trinity Historical Society's Virtual Gallery. To obtain these images please use the following link, www.trinityhistoricalsociety.com/fortpoint.htm.