

TURNING TABLES



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TURNING TABLES

Directed by Chrisann Hessing

2017 | Canada | 16 min

TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide has been designed to help teachers and students enrich their experience of *Turning Tables*, by providing support in the form of questions and activities. There are a range of questions that will help teachers frame discussions with their class, activities for before, and after viewing the film, and some weblinks that provide starting points for further research or discussion.

The Film

Powwow step DJ Joshua DePerry, a.k.a. Classic Roots, integrates the sounds of his Anishinaabe heritage with techno and house music, bringing a new sound and skills set to Indigenous youth. Redefining what it means to be urban and Indigenous, he's preparing to start the next chapter of his life as an artist and educator in the world's techno capital: Berlin.

The Filmmaker

Chrisann Hessing is a documentary filmmaker and digital media producer based in Toronto. Her film *The Good Fight* was an official selection at the 2016 Canadian Diversity Film Festival and was also screened nationwide on VisionTV. Chrisann was one of eight Canadian participants in the Corus Diverse Voices fellowship through Hot Docs and was one of 20 emerging Canadian filmmakers selected for RIDM's Talent Lab. Her films focus on women's issues, human rights, and culture and tradition.

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VIEWING THE FILM WITH STUDENTS

The following three sub-sections are intended to provide you with a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing and Post-Viewing activities. They are followed by a set of questions based upon the film's larger thematic domains, some follow-up questions and quotations, sample curricular outcomes and a page of weblinks for further investigation.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Have the students form small groups and examine the *Urban Indian* photo series created by Kainai Nation artist Terrance Houle (<https://vimeo.com/> Type "Terrance Houle Walk-Through" into the search function of the website). Ask each group to discuss the following prompt: Why has the artist dressed himself in powwow regalia to take part in everyday activities such as commuting, working at the office, grocery shopping and taking a bath? Tell each group to write down their answer and keep it on hand so they can use it in a Post-Viewing Activity.

Watch the film's trailer on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/> Type in "Turning Tables film trailer" into the search engine of the website). As they watch the trailer, ask students to make a list of all the themes or issues they predict may emerge in the film. Use the following prompts to get students started: What is the subject of this film? Whose stories are told in this film? What emotions will this film elicit in viewers? Have students keep their list of predictions so they can use it in a Post-Viewing Activity.

Reproduce some of the Quotations to Explore from this guide on large pieces of paper. Distribute them to students. Using these quotations, ask students to predict what they think the film is about.

As a class, have students brainstorm what they already know about pre-colonial and post-colonial Indigenous music and dance. After the brainstorming session, engage students in a large-group discussion guided by the following prompts: How would some of the negative effects of colonization—such as loss of language, criminalization of ceremonies and confinement to reserves—have changed Indigenous music and dance? In what ways would cross-cultural sharing with settler cultures have had positive effects on Indigenous music and dance?

Viewing Activities

Have students complete the PBS viewing guide on documentaries (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/docs/Copies%20of%20Viewing%20Guide.pdf>). Students will revisit their completed documents as a Post-Viewing Activity.

As they watch, have students create a quick mind map and jot down any connections they see between Classic Roots and his art forms (music and dance) and Indigenous issues of identity, relationships, sovereignty and challenges. After the film, students can use the material in the mind map to inform the Post-Viewing discussion.

Have students jot down three to five ideas for discussion, or questions that the film raises in their minds. As an Extension and/or Post-Viewing Activity, students can enter their questions into an online response or polling system and can vote on the questions or issues they would like to explore in further detail. Encourage students to use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

As they watch, have students paraphrase one quotation from the film that they feel is especially interesting or inspiring. After the film, have students share the quotation they documented and why this quotation stood out for them.

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask students to gather in the same small groups they were in when they viewed the Terrance Houle *Urban Indian* photos. Do they still agree with their original answer to the prompt? Do they have anything more to add? How has the film deepened or changed their understanding of Terrance Houle's artworks and the point he is trying to make?

Ask students if the predictions they made using the trailer in the Pre-Viewing Activity were correct. Have them give specific evidence from the film—images, ideas or dialogue—that supports or disproves their prediction.

Have students return to the mind map they created during the Viewing Activities. Ask them to share the most surprising or emotionally affecting thing they learned about Indigenous identity, relationships, sovereignty and challenges as represented in the film. Ask them to share a story from their own lives that also relates to identity, relationships, sovereignty and challenges, and share how they address those challenges through their own artistic, cultural, sporting or other activity choices. Students can choose to share the story orally or by drawing a page from a graphic novel.

Ask students to create a "reflection report" on the film. The reflection report should contain art and writing, and should document their first-person, critical reflection on the film and the subject of the film.

Have students participate in a Socratic discussion on the film. Guidelines for Socratic discussions can be found here: <http://www.authenticeducation.org/documents/WhatSeminar04.pdf>

Have a large-group discussion guided by student questions written during the Viewing Activity.

Ask students to revisit the PBS viewing guide on documentaries that they completed during the Viewing Activity. Do they think the storytelling techniques used in the film are effective? Do they think the information sources contained in the film are reliable and trustworthy? Why do the filmmakers choose certain images, for example, shots of the pines, shots of the roadblocks and media footage?

Have students complete an exit note. The exit note should contain one idea that demonstrates what they learned from the film, as well as one question that they still have about the topic.

WEBSITES AND ONLINE RESOURCES

About the Film

Website: <https://www.turningtablesdoc.com>

Facebook: <https://p.facebook.com/turningtablesdoc>

About the Filmmaker

Twitter: @Chrisannn20

Instagram: @Chrisannn20

About Classic Roots

Website: <https://www.classic-roots.com>

Facebook: @OfficialClassicRoots

Twitter: @Classic_Roots

Instagram: @classicroots

Additional Resources

San Francisco KALW: The November 8, 2018, radio segment, "How Are Filmmakers Bringing Authentic Representation of Native People to the Screen?," features *Turning Tables* director Chrisann Hessing, along with other filmmakers whose films explore Indigenous culture and experiences. <https://www.kalw.org/> Type the name of the segment into the search engine of the website.

CBC Arts: This July 21, 2017, article, "DJ Classic Roots on Playing NAIG: 'A Guy Like Me Can Do Something and Make a Difference,'" discusses Joshua DePerry's journey to performing at the 2017 North American Indigenous Games. <https://www.cbc.ca/arts/> Type the name of the article into the search engine of the website.

The Canadian Encyclopedia: The encyclopedia's entry on Powwows in Canada explains the history of powwows, what happens during a powwow and general information on dances, regalia and powwow food. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/> Type "Powwows in Canada" into the search engine of the website.

The Canadian Encyclopedia: The encyclopedia's entry on Powwow Dances explains dance categories and styles for both men and women, with plenty of photos and videos. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/> Type "Powwow Dances" into the search engine of the website.

The Canadian Encyclopedia: The encyclopedia's entry on History of Powwows details the Canadian government's prohibition on Indigenous dances and the cultural revival that has taken place in recent decades. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/> Type "History of Powwows" into the search engine of the website.

The Canadian Encyclopedia: The encyclopedia's entry on Indigenous Regalia details the effects of colonization on Indigenous dress, and the movement to reclaim regalia that began with Indigenous rights activism in the 1960s, which still plays a part in sovereignty and identity today. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/> Type "Indigenous Regalia" into the search engine of the website.

The Canadian Encyclopedia: The encyclopedia's entry on Music of Indigenous Peoples in Canada explains traditional and contemporary music, and what organizations and institutions helped support Indigenous musicians and music genres. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/> Type "Music of Indigenous Peoples in Canada" into the search engine and click on the first result in the list.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the issues or themes explored in this film and discuss what this film made you think/realize about that issue or theme.

Questions for Pre-Viewing or Post-Viewing Activities

What are the issues and themes explored in this film?

Why do you think the filmmaker chose to prioritize the personal experiences of Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots in this film? How would the film change if it did not include these personal experiences and reflections, and was instead based on impersonal or abstract research?

In the film, a connection is made between the music of Classic Roots and the work his father once did as a DJ. In what ways does the relationship between DePerry and his father illustrate the importance of creating and maintaining strong families? What effect did the historical prohibition on Indigenous music and dance and other aspects of colonialism have on Indigenous families in Canada?

In the film, Classic Roots says that Indigenous people need to use their regalia to "heal" themselves. What does he mean by this? How might the reclamation and continuing evolution of Indigenous artistic traditions relate to the process of decolonization? What does decolonization have to do with healing? What does decolonization have to do with reconciliation?

Before viewing this film, did the artistic traditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada play a large part in your life? If yes, why? If no, why not? Will this change now that you have seen this film? In what way?

What did the film reveal to you that you did not know before? What did it show you that you had not seen or heard before?

Do you think this film will inspire people to learn more about Indigenous artistic traditions and cultural reclamation movements? Why or why not?

In the film, Classic Roots says he was "hanging around with the wrong people," blacked out and ended up in a jail cell, after which he made the decision to stop drinking and live his life differently. How might this decision connect to his sense of identity? How might it relate to his relationships? How does Joshua's experience illustrate the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada today?

One of Joshua DePerry's mentors in his home community tells him when he comes home to work with youth in the community that he is completing a "cycle." This comment reflects the teachings of the medicine wheel, an Indigenous cultural framework that teaches human beings about balance, connection and the importance of change. What cultural frameworks do you have that teach you how to live your life in a good way?

QUOTATIONS FROM THE FILM TO EXPLORE

1. *"It just gives me the reminder of who I am and where I come from."* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots
2. *"Techno is quite new to this community."* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots
3. *"People look up to you. Everyone talks about you."*
Unidentified community member, Long Lake 58
First Nation
4. *"It's making yourself uncomfortable—that's what you have to do. That's how you actually experience growth."*
Unidentified studio collaborator
5. *"Growing up, I was taught to respect the regalia. You've gotta understand the history and learn to heal yourself and love yourself with that regalia."* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots
6. *"As an Indigenous person, I feel that's important—to show that we're still here."* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots
7. *"In my teen days, I was just another guy who dreamed so much. But it can't go no where without leadership around"* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots
8. *If you take care of your mind, body, heart and spirit, you can be successful at anything."* Ron Kanutski
9. *"You've always stayed connected to your roots. And you're giving back to the young people. And that makes this whole cycle complete."* Ron Kanutski
10. *"I'm going to Berlin because I really want to create something new"* Joshua DePerry/Classic Roots

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: INDOMITABLE

Watch the music video "Indomitable" by DJ Shub on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/> Type "DJ Shub Indomitable" into the search engine of the website). In the video, Joshua DePerry plays a fancy dancer who lives in the city and works in an office, travelling to a reserve community to take part in a powwow on the weekend.

Research the rise of the music genre called "powwow step" using mainstream media and alternative media. Evaluate the credibility of all the sources you use. Using your research, create a glossary of terms that relate to DJ Shub's video—including Joshua DePerry's central role in the video—as well as the music of Joshua DePerry when he is performing as Classic Roots. To write the glossary, you need to identify the terms that you think need to go into the glossary. Then you need to create definitions or summaries for these terms. Format the glossary in alphabetical order and use a design that makes the glossary easy to read (e.g., bullets or spacing). Your glossary of terms can be created as a long list in hard copy (paper) or as a one-word-per-slide PowerPoint presentation. The final product should explain the historical and cultural importance of powwow step.

Your glossary of terms should, through its words and definitions, touch upon the following points:

- The role powwow step plays in Indigenous identity in urban and on-reserve communities
- The connection between powwow step and evolving relationships among Indigenous peoples and settler cultures
- The challenges faced by Indigenous peoples living in urban environments
- The connection between Indigenous sovereignty and this genre of music

Make sure to include the word "indomitable" in your glossary of terms and explain how it relates to Indigenous peoples and communities today.

ACTIVITY RUBRIC: INDOMITABLE

Knowledge and Understanding

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Knowledge of facts	Demonstrates limited knowledge of facts	Demonstrates some knowledge of facts	Demonstrates considerable knowledge of facts	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of facts	/5
Understanding of concepts	Demonstrates limited understanding of concepts	Demonstrates some understanding of concepts	Demonstrates considerable understanding of concepts	Demonstrates considerable understanding of concepts	/5

Thinking and Inquiry

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Inquiry skills (e.g., formulating questions, planning, selecting strategies and resources, analyzing and interpreting information, forming conclusions)	Applies few of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies some of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies most of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies all or almost all the skills involved in an inquiry process	/5

Application

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Making connections (e.g., between personal experiences and Indigenous issues, between Indigenous issues and other subjects, between the subjects studied and the world outside school)	Makes connections with limited effectiveness	Makes connections with some effectiveness	Makes connections with considerable effectiveness	Makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness	/5

Communication

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Communication of information and ideas	Communicates relevant information and ideas with limited clarity	Communicates relevant information and ideas with some clarity	Communicates relevant information and ideas with clarity	Communicates relevant information and ideas with clarity and insight	/5

Comments:

Total ____ /25 = ____ /100

EXAMPLES OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

COURSE	OVERALL EXPECTATIONS
Grade 7 & 8 Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a wide range of print and electronic resources. make revisions to improve the content, clarity and interest of their written work, using a variety of strategies.
Grade 8 History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assess the impact that differences in legal status and in the distribution of rights and privileges had on various groups and individuals in Canada between 1850 and 1890.
Grade 9–12 Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct research to gather reliable information relating to specific music, musicians and the musical opinions of others, and describe the impact this information has had on their own opinions or assessments. demonstrate an understanding of the origins and development of some musical forms. gather information from a range of reliable sources on music history, composers and musicians, technical and/or aesthetic criticism and audience responses, and analyze, critique and reflect on the information with increasing insight to enhance their critical judgement and ongoing interpretation of music. analyze the impact of significant individuals or groups from a variety of cultures or communities on various genres of traditional, commercial and/or art music.
Grade 9 & 10 English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate in a clear, coherent manner appropriate to the purpose, subject matter and intended audience. locate and select information to support ideas for writing, using several different strategies and print, electronic and other resources, as appropriate. establish an identifiable voice in their writing, modifying language and tone to suit the form, audience and purpose for writing. revise drafts to improve the content, organization, clarity and style of their written work, using a variety of teacher-modelled strategies.
Grade 11 & 12 English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate in a clear, coherent manner, using a structure and style effective for the purpose, subject matter and intended audience. locate and select information to effectively support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic and other resources, as appropriate. determine whether the ideas and information gathered are accurate and complete, interesting and effectively meet the requirements of the writing task. establish a distinctive voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skillfully and effectively to suit the form, audience and purpose for writing.
Grade 9–12 Native Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how Canadian government policies have affected Aboriginal identity in the 20th and 21st centuries. identify examples of the growing activism of Aboriginal groups in the 20th and 21st centuries. explain why the recognition of Aboriginal identity is an important component of understanding Canada's identity. demonstrate understanding of the importance of self-determination to the lives of Aboriginal peoples. describe how traditional Aboriginal values are maintained in the 20th and 21st centuries.
Grade 12 Canadian and World Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the impact of technology as an agent of change, and describe ways in which technology could be used to bring about beneficial change in the future. analyze the role of urbanization as an agent of social, economic and environmental change. analyze impacts of population movements on cultural diversity and social interaction in urban areas. analyze factors affecting quality of life in urban environments generally and in selected communities.

Grade 11 & 12 Equity,
Diversity and Social
Justice

- describe the impact of historically important social movements.
- explore topics related to equity and social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research.
- explain how power and privilege operate in various Canadian social, economic and political contexts.
- demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice.
- analyze, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization.
- analyze historical and contemporary equity and social justice issues and the impact of economic and environmental factors on these issues.
- explain how the combination of circumstances and personal qualities and skills resulted in specific individuals' becoming effective agents of change.

The Overall Expectations listed above are from the *Ontario Curriculum*. Complete course descriptions, including all Overall and Specific Expectations can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html>