Generalization
People in a community contribute to change. Aboriginal People adapted to changes in society and worked to evolve and empower their communities.

Rationale
There are many successful and influential Aboriginal People who are empowering role models for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. These individuals demonstrate that many of the stereotypes generated and perpetuated by the media and government are false and misleading. Students have the opportunity to explore a variety of Aboriginal role models and heroes, and to discover how many Aboriginal leaders struggled to provide for their communities in the face of significant cultural and social change.

Objectives
Knowledge
- Recognize that stereotypes and labels are inappropriate and generated from an example representing a small number of Aboriginal People
- Explore the life of an Aboriginal individual and learn about their contributions to their community and Canadian society as a whole

Skills
- Increase knowledge in searching for information on the Internet
- Participate in group and in-class discussion

Attitude
- Learn to value the contributions of Aboriginal People to their communities and society as a whole

Materials
- Aboriginal hero list
- Internet access
- White board or flip chart

Teacher Information
There has been little mention of the successes and contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian society. Thus, many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth are unaware of the contributions that many Aboriginal individuals have made. Mainstream media, texts and education curricula have all largely ignored the successes of many Aboriginal People. The intent of this lesson is to educate students on the variety of roles that successful Aboriginal individuals assume, including successful artists, musicians, politicians, athletes, healers, and business owners to just name a few. Students will learn that Aboriginal People have flourished in a number of activities and have all influenced their communities.
**Introductory Activity**
Have students arrange desks or sit in a circle and begin your discussion by defining a hero or role model. Focus on influential people and positive role models in the students’ own communities. To get students brainstorming, it may be easiest to provide examples, such as the Prime Minister and work down to the Mayor, the Principal etc. Slowly shift the discussion to Aboriginal People and inquire if the students can think of an Aboriginal role model. What qualities does a good role model or leader need to have (courage, determination, excellence etc.)? You may want to write some of these qualities on the board and a list of some of the people the students came up with.

**Main Lesson**
Have students select a partner with whom they will research an Aboriginal person that has contributed to their community. Students should not just focus on the individual, but also on the impact that person has had on their community. How did the community change as a result of this individual’s actions, hard work, and/or contribution? How could other people in the community work to be successful? Students will be allowed to choose from the following list the individual they would like to research (keep in mind that the list is a guideline, there are many Aboriginal heroes and you may want to choose people from their own community). However, make sure students are not all researching the same person, and that as many people off of the list as possible are selected. The following list contains a range of people, from historical to present-day figures:

- Mary Two-Axe Early
- Joseph and Josephine Crowshoe
- Walking Buffalo
- Matthew Coon Combe
- Waneek Horn
- Tom Longboat
- Crowfoot
- Buffy Sainte-Marie
- Allen Sapp
- Tom Jackson
- Susan Aglukark
- Sharon and Shirley Firth
- Elijah Harper

After the students have completed their biographies, have them share what they have learned with the rest of the class. This will ensure that students will recognize that Aboriginal People have contributed and helped change their community in positive ways by accomplishing a variety of different goals. This exercise also allows students to feel confidence that they too can make contributions to their communities.