

# **THE HERITAGE MINUTE: INSPIRING VIDEOMAKERS**

Carol White, Ontario

## **INTENDED GRADE/SUBJECT AREA**

Grades 7 and 8 History, Geography, the Arts, Science and Technology

## **CONCEPTS**

- Cultural and heritage awareness and appreciation, media techniques, teamwork

## **INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES**

Students will:

- develop an understanding and appreciation of the rich heritage of Canada;
- work cooperatively to write and produce a video presentation;
- develop an understanding of media techniques, such as storyboarding, animation, editing video, titling video.

## **RECOMMENDED TIME FRAME**

Six weeks

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

When our school decided to participate in our region's first Heritage Fair, a special Heritage Unit was developed to provide the entire Intermediate Division of the school with an opportunity to foster their heritage backgrounds.

Students were allowed to participate in a variety of activities which included: researching, designing and creating a heritage quilt representing their local community; researching, drawing and tooling copper embossed pictures of local landmarks; researching and producing a heritage website highlighting the history and important landmarks of their local community; creating individual projects such as homemade dolls, quilts or models to represent part of their personal heritage or that of their community.

Twenty students were given the opportunity to produce a Heritage Moment with one of the creative directors of the CRB Foundation's Heritage Minutes, Robert Scully. The activity described was created to give those students an opportunity to learn about the rudiments of making videos before they created their own moment.

## **ACTIVITY**

A grant from our Student Council enabled us to hire an expert to teach us the video techniques we needed. In the first stage of the project, students brainstormed ideas about the nature of the project and its format. The students decided not to centre on the history of their community but to celebrate the heritage of Canada. Their production would include a combination of live performances and animation, with some segments combining the two. The topics to be included were selected by the

whole group. They included: the first settlers—the Aboriginal Peoples, the French and the English; the formation of the dominion of Canada; and Canada’s expansion and growth.

Smaller groups then took each topic, researched it, and decided how it should be presented. Whole group consensus was sought to ensure continuity and clarity. Smaller groups then prepared storyboards. Dialogue, scenery sound effects and other special effects were part of these storyboards. After the final full group approval and synthesis of the storyboard, production began.

The process of making the video was important to us so one member of our group taped the work in progress as a record of our efforts. Groups were set up to produce the scenery. Extra students were approached to help with the artwork. Actors and voices for the animation were chosen and parts were practiced. Cue cards were produced for actor prompting. Studio time was arranged at a local school set up with video cameras, a toaster and editing suite. (Senior secondary students can be used as advisors.) Large blocks of time allowed us to practice using the technology.

Finally, we were ready to videotape our scenes. The toaster enabled us to add sound effects as we taped.

After the taping was completed, a smaller group, with the help of our expert, completed the arduous task of editing and adding transitions. An outtake of all the group’s funny errors and learning experiences was also compiled as a permanent memory of the exacting, yet rewarding work that goes into video production.

Parents were enlisted to drive the students to and from the video studio and to collect costumes. To acknowledge their contributions, we held a private screening of both this video and our Heritage Moment. Thank you notes and screening invitations were also extended to our expert, other teachers who helped in supervision, the host school that loaned us their video equipment, and to Fort Henry as the generous host for the Heritage Moment.

The video was entered into the Regional Heritage Fair. The students formulated questions they thought might be asked of them and took turns responding. Their diligence paid off. Their project was one of the fifteen chosen to represent Ontario at The CRB National Heritage Fair.

## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES**

- Expertise in video production and editing
- Video cameras, toaster, editing suite
- Research material about Canada
- Bristol board, construction paper, paints, etc.

### **About the Educator**

Carol White brings Canadian history to life for her grade 8 students through extensive use of simulations, multi-media and innovative teaching methods. She and

her class are very active in the CRB Foundation's Heritage Fairs and they have participated in the production of a Heritage Minute. With a grant from their Student Council, they produced their own video documenting important moments in Canadian history. Carol's students enjoy exploring and sharing stories of the past through illustration, videos, models, dramatic presentations, overnight field trips and computer programs.

They learn about conflict and conflict resolution through a unique six-week unit that involves an overnight visit to Kingston's Old Fort Henry. Carol's immigration simulation is an example of her student-centred teaching philosophy. The activity, *Utopia, Why Not?* has students study the basic concepts of culture in Canada and other parts of the world and then apply their skills to creating their own perfect world. Carol has contributed curriculum to schools, boards and Ministries and has just completed a local unit on Molly Brant, an honoured aboriginal woman who played a prominent role in Kingston's history.