



# MANOOMIN

LESSONS &  
UNIT PLANS

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Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board  
*Lakefield Public District School*

Trillium Lakelands District School Board  
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## What is the Manoomin Curriculum Project?

The Manoomin curriculum is a Grade 1-12 curriculum that connects with the Ontario elementary and secondary curricula. It was developed under the leadership of Dr. Katie Tremblay in her Indigenous Education course at Trent University. The curriculum was created by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 1 and 2 Teacher Candidates in the 2021-2022 course, with guidance from an advisory circle of Manoomin Knowledge Keeper including Jeff Beaver (Alderville FN), Daemin Whetung (CLFN), Lorenzo Whetung (CLFN), Jack Hoggarth (CLFN) and Heidi Burns (Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies (CSID), Trent University). The curriculum was presented by the teacher candidates to the manoomin Knowledge Keepers in February and March, 2022.

## Why Manoomin?

Manoomin, popularly called wild rice, is a nutritious grain that grows in the waters of the Kawartha Lakes region. The cultivation and harvesting of manoomin is a constitutionally-protected inherent right of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, however recent ecological and social developments have impacted these practices. The rising Trent-Severn Waterway, industrialized agriculture run-off along the lake shores, shoreline development, problems with septic tanks, increased motor boat traffic, poisoning, dredging and the introduction of foreign aquatic plants and fish species into the lakes are some of the main threats against this keystone species. There have also been ongoing conflicts with lakeshore residents over Indigenous rights to Manoomin cultivation, particularly as it relates to boating and recreational uses of the lakes by non-Indigenous residents and cottage owners. The Manoomin curriculum is designed to address the cultural and ecological significance of this keystone species to the local area and address the relevant socio-economic issues associated with this plant.

## How did it evolve?

The Manoomin Curriculum Project was an idea that came up in the planning of the local advocacy organization Community Voices for Manoomin (CVFM) and through conversation with Barbara Wall (Trent University, Indigenous Studies). As a member of CVFM and a faculty member in Trent's Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, Lynne Davis met initially with Dr. Nicole Bell in Trent's School of Education to brainstorm ideas on whether a manoomin curriculum could be developed and who potential community partners might be. At the same time, Lynne reached out informally to Anne Taylor at Curve Lake and Jeff Beaver at Alderville to see whether this was an idea worth pursuing, whether it would duplicate efforts by others, whether there was something more useful that could be done in manoomin education, and who might be potential members of an advisory circle. The feedback from this initial inquiry was positive. We then approached Dr. Katie Tremblay to see whether the development

of the curriculum would mesh with her Indigenous Education class. Dr. Tremblay embraced this project and developed it for use with her students.

In the fall of 2021, the project researchers began with an initial meeting with Manoomin Knowledge Keepers (Jeff Beaver, Daemin Whetung, Heidi Burns) to determine what was important to include in a manoomin curriculum. Once classes began, the students learned about harvesting manoomin first hand from Daemin Whetung of Black Duck Wild Rice. Over the next months, they worked in teams to develop a Grade 1-12 curriculum across different subject areas. They were visited by Manoomin Knowledge Keepers who could give guidance and answer questions: Daemin Whetung, Jeff Beaver, Jack Hoggarth and Heidi Burns. In February and March, 2022, the students made presentations to the Manoomin Knowledge Keepers including Daemin Whetung, Jeff Beaver, Lorenzo Whetung and Heidi Burns.



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## Community Connections

This resource was piloted in local classroom communities in January-June 2023. The researchers contacted the research ethics departments of Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and the Curve Lake First Nation Education Committee. We wanted to ensure that First Nation students had an opportunity to engage with the curriculum and this helped us select school sites that had a high number of self-identified students. These sites included Curve Lake First Nation School (K-3, 4 participants) and Lakefield Public District School (K-8, 3 participants).

The researchers also reached out to Sherry Telford, Indigenous Student Success Teacher, at Trillium Lakelands District School Board to inquire about additional participants for the project. Sherry is a member of Community Voices for Manoomin and we wanted to give an opportunity for teachers working in that area to engage with the curriculum at the Secondary Level. Sherry recommended 4 teacher participants at the high school level who would be interested in participating in the project. The subjects include Grade 9 Science, Food Studies, Grade 11 NBE, and Adult Education.

As per the request of the CLFN Education Committee, we ran a professional development session for the project Participants. This workshop included a focus on the curriculum itself and the context for teaching, including a module on lateral violence and a case study on supporting First Nation students in the classroom. The workshops were held in February and all participants attended at the 3 different sites with the TLDSB participants attending an online workshop.

Participants attended a final Sharing Circle at the end of the project. During this virtual sharing circle participants brought their Medicine Circle Reflection Framework to share the process of using the curriculum in the classroom. They also submitted recommendations for updates/changes to the curriculum itself for the next stage of editing. A summary of the changes was sent to the CLFN Education Committee and the Indigenous Advisory Circle for approval before final publication.



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## Curricular Connections

The manoomin curriculum reflects the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action, specifically #62, which calls upon the government to “make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students” (TRC, 2015, p.11). The curriculum is related to the Ontario education context through the First Nations Metis and Inuit Policy Framework, which asks the Ministry of Education to “provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and that also contributes to the education of school board staff, teachers, and elected trustees” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 7). The curriculum also reflects Article 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in that “Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information” (UNDRIP, 2007, p.14). While other curricula are being developed to address these frameworks, this curriculum is based on a specific focus on manoomin at the local level with opportunities for extensions into other areas of study.

Pedagogically, the curriculum incorporates both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, specifically infusing Anishinaabe learning processes in a variety of contexts. At the high school level the curriculum addresses the content of the existing History courses (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019) with a cross-curricular emphasis on process and understanding. For example, the curriculum incorporates the scientific process and inquiry-based skill development through the exploration of manoomin from an environmental sustainability perspective (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b). It also creates space for arts-based projects and perspectives, drawing upon the critical and creative processes to examine the socio-cultural impact of manoomin (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). While looking at the content through the specific subject lenses, the curriculum infuses Indigenous pedagogies, such as land-based and experiential learning practices, to meet the needs of the students through “observation and doing, learning through authentic experiences and individualized instruction, and learning through enjoyment” (Battiste, 2002, p.18). In this way the manoomin curriculum project permeates the content and context of learning directly in the classroom.



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## Classroom Context and How to Use this Resource

### Language

Indigenous languages are based in oral tradition and thus there will be slightly different spellings of words depending on the Nation and region. This document uses the word “manoomin” throughout, however you may encounter “minoomin” on external resources. These are still appropriate to use with the curriculum.

### Appropriateness

The teaching resources featured in this project reference external materials created by teachers candidates and refined at the discretion of the editorial team. Educators are encouraged to continually assess whether such external materials and/or any given resources are appropriate and responsive to their unique educational environment. This curriculum is designed to align with the Ontario Curriculum at the time which it was written. If teachers are not using this particular curriculum they may need to make adjustments to the lesson plans to fit their learning context.

### Access

This curriculum is a document fixed in time, meaning that relevant external video links may not always be available depending on the host platform. Some school boards may block access to certain websites. Please refer to the appendix at the end of the document which includes all external video sources to find a similar resource to fit the lesson if needed.

### Physical Resources

Some of the lessons mention physical books as resources. When possible, teachers are encouraged to purchase these resources from an Indigenous bookseller, such as GoodMinds.com. If teachers are unable to access the books they are again encouraged to use the links provided in the appendix to find a similar source that fits the lesson.

### Scope

While the scope of this resource is focused on manoomin, all beings are interconnected in our world. Educators are encouraged to continue to investigate the ideas presented in this curriculum beyond the topic presented to further their own learning as they engage with the material. We also encourage educators to look at material in the curriculum outside of their designated grade and/or subject matter area for additional learning opportunities. Students may also make connections and bring their understanding from the curriculum into other learning opportunities later in the school year.

### Inquiry and Action

If students are used to doing more of an inquiry-based approach then teachers can also adapt the lessons to reflect this in the culminating tasks. Teachers can encourage students to take action as a result of their learning by contacting local advocacy groups, such as [Community Voices for Manoomin](#).

### Experiential Learning

Educators should start with experiential learning wherever possible (harvesting manoomin, cooking and tasting manoomin, etc.). Here is a link to the [Mnoominkewin Festival](#) via Black Duck wild rice for more information about an experiential opportunity in the Kawartha Region.

### First Voice

When it is not possible to start with experiential learning, starting with classroom visits from Elders and Knowledge Holders would also be appropriate. Please refer to your school boards' protocols for inviting community members into the classroom. Educators can also use videos of First People's teaching about manoomin to introduce the topic to their students, such as the Trent University Pine Tree Talks which are also used in many of the lessons in the curriculum: [Part 1: Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg and Manoomin](#) and [Part 2: The Ecology of Manoomin](#)



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## Timing and Location

Educators are encouraged to use this resource in September as it aligns with the manoomin harvesting season, however it can be used year-round depending on the context of the classroom. If you aren't teaching in the Kawartha Lakes region, it may be helpful to look at maps of the area so students have a better understanding of harvesting locations.

## Dialogue

Battiste (2013) identifies the importance of respectful dialogue as a basis for arriving at a decolonized educational agenda to support Indigenous knowledge. We ask educators to refrain from using debate as a pedagogical approach with these materials. Instead, we ask you to focus on the expectations of understanding point of view through collaboration and discussion for the purposes of respectful dialogue in the classroom.

## Student Perspectives

Each student will bring their own perspective and lived experience to the classroom. We ask that educators address the needs of their students and maintain a respectful classroom climate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. We also ask that educators address any challenges around Lateral Violence between Indigenous students through a holistic approach of Spirit, Heart, Body, and Mind. For your own learning, [please access the following video from BearPaw Media](#). For teaching resources, you may want to use the book *Ensouling Our Schools: A Universally Designed Framework for Mental Health, Well-Being, and Reconciliation* (Katz and Lamoureux, 2018)

## Working with Food

Issues of food insecurity and food sovereignty may arise when working with this curriculum.

[www.seedchange.com](http://www.seedchange.com) is a website to help guide these discussions. We ask that educators use their professional judgment and knowledge of their students when discussing access to food and challenges of food insecurity. You can purchase manoomin to cook with your students by [visiting this website](#) and watching videos on how to cook manoomin: [Pine Tree Talks Webinar 3: Putting Manoomin on Your Table](#).



## Two-Eyed Seeing

This is a process of weaving Indigenous traditional knowledge within science educational curricula. It is used as a way of meeting an environmental challenge through a deeper understanding informed by both world views (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012). This concept is explicitly addressed in the Grade 11 & 12 Environmental Science lessons, however it is woven throughout the other lessons in the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to investigate this topic on their own if this is not a familiar concept for them, such as [this video from Elder Albert Marshall](#). Students may need more explicit instruction on this topic while accessing the curriculum. Teachers can source other videos that are developmentally appropriate for their students based on the link above.

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## Lesson Description

The resources in this project are divided by grade and subject area and educators are encouraged to explore lessons outside of these divisions. For example, there may be useful material within the same division (i.e. Grades 4-6) or across similar areas of study (i.e. social sciences). This is especially important at the Secondary Level. For example, the content in the Grade 9 History, Language and Arts lesson speak directly to curriculum expectations for HFN 1O, HFL 4E, and HFC 3E (Food and Nutrition, Food and Healthy Living and Food and Culture) however the final assignment will need to be adjusted to fit the course context. Educators will need to consult their ministry curricula to determine how to best incorporate these lessons in a way that aligns with their given expectations.

The chart below gives an overview of the individual lessons by grade and subject area:

Grade	Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Geography	History	Science	Health & PE	Visual Art	Drama	Music	Dance	NDW4M	NBV3C
1/2	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				
3/4		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
5/6	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		
7/8	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						
9/10	✓				✓			✓					
11/12					✓	✓		✓				✓	✓





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By clicking on the grade levels below, you will be directed to Google Drive folders containing resource materials you are welcome to download and adapt to your own practice and Grade 1 - 12 classroom, as appropriate. Over time, these folders will populate with additional lessons and resources as they become available.

## ADVISORY

This resource uses the spelling of Manoomin that is used by the Community Voices for Manoomin Group, as they are the ones who inspired the project. Some of the resources used from this project from different regions outside of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg territory use alternative spellings of Manoomin. Therefore there will be some inconsistencies within the curriculum material itself. Please use these resources with care and respect.



[GRADES 1 - 2](#)

[GRADE 8](#)

[GRADES 3 - 4](#)

[GRADES 9-10](#)

[GRADES 5 - 6](#)

[GRADES 11- 12](#)

[GRADE 7](#)

[List of Resources](#)

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoQG2xvZhBA&t=3983s>

Trent University (2021). *Pine Tree Talks Webinar 2: The Ecology of Manoomin*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMlzd7xtuQI&t=1270s>

Trent University (2021). *Pine Tree Talks Webinar 3: Putting Manoomin on Your Table*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6YXP4mYD4U&t=1s>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: *Calls to Action* (2015).  
[http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)