

Bringing Métis Children's Literature to Life—Dancing in My Bones

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Overview of Story: *Dancing in My Bones*, the sequel to *Fiddle Dancer*, returns us to the story of a young boy, Nolin, as he continues to discover his Métis heritage. *Dancing in My Bones* will take you on a journey to discover Moushoom's first moose hunt, red lipstick kisses, Uncle Bunny's fiddling, and the return of the "Bannock Jig." But most importantly, by the end of the story, you might feel like you have dancing in your bones!

Themes in this book:

- Mentorship from grandparent/ways of learning
- Family/love/kinship/joking
- Learning new things/doubt/confidence
- Dance/jigging
- Music/fiddle/spoons
- Food
- Clothing/sash
- Life cycle (birth to Elder)
- Saskatchewan geography
- Survival/winter
- Métis ways: Hunting/praying/New Year's celebration/beadwork

Possible Curriculum connections:

Language Arts

- Compose and Create: Procedural Writing
- Comprehensions strategies: making connections
- Onomatopoeia* (squeak, squawk)

Science

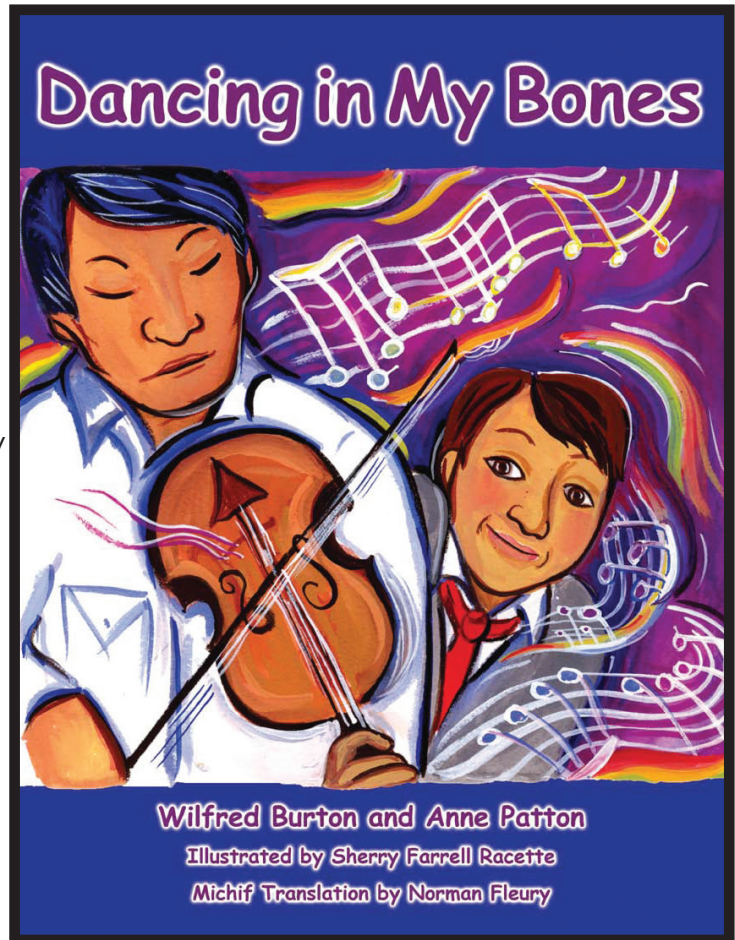
- Temperatures
- Interdependence of human and animal

Social Studies

- Culture and traditions
- Worldview (relationship with land)
- Family

Health/Physical Education

- Nutrition: eating healthy food



*Onomatopoeia is the naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it



Procedural Writing Lesson:

Before Reading: Introduce the story, *Dancing In My Bones*, the sequel to *Fiddle Dancer*. If reading this book after *Fiddle Dancer*, the students will have ample **background knowledge** and context to build on their understanding of Métis culture. Colour copy the following pages (see images 1-5 on the following pages): 1) Nolin and Moushoom driving, 2) the meal-soup pot, 3) Uncle bunny playing the fiddle, 4) the aunties kissing Nolin and 5) mom hugging Nolin. Place students in groups. Give each group an illustration. In small groups or pairs have the students take turns **making connections** to the illustration (you may want to laminate them to use them in the future or to post them on the wall for continued discussions).

Suggested Connections:

1. Make a connection to a time when you were out driving some place or a time when you went on a trip with a grandparent (or older person special in your life).
2. Make a connection to your favourite meals or meals that are a tradition in your family.
3. Make a connection to a dance you have gone to such as a wedding or a school dance or maybe to an instrument you play or would like to play.
4. Make a connection to things you really dislike.
5. Make a connection to those you love and to your favourite things they do for you to make you feel loved.

After each student has had a turn with one card, pass the illustration on to the next group, discuss and pass on until the students have had a chance to make connections to all or some of the images (as time allows).













During Reading: While reading, stop three or four times and have the students think about the connections posed in the pre-reading activity and see if they can make additional **connections** (Turn and Talk strategy).

After Reading: Use the pre-reading “connections” prompts as a writing activity. Have them choose one and write about it (a trip or a great meal, etc). The purpose of this writing is to **recount** an experience.

Graphic Organizer for Recount Writing					
1. Setting or Introduction:					
<u>Who</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Why</u>	<u>How</u>
2. Events: List important events in order.					
<u>Event #1</u>	<u>Event #2</u>	<u>Event #3</u>			
3. Concluding Statement: State an evaluative comment or significance of the event.					

Additional Post-Reading Lessons for *Dancing In My Bones*:

Balanced Diet Lesson:

Part 1: After reading *Dancing In My Bones*, brainstorm all the foods Nolin ate (moose meat, *tourtière*, mashed potatoes, gravy, *lii beignes*, and pie). After listing the foods, pose the question: Did Nolin eat a balanced meal? Use the Canadian Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Guide (online version available) to create your argument. Discuss (You will find that Nolin didn't have the required servings of each category for his meal). The students may not know the ingredients used for Nolin's meal so you may have to read the recipes in the back of the books.

Part 2: Add to Nolin's meal to make it balanced. Using the Food Guide, have students cut out pictures from magazines, AND/OR write a list AND/OR draw on a paper plate the ideal meal for Nolin.

Part 3: Discuss likes/dislikes in food. Make a plan on how one can eat better.

Part 4: Discuss the choices everyone made and evaluate whether or not they comprise a balanced meal.

Canadian Food Guide: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/view_eatwell_vue_bienmang-eng.pdf
 Indigenous Peoples Food Guide: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/fnim-pnim/index-eng.php>

Jigging Lesson:

Refer to the Dance unit in *Bringing Métis Literature to Life* for a logical post-reading activity for *Dancing In My Bones*.

