



Big Idea: First Nations people along the Fraser River lived off the land and stayed in balance with their environment. Of the many food sources in the surrounding area, the white sturgeon was an important and constant source of nourishment. However the use of the white sturgeon was not limited to providing food. Other parts of the fish, from the scutes to their swim bladder, were used by the First Nations people. In this lesson, students will discover the various uses of the white sturgeon by First Nations people and gain an appreciation of how they connected with the environment.

Objectives: Students will...

- learn the several ways First Nations people used the various parts of the white sturgeon
- learn the importance of the white sturgeon for the survival of the First Nations people
- contrast the relationship with the environment of First Nations people and western society

Curricula Links: Social Studies, Science, Language Arts

Suggested Grade Levels: 4-6

Materials:

An object (e.g. coat hanger)
Copies of 'Different Uses of Sturgeon Parts' (Appendix 4.1)

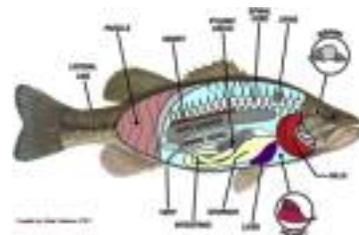
Lesson Four - Historical Uses of the Fraser River Sturgeon

Opening Motivator:

Tell your students that they are going to become 're-inventors', which are inventors of a different sort. Instead of creating something new, they are going to take something that already exists (e.g. coat hanger) and find a new use for it. Challenge your students to find more than one new way to use the item you choose. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Afterwards, discuss the different ideas the students come up with.

Classroom Activity:

- 1) Tell your students that just as they were creative in their ideas for the different uses of the chosen item (e.g. coat hanger), the First Nations people were creative in their uses of the different parts of a sturgeon. They used different parts of the sturgeon in various ways to help with their survival.
- 2) Provide the list of sturgeon parts and their uses (Appendix 4.1) to your students. As a class, read over the information and discuss any words or explanations that the students might not understand.



Teacher Tip: A different approach to learn the facts is to use the 'Inside Outside Circle' method. Cut up the "Different Uses of Sturgeon Parts" chart into individual facts. Ask students to pair up and assign themselves as #1 or #2. Provide one fact for each pair of students. Instruct students to carefully read the fact and ensure that they understand it. Then, ask your students to form two circles, with one circle inside the other circle, i.e. #1's on the inside and #2's on the outside. Partners should be facing each other. Ask the pairs of students to repeat their fact to each other. Then, direct one of the circles to move one spot in a clockwise direction. Students should now be facing a different student - ask the students to explain their fact to each other. Repeat the rotation of the circle until the original partners match up again.

3) Inform your students that they will write the information that is in point form on the "Different Uses of Sturgeon Parts" chart into a series of paragraphs. Younger students who have not yet developed the skill of writing paragraphs may write one long paragraph.

4) Provide time in class to complete this writing assignment. As students write the information into sentences, conference with them. After reading a small selection of their work, provide both positive and constructive feedback.

Conclusion and Reflections:

First Nations people have a special relationship with their environment and demonstrate tremendous respect for it. They believe that human beings are part of nature, not separate from it and that everyone has a responsibility for protecting the Earth and its creatures. How does the above lesson demonstrate the First Nations people's relationship and respect for the environment? How does their viewpoint differ from the western view of the environment?

Extension Ideas:

1) Research other parts of our environment that were used by the First Nations people along the Fraser River. How were they used by the First Nations people for their survival?

2) The sturgeon was the main idea of various First Nations legends, stories, and dances. Provide examples of these works of art and have the students create their own legend.

3) Ask students to draw a picture of a sturgeon and label the exterior anatomy.

Web Link:

1) Wikipedia Information Site - this online encyclopedia has information that explains what isinglass is and how it is extracted from fish. Go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturgeon>

Appendix 4.1 - Different Uses of Sturgeon Parts

| Sturgeon Part | Use by First Nations People |
|--|---|
| Oil | Medicinal purposes (heal mosquito bites) |
| | Lamp oil |
| | Tan / soften animal hides |
| | Mosquito repellent |
| Scutes | Needles for sewing |
| | Spearheads |
| | Piercing tools |
| | Arrowheads |
| Stomach lining | Drum coverings |
| | |
| Swim bladder | Dried, then filled with beads to make a children's rattle |
| | Pouch to store preserved food |
| | |
| Isinglass from the swim bladder | Glue for tools and pottery |
| | Ingredient in paint |
| | Waterproofing material |
| | Seal cracks in canoes |
| Meat | Food |
| | Traded for other goods |
| | |
| Fat | Boiled to make glue for bows and canoes |