



ND EPSCoR Cultural Supplement

Digital Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources

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Introduction:

This cultural unit will help you understand why this field is important to our way of life.

Cultural Objective:

Students will learn that what we learned from our elders is that our history, culture, language is the most important part of our historical way of life.

Cultural Information:

The PPT presentation will demonstrate how this is done and why I learned why the elders taught us about our way of life long ago. It will also show what was important due to the changes in all aspects of our historical background, and that we need to know where we come from and our way of life then and now.

In 1998 I was asked to create a place for our artifacts/culture/heritage that the college had acquired. Archiving and preserving our culture/heritage and our way of life is very important for our people. I began with a room full of items that needed to be accounted for. I was asked to create a position and what the duties would be of an Archivist/Museum curator.

So TMCC sent me to Bismarck to the Museum there and I was educated in the art of taking care of the history of our people. This meant all three of our cultures which are on Turtle Mountains: Chippewa, Cree and Mitchif.

I learned at that time how to start putting the information on a database to preserve it. The history of our people is in that room and includes tapes, CD's, picture, sculptures, wood carvings, beadwork, baskets, canoes, many boxes of paper that the elders had kept and when they passed away the families brought them into the college where at that time, was the only place to keep our very important information. Information on our culture, historical events, who did the work, who signs various documents in our history a long time ago, our artwork, who made it, who donated it, and what year.

I knew I was Chippewa/Cree when I was in high school. Then I learned about my Mitchif heritage from my parents who demonstrated that to me growing up until I moved from California to the Turtle Mountains in 1959. During the time I was young growing up in the Marines with my father, I learned that there were many cultures all over the world.

I for some reason enjoyed listening and visiting with those different cultures: learning later in life that they were called: white, black, yellow and red nations of people.



Most and maybe all my teachings came from the Elders. When I returned in 1995 for the last time I began learning more about my Chippewa/Cree heritage, again from our elders here, in all four directions on this reservation. Then I went to Canada to learn about the Cree side of me, again from my elders there.

Here is some background of why it is important for us to keep our way of life continuing on to the next generation. Our culture/heritage and way of life is and as time goes on, changing, and we lose some of the importance of why we lived this way, or why we did things the way we did. It is our way of saving and preserving our way of life.

The Elders share with us that someday we will be starting over because our world is changing fast due to the environment, air quality, water, the devastation of war, and Aki-Mother Earth is being destroyed through the human beings being unforgiving, wasteful, destructive to everyone's way of life. This is not just us on Turtle Island, but all over the world, this is occurring.

We need to begin now to save our very important aspects of our way of life, to give to the next generation of our legacy/culture/heritage so we can continue practicing our ways.

Resources of human knowledge or expression also digital materials include texts, databases, still and moving images, audio, graphics, software, and web pages, among a wide and growing range of formats. They are frequently short-lived and require purposeful production, maintenance, and management to be retained.

Many of these resources have lasting value and significance, and therefore constitute a heritage that should be protected and preserved for current and future generations. This heritage may exist in any language, in any part of the world, and any area of human knowledge or expression.

Using computers and related tools, humans are creating and sharing digital resources – information, creative expression, ideas, and knowledge encoded for computer processing - that they value and want to share with others over time as well as across space. It is a heritage made of many parts, sharing many common characteristics, and subject to many common threats.

This digital heritage is likely to become more important and more widespread over time. New forms of expression and communication have emerged that did not exist previously. The Internet is one vast example of this phenomenon.

This digital life of today is making sure that our way of life and our culture/ heritage remains available to our future generations of all four nations.

Author biography:

Boozhoo, my name is Miigizi Ikwe, Wapski Makwa indoodem, Mikanock Wajii. My other name is Frances Allard, I'm from the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation in Belcourt, ND. I am Anishinabe Ikwe (Ojibwa)/Cree/Mitchif and the eldest of 8 siblings. I have two sons, an adopted daughter, a foster daughter and an adopted grandson. I have seven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. I raised two other young men as well; one lives here in Belcourt and the other lives in Colorado. My father was a marine, my mother was a beautician, and when I was a child, we traveled throughout the US/Guam/Japan before returning to the Turtle Mountain home of my parents in 1959 when I was 14 years old.

I have had a lot of educational experiences, both formal and informal. I graduated from Turtle Mountain Community High School in 1963; got an LPN degree in 1974 through the Lake Region Jr. College in Devil's Lake, ND and was trained in Belcourt; completed a BA in Communication/Dance in 1985 (Missoula, Mt) during the summers I worked as a woodland fire fighter; added an AA in Chemical Dependency in 1993 and an AA in Child Abuse/Neglect in 1994 from Lummi Community College (which later became Northwest Indian College) in Bellingham, WA; and then went back to TMCC for an AA in Commercial Art/Graphic Design in 2005; and picked up many certificates along the way. During those years, I was educated also by many Elders from different tribal nations and finally came home to Belcourt in 1995 and began my studies with all the Elders in the Turtle Mountains. I learned a lot and was honored to sit with them and learn from them. I also went to Canada to learn from the other half of my blood line, the Cree Nation. My travels took me across the US/Canada and across the ocean to Guam and Japan, learning many cultures along the way. The very first teachings I learned were the Seven Teachings of the Ojibwa, which came from my Aunt Edna Cloud who began this journey for me.

While I was in college, I learned to do research and found that very interesting. That training has become even more useful now that I am a board member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribal Nations Research Group, a board that reviews and approves all research done on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation. There are individuals from various universities who want to do research with our Turtle Mountain people, and the board makes sure they are following the guidelines of the Tribal Nations Research Group. We are the protectors of our people in the research/data arena.

I learned to sew in high school and loved it. This is one of my gifts that I have. I design all of my regalia (the traditional clothing/accessories) that I wear for Ceremonies/Pow Wows/special occasions. Since I have moved home, I have designed and made regalia for my grandchildren and other young people as well as others who request it of me.

I am a Cultural Advisor for TMCC and ND EPSCoR. I work with 6-12 graders in ND EPSCoR NATURE camps during the summer months and ND EPSCoR NATURE Sunday Academies during the school year. I write cultural supplements for each of the STEM topics covered in the various STEM activities. If I am not familiar with a STEM topic, I do research on the topic so that I can figure out which cultural information fits best with it. This I have been doing for 22 years. I work for TMCC as an instructor, and was asked by the TMCC president and vice president many years ago to develop an archive for our artifacts by our people (clothing, tools, baskets, sculptures, etc.) for the college, which I did for 6 years. I am also currently working for the Turtle Mountain

Chippewa Heritage Center for the last 3 years as an archivist/assistant for our artifacts and the tour guide to explain the historical way of life of our people here on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation. I also do research on various artifacts in our collection to find the importance/year/geographic origin of the items.

I realize that my passion is all about what I have learned and how to give back to our families, relatives, friends, and those who want to know who we are as Anishinabe people. I am grateful for the teachings of our elders, our young people of today and my children. I am also a sponsor for those who are struggling with alcohol/drugs on a one-on-one basis, as well in the sweat lodge. I work with the youth, adults, and the elders, outside this community in all four directions.

As I look at my journey throughout my life, my vision is to work with my people in any way I can to teach what I know, and pass it on to all that are interested in our Native way of life. I live simply so that I can live in peace and harmony in nature, which means I will follow the Seven Teachings in a good way. Those teachings came from my elders and I take the lessons they taught me seriously and to heart. So, my mission is to guide those who want the Seven Teachings in their life. The Seven Teachings are Love, Honesty, Humility, Bravery, Respect, Wisdom and Truth.