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Grade Level: 7-12

Magazine Article:
"Living Well Together"
by Aimée Craft

Theme(s):

- First Nations, Inuit, & Metis
- Treaty Knowledge
- Reconciliation

Subject Area(s):

- Social Studies
- History

Lesson Overview: In this lesson students examine the idea of justice as it applies to Treaty interpretations. They explore First Nations and non-First Nations worldviews, recognizing that in the past Canadian law has been used as a tool of dispossession in relation to First Nation peoples, lands, and resources.

Time Required: 2-4 class periods.

Historical Thinking Concept(s):

- Analyze cause and consequence
- Take historical perspectives
- Understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.

Learning Outcomes: Students will...

- Explore how Canadian law and institutions have been used as tools to suppress/oppress First Nations peoples.
- Recognize that First Nations and the Crown had differing worldviews at the time of Treaty-Making.
- Identify the current consequences assimilatory laws have had on First Nations and non-First Nations peoples in Canada.
- Analyze and evaluate historical decisions and propose suggestions for a just future.

Reimagining History: "Righting" Treaty Wrongs

The Lesson Activity

Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?

- Write the question "What is justice?" in the centre of the whiteboard.
- Pass out sticky notes, all the same colour – one to each student. Instruct them to respond.
- Collect the notes and affix them to the board.
- Read student responses and engage in a class discussion. Lead the session by noting the differences in definitions of justice.
- Write a second question on the whiteboard (do not erase the first): "Why is it difficult to define justice?"
- Pass out a different colour of sticky note - one to each student. Instruct them to respond.
- Collect the notes and affix them to the board.
- Read student responses aloud. Invite participation.
- Invite a student/s to come to the board and collect any sticky notes that contain these words:

- Perspective
- View
- Worldview
- Perception
- Viewpoint
- Opinion
- Interpretation
- Understanding
- Or any other term or phrase meaning the same

- Read aloud the collection of sticky notes. Ask: How does one's worldview affect their understanding of justice?
- Guide and assist a class discussion.

Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?

- Read aloud the following excerpt from the article "Living Well Together" (p. 35)

Anishinaabe law tells us that land is not to be owned. Rather, we are in a relationship of respect with the land, with a sense of belonging to the land or "being of the land." Non-Indigenous legal systems, however, are primarily based in ideas of land ownership and possession.
- Ask: Considering these two worldviews/perspectives, how may the concept of justice/fairness be seen differently by each?

Reimagining History: "Righting" Treaty Wrongs (continued)

- Explain how Canadian law has often served as a tool to oppress First Nations and Treaties were oftentimes not implemented in a way that bettered the life of First Nations peoples. Treaty rights - guarantees for a shared nationhood within Canada - became Treaty "wrongs."
- Read the excerpt on page 38:

The law of Canada has been employed as a tool of dispossession in relation to Indigenous peoples, lands, and resources. Indigenous peoples view Treaties not as a fixed set of terms but rather as relationships of respect and reciprocity that are meant to be renewed. The Treaty relationship was meant to evolve over time, based on non-interference and respect for each other and for the land that was shared.

Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?

- Provide students with copies of the magazine and access to the Internet.
- Instruct the students to turn to page 38 in the magazine. You may access the article at: <http://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/politics-law/living-well-together>
- Read aloud the section entitled "Treaty rights and wrongs" that focuses on: the pass system, the reserve system/forced agriculture, Indian Residential Schools, and the Delgamuukw case.
- Invite questions, encourage discussion.
- Hand out BLM 8.1 - one per student.
- Instruct them to complete Sections I and II.
- After sections I and II have been completed, organize a "speed networking" sharing session.
- Students arrange themselves so that each person is sitting across from one other person.
- Instruct students to provide an overview of their research. Time each session at 1-2 minutes.
- Have the students switch 3-5 times, hearing from and sharing with several, if not all, classmates.
- Once the "speed networking" session has concluded, instruct students to complete Section III on the activity sheet.

Materials/Resources:

- Copy/copies of the *Treaties and the Treaty Relationship* issue of *Canada's History* magazine.
- Sticky notes - two different colours
- BLM 8.1 - one per student
- Access to Internet for research

Extension Activity:

- Instruct students to create a pamphlet of essential knowledge regarding First Nation people (history, Treaties, etc.) used a teaching tool for Canadians aimed at reconciliation.

BLM 8.1 Treaty Rights and Wrongs - Activity Sheet

Choose **one** of the following topics. Circle your choice.

1. Pass System
2. Reservation system/forced agriculture
3. Indian Residential Schools
4. *Delgamuukw* case

Using the article "Living Well Together" and the Internet, complete the summary table below:

I. Topic Overview/Summary

How did this event affect First Nations people? In what ways did it affect non-First Nations people?

I. Treaty "right" or "wrong"?

Is this event a Treaty "right" - a positive interpretation/consequence of the Treaty relationship - or a Treaty "wrong" - a negative interpretation/consequence of the Treaty relationship?

III. Reimagining History: "Righting" Treaty Wrongs - Personal Reflection

Imagine if First Nations' perspectives during historic Treaty-Making were recognized and First Nations' perspectives concerning law were validated. How would the present be different?

Imagine a future where the original intent of the Treaties was honoured - what would it look like? What can we do today to ensure this future?



Adaptations for grades 3-6

See "What is a treaty?"

on pages 4 and 5 in the *We Are All Treaty People* issue of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*.

Read: For First Nations people, land is a gift from the Creator. They did not own the land. The Creator gave them teachings on how to respect it and look after it. This would ensure that all Creation would benefit from it. Europeans did not understand this way of thinking. For them, land was not to be shared - it was to be divided up and each part owned by different people.

Minds on

Design a classroom Treaty. Make sure that students have full involvement and investment in its creation. Use it throughout the year as the typical "class rules." Refer to it often as a guide.

Hands on

Purposely break one of the "rules" to be upheld. Have the students explore the idea of interpretation and broken promises. Instruct them to write a personal reflection on how they felt when the classroom Treaty was not honoured. Use the experience as an activator for exploring Treaties, worldview, and broken promises.