

Appendix Seven

Educator's Guide

There are many possible discussions and assignments that may unfold following reading this book in a classroom setting. To review the ideas and stories shared in *Water Confidential*, students may gather into groups, either having all groups review the same set of questions or each group is assigned their own specific questions; each group then presents their findings and results back to the class.

Below are some specific ideas for how groups may present ideas based on analysis of the information in the book, or information gathered through research inspired by this book:

- research and write a paragraph, a page, or an essay on a topic or story related to those in *Water Confidential*
- write a newspaper article, or compare how two (or more) existing articles covering a similar water-related issue demonstrate bias or present the same information in different ways
- write a letter to an MP, MLA or municipal councillor describing a current water issue
- create a podcast investigating a news story about water, or sharing personal stories related to water access
- stage a mock trial to sentence those who are at fault for unsafe drinking water

- prepare a presentation for the United Nations

The author Susan Blacklin invites teachers to submit students' work and commits to display all works submitted on her website: susanblacklin.com

Suggested discussion questions/prompts:

1. Do they [the students] perceive a difference between a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) and a Drinking Water Advisory (DWA)?
2. Discuss/compare drinking water regulations to drinking water guidelines or standards. Is it sufficient to meet drinking water guidelines set by government departments such as INAC/Indigenous Services Canada or should drinking water in Canada be required to meet or exceed the WHO standards for drinking water?
3. What would it be like to live under a boil water advisory? How time-consuming is the process of boiling all water used daily, and how much energy does it take? If they use the tap water, how do they feel about the risk and what risks are they facing?
4. Research the First Nations Drinking Water Settlement. Who can apply for compensation? How much compensation would they receive? How would they feel about receiving that amount of money for being under a drinking water advisory for one year or longer continuously? How much money do they feel would be the right amount? Is there a right amount that exists?
5. Do they know anyone who requires kidney dialysis? Do they see a correlation between safe water access issues and disproportionate rates of kidney disease? Are there other chronic health issues that could be related to water issues?
6. What would they do if they were a Health Inspector and learned about a First Nations community like Yellow Quill First Nation and their terrible drinking water?

7. Have there been any recent outbreaks of water-borne disease in Canada? If so, where, what, when, why and who was affected? Who is to blame?
8. How would they feel if they had been in Walkerton or North Battleford at the time of the contaminated drinking water? Would they feel entitled to compensation? Would they want someone else to be punished?
9. Describe what the IBROM means: Integrated Biological Reverse Osmosis Membrane; describe in their own words how the system functions; explain the benefits and/or challenges of the IBROM system.
10. Describe their thoughts about Engineers being responsible for all water treatment infrastructure and Hans's comment: "It is time to start seriously teaching biology at engineering schools".
11. What is the difference between drinking water guidelines and regulations? What would happen if speed limits were speed guidelines that were not legally enforceable?
12. Research the skills and/or roles of board members of an environmentally focused charity.
13. Describe how they would feel if they were the children on the farms who had to travel into the city once a week to have a shower.
14. Research how the media chooses the stories that it covers. Is there a bias? Can they trust media to fairly represent issues?
15. Are there similarities between the effects of the oil sands on Alberta waters, and the effects of diamond mines on Ontario waters?
16. Do they think the Ontario First Nations Technical Services made a reasonable or fair response to the Attawapiskat First Nation when De Beers caused a sewage backup that flooded

the basement floors of several homes? Why or why not?

17. Discuss how they would be able to speak up on a crucial issue like their drinking water if they were invited to speak at the United Nations.
18. Discuss where corporate responsibility, and/or government responsibility begins and ends.
19. How do they feel about CEOs of large companies earning over \$15 million per year? Is this different from athletes or celebrities earning exorbitant salaries?
20. Do oil companies have a responsibility to provide truly effective water treatment systems to all communities impacted by their waste products?
21. What emotion do they feel when reading about communities or governments building more homes or developing real estate instead of first addressing water issues in the community?
22. Research promises politicians made and whether they held to them. Either support or refute the argument that politicians mean what they say and include examples.
23. As much as this book is about the struggle for safe drinking water, it is also about the struggle that is experienced inside a family. Ask students to compare and contrast how these struggles are the same and how they are different.
24. Would they submit a claim if they were affected by a drinking water advisory and could register for it, knowing that registering for it would negate any future claims? Explain their reasoning.
25. How do students feel about the different rules to access the settlement, that what year they were born determines the amount of money to which they may be entitled?
26. Discuss a legacy left by a person they know.

Film “Downstream” and panel discussions:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fc2voopGRKM (1 hour, 24 minutes)

“Downstream” Lesson Plan:

www.safewater.org/operation-water-drop-listings/2016/10/30/downstream-and-crapshoot-lesson-plans

“Downstream” Questions:

<https://www.safewater.org/operation-water-drop-listings/2016/10/29/questions-regarding-the-film-downstream>

Answer Key for “Downstream” Questions:

<https://www.safewater.org/operation-water-drop-listings/2016/10/29/answer-key-for-downstream-questions-for-students-to-answer-while-watching-the-film>

Additional Resources

- Information about long-term drinking water advisories in First Nations communities: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660>
- Information about short-term drinking water advisories in First Nations communities south of 60: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1562856509704/1562856530304>