

LESSON PLAN - Ecological Viewpoints:  
Connecting with Nature

EALRS: (Reading 3) The student reads from material for a variety of purposes.  
(Communication 1) The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.  
(Communication 2) The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively. (Communication 3)  
The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.  
(Communication 4) The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.

GRADE LEVEL: Secondary

BASIC CONCEPTS: Native peoples' intellectual and experiential insights into the workings of nature and proper human relationships with the natural world.

ORGANIZING GENERALIZATION: Very different societies, living in very different environments and using very different philosophical approaches, have nevertheless evolved similar understandings of their fundamental ties to their natural environment.

CULTURE AREA: Worldwide

TIME PERIOD: Pre-historical to present-day.

BACKGROUND: This lesson provides indisputable evidence of the depth, irreplaceability, and contemporary relevance of traditional Native knowledge. These stories are not only insightful and inspirational but do represent profoundly different notions of humans' relationships with Nature. The rapid and catastrophic degradation of the planetary biosphere has been the main catalyst for a radical reassessment of the power and limits of scientific insight and application. "Parts of Nature and other systems have been shown to interact *synergistically* so that the actions and properties of a system as a whole cannot be predicted on the basis of what is known about its individual components. Thus, while science yields powerful insights into isolated fragments of the world, their sum total is a disconnected, inadequate description of the whole. Ironically, scientists today are faced with the devastating possibility that the whole *is* greater than the sum of its parts." p. xxix

OBJECTIVES:

Knowledge

**Students will:** (Reading 3.3) read for literary experience, (Communication 1.2) listen and observe to gain and interpret information, (Communication 2.2) develop content and ideas, (Communication 2.5) effectively use action, sound, and/or images to support presentations, (Communication 3.1) use language to interact effectively and responsibly with others, and (Communication 4.2) seek and offer feedback.

Skills

**Students will:** read accompanying stories and construct presentation to express understanding of materials or message.

#### Values

**Students will:** read critically to analyze, compare and contrast works of various authors and to understand multiple perspectives and issues of self, others, and world issues, interpret and draw inferences from verbal and non-verbal communication, use a variety of content to convey messages to a chosen audience, communicate message through oral, artistic, graphic and/or multimedia presentation, show awareness of cultural premises, assumptions, and world view in order to effectively communicate cross-culturally, and seek, evaluate, accept, and apply feedback.

**ACTIVITIES:** Students will read the stories included in this lesson (reading these stories aloud in class and defining terms that are difficult would help in the dissemination of this information), a classroom discussion about environmental concerns that we are now facing. The teacher could either copy the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples onto a transparency or pass out copies and ask students to find articles in magazines, newspapers, books, or the Internet that illustrate any one of the working paragraphs. They should do a presentation of their findings, which could be better represented through the various forms listed in the Values section of this lesson.

**EXTENSIONS:** Students should bring their presentations to the larger student body, either through an assembly, another classroom, or by making a gallery of their presentation materials.

**EVALUATION:** Most students will find this lesson timely and relevant to the concerns they have about their environment. Larger or more local projects could be identified for further study. Contact local area tribal representatives for information about their present projects, concerns, or issues they are working on for assistance.

**MATERIALS/ RESOURCES:** from *Wisdom of the Elders: Sacred Native Stories of Nature* by Suzuki & Knudson, -*Indigenous People - Caretakers of All Life* - p. 235 & *Communicating a Sense of the Sacred* -p. 233

Excerpt from UN draft *Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* - Appendix