
TOOLS FOR TEACHING LIFE NARRATIVES

Indigenous Skills in the Classroom



Constance Lavoie, Professor, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Patricia-Anne Blanchet, Lecturer, Université de Sherbrooke

To cite this article >

Lavoie, C. and Blanchet, P.-A. (2019). *Tools for Teaching Life Narratives: Indigenous Skills in the Classroom*.

Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, 3, p. 22-25.

Background

The life narrative is an oral genre and dialogical teaching practice which involves taking a retrospective look at an experience allowing both the narrator and his interlocutors to reflect, inform, describe, feel the present or understand the future by a reflexive return on the past. (Lavoie & Blanchet, 2017, p. 206)

Recognized as one of the oldest forms of communication, life narratives form the core of the oral tradition in First Nations. In Indigenous communities, the elders tell the younger ones the story of their lives in order to transmit, over the generations, values, beliefs, knowledge, skills,

a collective memory (Mac Lean & Wason-Ellam, 2006). Life narratives thus play an essential role in keeping cultures alive (Unesco, 2014). Seen as an essential practice in the education of children, the educational potential of life narratives has, in recent years, attracted increasing attention for research in educational sciences (Archibald, 2008; Billy, 2015).

Educational potential of life narratives

At the ministerial level, life narratives are part of the oral genres to experiment from the first cycle of elementary onwards for the practical application of speaking and listening (MELS, 2006). Used in class, it contributes to the development of active listening (listening
