

FORT POINT TRINITY: A SENIOR HIGH EDUKIT

The Importance of Local Study

The Curriculum Guide for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 2205 states the following about the importance of local study:

In the social sciences, students are frequently exposed to grand narratives. A grand narrative is a comprehensive explanation of an experience, which attempts to highlight the more significant aspects of the story – in other words it is a story *about* a story. By using only this approach, “small histories” tend to get lost. Therefore, to help maximize meaningful engagement with students, it is essential that time be allocated to allow students to examine issues and topics at the local or regional level that have personal significance. In fact, these “small histories” or case studies are significant in as much as they are revealing and provide deeper insight into particular events and experiences. (NL Studies 2205, page 7)

Focus of this *EduKit*

This *EduKit* is a local study; however, by the nature of the inquiry and instructional strategies recommended, it can be utilized by senior high 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 demonstrate their learning, students will be encouraged to utilize the arts as a means of expression, including story telling, drama, song writing, photography, and film making. 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.

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 for 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.