

# **Weaving Reconciliation Recommendations into Social Sciences Teaching**

## **Final Report**

**1. Project Description Describe/show to what degree the project was carried out as planned. Include what went well and what proved to be a challenge. Include a synthesis of your journal entries.**

Our team was thrilled to receive funding to support the work that we want to do to bring resources and curriculum supports that address Indigenous history and contemporary issues in our social sciences classrooms. Working on this project helped us learn how to incorporate these issues meaningfully into the already existing history curriculum. We definitely grew as teachers as we contemplated and devised lesson plans, student projects and outings that would stimulate and sustain our students' intercultural understanding, empathy and respect for Indigenous peoples.

Unfortunately, our project got off to a late start and we were unable to use all of the substitution days granted to us because three of our working days were planned for the period when schools got shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We were able to meet three times and these working days were fruitful collaborative moments. We were able to connect with an ally, Paul Rombough from LEARN Quebec, who helped us conceptualize using cartograf as part of our work with students. Our aim is to get students to understand the role of treaties in the evolving map of Canada, to see how Indigenous territories have been systematically diminished over time and to explore their own place on Turtle Island.

As we have not yet completed what we fully set out to do, we plan to put what we have already created into practice and complete our project in the next school year. We see our project as a work in progress that we will refine in the coming year(s).

**2. Project Goals Describe/show to what degree the goals of the approved project were met. If the goals were only partially met or not met at all, describe the**

## **reasons for this.**

Our goals were only partially met this year due to our late start and the fact that the school year was truncated at the point we were hoping to get the second half of our work done. We do hope to continue the work next year to complete what we set out to accomplish.

### **3. Project Outcomes Describe/show the gains that the participating teachers achieved through this project.**

As teachers, we gained so much through the process of working on this project.

First, we learned so much about Indigenous history and contemporary Indigenous issues through our research. We developed a robust annotated list of resources we can share, add to and refer back to as our teaching evolves over time. We were able to connect with local Indigenous resources, such as the First People's House at McGill and use locally produced teaching materials, such as the Indigenous Ally's Toolkit produced by the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Network.

Secondly, in developing our activities focused on education for reconciliation, we have reframed our approach to Canadian History. The prescribed curriculum seems to focus on the way tensions between the French and the English shaped our evolution, and we had not, until now, grounded the course otherwise. Our work together, however, has allowed us to reorganize our approach to the curriculum so that we can explore the tensions of our developing country as it grows out of the early and evolving relationships between First Nations, French settlers and English settlers on the land. Although this does not change the content we teach, grounding the course in the question of land seems a more accessible and more powerful foundation for understanding the contributions of ALL Canadians both in our early development, and in our continued evolution and through the arrival of successive waves of migration.

Thirdly, we discovered and learned how to use different online map applications in order to help our students better understand the critical relationship between economics, political policies, and land through playing with shifting borders over time and the stories which drove those shifts.

Fourthly, we strengthened our professional bond with one another through this ongoing

collaboration. For teachers working in very small schools, opportunities to work collectively make such a difference to the quality of our professional lives which is translated into improvements in our professional practice in the classroom.

We are proud that we have developed part of what we feel promises to be is a good introduction to Indigenous issues for our students, with the appropriate resources that make learning this material engaging.

**4. Reinvestment: Clearly describe how the resources created and/or the learning achieved by the participants can be of benefit to the educational community at large. If applicable, comment on whether or not this project should be carried out by other teams and if so, how it could be improved.**

The resources we created could be used by the wider English-speaking teaching community in the Montreal area and beyond. What we have developed are projects, outings and activities that could be adapted by other teachers to their own particular needs in their classrooms.

We plan to share our materials in the immediate future with our colleagues in the English Montreal School Boards Outreach network, through online sharing and discussion within a history PLC.

We feel that we have developed the much needed, respectful, usable content that will allow us to work towards answering the calls to action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We would love to continue to improve and refine them with the help of other teachers and members of Indigenous communities.