

Topic:	<b>The Witness Blanket Project</b>
Audience:	UFV students from various departments
Snapshot:	Introduce students to the Witness Blanket (WB), a national monument. The blanket stands to honour the children through acknowledgement of the Indian Residential School era. It is an important symbol of the reconciliation process that creates an entry point for witnesses to contribute further.
Project link:	Consider the impact of the WB in relation to BRP-200.05 – Board

	L.O. 1 – Identify the circumstances of Aboriginal people in relation to residential schools L.O. 2 – Examine the impact of residential school on Aboriginal people and others in Canada L.O. 3 – Envision my personal role in reconciliation
Setting the stage for viewing the Witness Blanket	

#### Understandings

- Historically, the relationship between First Nations and other Canadians have been unequal and damaging
- Today, Canadians have the opportunity to build a new relationship through the reconciliation process
- There needs to be an understanding and acknowledgement of the injustices of the past, and a commitment to build a relationship of mutual understanding to renew relationships between First Nations and other Canadians
- The Witness Blanket's sole purpose: stand in eternal witness to the

Witnesses are called to be the keepers of history when an event of historic significance occurs. Partly because of the oral traditions of Aboriginal peoples, but also to recognize the importance of conducting business, building and maintaining relationships in person and face to face. Through witnessing the event or work that is undertaken is validated and provided legitimacy. The work could not take place without honoured and respected guests to witness it)

- **What is the responsibility of a witness?**

(Those who accept the invitation to bear witness have a responsibility to remember and to take the story forward. Witnesses are asked to store and care for the history they witness and most importantly, to share it with other people when they return home. Many of us didn't experience residential school firsthand, but are able to witness through learning and active participation in the reconciliation process. We share a collective responsibility to make things better. To act. Because if we do nothing, nothing will change)

- **Explain the Significance of A Blanket/The Blanket**

including Friendship Centres, band offices, treatment centres and universities, from across Canada. See <http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/project/> and watch the Witness Blanket Documentary Trailer 2015. See <http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/pieces-of-history/> that explains the individual and collective importance of each piece)

### Suggested viewing activities

- Download the Witness Blanket App

Once downloaded, click on any piece to identify what the piece is and where it is from. Click the description box again to reveal who contributed the piece, sometimes a story, as well as a map that marks the place where the item is from on a map. You can also choose to search a list view to retrieve information on each piece. Both viewing options allow the user to add pieces to their personal collection on the app.

[Itunes witness blanket app](#)

- Questions to ask when analyzing a rt

- What can I see just by looking at this art work?
- How was this art work made?
- When was it made, and what was happening in art and broader history at that time?
- Why did the artist create this work and what is the meaning to them, and to us now?
- How does this art installation make you feel about the fundamental question of justice?

- Answer Reflective questions

Answer the following questions while viewing the installation:

- What are you witnessing?
- How are you impacted as a witness?
- Having witnessed the art changed your view of the value of ethics and morality in your field of study?
- What in your opinion is the greatest controversy of this aspect of Canadian history?
- How will your awareness of this history and art installation positively impact society?
- What is the significance and value to having the UFV host this art installation?
- How did your understanding of Indian residential schools differ before and after the witness blanket visit?
- Describe the importance of the place of learning in this chapter of Canadian history.
- Does the art installation make you want to know more about Indian Residential Schools?

- If you had one story to tell the world about Residential schools what would that be?

Answer the following questions after your viewing:

- How would you feel if someone came and took your child?
- What if that child was you?
- What does it mean to have your cultural identity suppressed?
- How has witnessing this art impacted your understanding of Canadian history?
- As a witness, you now have the responsibility to share what you have witnessed and be a part of the reconciliation process, how will you do this?
- Explain how witnessing can positively influence your chosen field of

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- This award winning documentary reveals Canada's darkest secret - the deliberate extermination of indigenous (Native American) peoples and the theft of their land under the guise of religion. This never before told history as seen through the eyes of this former minister (Kevin Annett) who blew the whistle on his own church, after he learned of thousands of murders in its Indian Residential Schools.  
<https://youtu.be/0brD50DIv5Q>
- 20 minute history of Canada and the Indian Residential School system. To provide historical context and intended as a prequel to the video Murray Sinclair Truth and Reconciliation.  
<https://youtu.be/6-28Z93hCOI>
- Truth and Reconciliation: Stories from Residential School Survivors  
<https://youtu.be/VmjrVfsLRBE>
- 1000 conversations, a website and initiative by the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (a department of the Native Counselling Services of Alberta) and the Legacy of Hope Foundation, supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.  
[http://1000conversations.ca/?page\\_id=46](http://1000conversations.ca/?page_id=46) which includes resources and conversation starters [http://1000conversations.ca/?page\\_id=54](http://1000conversations.ca/?page_id=54)