Liah Van Veen

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 7	Subject: Cross Curricuar Social Studies, Science, ELA	Date: 2026

Topic: Learning Through Two Eyes: Understanding Local Ecosystems Through Indigenous and Western Knowledge

Lesson Focus: How can learning from multiple ways of knowing help us better understand and care for the world around us?

First Peoples Principle of Learning:
Learning is holistic, reflexive, experiential, and relational.
This principle is central to Two-Eyed Seeing because both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems are best understood through experience, observation, reflection, and relationships. Indigenous knowledge is often developed through generations of observation, storytelling, community teachings, and relationships with the land. Students will not simply learn about Two-Eyed Seeing; they will experience it through observation, discussion, inquiry, and reflection. By examining a local ecosystem through multiple perspectives, students will recognize that learning occurs through relationships with people, place, and community rather than through isolated facts alone.

Materials Needed:

Teacher Materials

- **Computer, Smart Board and whiteboard**
- **Presentation slides reviewing Two-Eyed Seeing**
- **Scientific graph showing seasonal temperature changes**
- **Indigenous seasonal calendar from a local Nation (or comparable local Indigenous resource)**
- **Markers**
- **Teacher observation checklist and exit slip handout**

Student Materials

- **Ecosystem Investigation worksheet**
- **Reflection/Exit Slip handout**
- **Pencils or pens**
- **Clipboards (if completing the outdoor observation activity)**
- **Observation recording sheet**

Optional Outdoor Learning Materials

- **Field journals or notebooks**
- **Measuring tools (thermometer, ruler, magnifying glass, etc.) for students exploring observations through a Western scientific lens**
- **Local plant, wildlife, or ecosystem identification guides**

Community Resources (if available)

- **Local Indigenous seasonal calendar, ecological knowledge resources, or land-based learning materials**
- **Information about local Nations and traditional territories**

Learning Intentions:
Students will:

- **Understand the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk) as described by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall.**
- **Explore how Indigenous and Western knowledge systems contribute different but equally valuable understandings of the natural world.**
- **Recognize that knowledge is shaped by culture, relationships, experience, and purpose.**
- **Develop respect for multiple ways of knowing and learning.**
- **Apply Two-Eyed Seeing to a local environmental or community issue.**
- **Reflect on how Two-Eyed Seeing supports reconciliation and respectful relationships.**

Assumed Prior Knowledge:
Students have previously:

- **Viewed and discussed 2019 Global Symposium: Albert Marshall, Two-Eyed Seeing (36:18) and have a foundational understanding of the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk).**
- **Explored the idea that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems may offer different perspectives and ways of understanding the world.**
- **Participated in classroom discussions related to reconciliation, Indigenous perspectives, and respect for diverse ways of knowing.**
- **Practiced collaborative discussion skills, including active listening, sharing ideas respectfully, and considering multiple viewpoints.**
- **Developed basic observation and inquiry skills through previous science and social studies investigations.**
- **Have some familiarity with local ecosystems and environmental issues within their community.**

Students may still require support in understanding the distinction between comparing knowledge systems and recognizing how they can work together through Two-Eyed Seeing. Students may also need guidance in discussing Indigenous knowledge respectfully and avoiding deficit-based thinking or assumptions about one knowledge system being superior to another.

Big Ideas, Core Competencies and Curricular Competencies:

Big Ideas
Science 7

- **Evolution by natural selection provides an explanation for the diversity and survival of living things.**

Social Studies 7

- **Religious and cultural practices that emerged during this period have endured and continue to influence people.**

English Language Arts 7

- **Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking.**

Curricular Competencies

Science 7

- **Observe and identify questions about the natural world.**
- **Experience and interpret the local environment.**
- **Analyze and apply scientific ideas.**

Social Studies 7

- **Make ethical judgments about past events, decisions, or actions, and assess the limitations of drawing direct lessons from the past (ethical judgment)**
- **Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to — ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions**

ELA 7

- **Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking**
- **Access information and ideas for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources and evaluate their relevance, accuracy, and reliability.**
- **Recognize the validity of First Peoples oral tradition for a range of purposes**

Content

Science 7

- **First Peoples knowledge of changes in biodiversity over time**
- **Evidence of climate change over geological time and the recent impacts of humas: Physical records and local First Peoples knowledge of climate change**

Social Studies 7

- **Origins, core beliefs, narratives, practices, and influences of religions, including at least one indigenous to the Americas**

Success Criteria

I can:

- **Explain Two-Eyed Seeing in my own words.**
- **Identify strengths of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.**
- **Respectfully discuss different perspectives.**
- **Describe how Two-Eyed Seeing can support reconciliation.**
- **Make connections between land, relationships, and learning.**
- **Explain why multiple perspectives can deepen understanding.**

Lesson:
Introduction

Hook (10 Minutes)
Display two images:
1. **A scientific graph showing seasonal temperature changes.**
2. **An Indigenous seasonal calendar from a local Nation.**

Before showing the images, present students with the following scenario:
Imagine two people standing beside the same river. One is a scientist collecting water temperature data. The other is an Elder who has observed that river throughout their lifetime and knows its seasonal patterns through stories, language, and experience.
Who knows the river better?
Have students discuss their thoughts with a partner and then share with the class.

Next, display the graph and seasonal calendar.
Ask:
- **What information does each image provide?**
- **What can we learn from each?**
- **Which one is more valuable?**
- **What might we miss if we only used one source of knowledge?**

Introduce the idea that both perspectives provide valuable knowledge and can work together through Two-Eyed Seeing.

Direct Instruction (15 Minutes)
Who remembers what Two-Eyed Seeing is?
Refresh, Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk) is a concept introduced by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall.
It means:
"Learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge and using both together for the benefit of all."
Indigenous Knowledge Often Emphasizes:
- **Relationships**
- **Observation**
- **Storytelling**
- **Connection to place**
- **Responsibility to community and land**
- **Knowledge gained through lived experience**

Western Knowledge Often Emphasizes:
- **Data collection**
- **Measurement**
- **Experimentation**
- **Classification and categorization**
- **Evidence-based investigation**

Important Understanding

Two-Eyed Seeing does not mean Indigenous knowledge needs Western science to validate it.

Indigenous Peoples have developed sophisticated knowledge systems through generations of observation, relationship, experience, and stewardship of the land. The goal is not to determine which perspective is better. Instead, Two-Eyed Seeing teaches us to recognize and respect the strengths of both knowledge systems and consider how they can work together to deepen understanding.

Activity: Ecosystem Investigation (25 Minutes)

Students work in groups and choose a local environmental topic such as:

- **Water quality**
- **Wildlife populations**
- **Seasonal changes**
- **Forest health**
- **Climate change impacts**

Groups complete the following chart:

Indigenous Knowledge Perspective	Western Science Perspective
What relationships are important?	What data could be collected?
What stories or teachings may be connected to this place?	What patterns or changes could be measured?
How might long-term observation inform understanding?	What scientific explanations could be explored?
What responsibilities do people have to this ecosystem?	What evidence would be needed?
What knowledge can be gained?	What knowledge can be gained?

Students then discuss:

Two-Eyed Seeing

- **What can we learn when both perspectives are considered together?**
- **What might be missed if only one perspective is used?**
- **How can these perspectives complement one another?**

Groups share their thinking with the class.

Outdoor Observation Extension (Optional)

Students spend 15–20 minutes outdoors observing:

- **Plants**
- **Animals**
- **Weather**
- **Water**
- **Seasonal changes**

Indigenous Lens

- **What relationships do you notice?**
- **What connections exist between living things?**
- **What responsibilities do humans have here?**

Western Lens

- **What measurable observations can you make?**
- **What patterns do you notice?**
- **What evidence could be collected?**

Students record observations and compare what they notice through each lens.

Reflection and Discussion (10 Minutes)
Students respond to the following questions:

1. **What did you learn from the Indigenous perspective that you may not have learned through science alone?**
2. **What did you learn from the scientific perspective?**
3. **Why is it important that both perspectives are respected?**
4. **How does Two-Eyed Seeing challenge the idea that there is only one way to understand the world?**
5. **How can Two-Eyed Seeing support reconciliation in schools and communities?**

Tier 2 / Tier 3 Supports
Students may:

- **Work with partners or small groups during discussions and the ecosystem investigation.**
- **Use graphic organizers to compare Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.**
- **Receive teacher conferencing support throughout the lesson.**
- **Complete modified reflection expectations by responding to fewer questions or providing shorter written responses.**
- **Demonstrate learning through oral recordings, visual representations, drawings, or videos.**
- **Access sentence starters and scaffolded inquiry questions.**
- **Receive pre-teaching of key vocabulary such as Two-Eyed Seeing, reconciliation, Indigenous knowledge, and Western knowledge.**
- **Use partially completed charts or templates to organize their thinking.**
- **Access assistive technology such as speech-to-text or text-to-speech tools when needed.**

Extensions
Students may:

- **Conduct interviews with community members, Elders, or Knowledge Keepers (where appropriate and available).**
- **Investigate multiple Indigenous perspectives and compare how different Nations understand relationships with the land.**
- **Create additional multimedia components such as videos, podcasts, infographics, or digital presentations.**
- **Explore contemporary Indigenous issues connected to environmental stewardship, reconciliation, or self-determination.**
- **Research a local environmental issue and examine how Indigenous knowledge and Western science could work together to address it.**
- **Design a proposal outlining how Two-Eyed Seeing could be applied to a community or school initiative.**
- **Facilitate small-group discussions exploring the role of Two-Eyed Seeing in reconciliation and education.**

Assessment

Assessment will be ongoing, strengths-based, and focused on growth.

Teachers will observe:

- **Understanding of Two-Eyed Seeing and its application to learning.**
- **Participation in discussions and group inquiry activities.**
- **Recognition of the strengths of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.**
- **Connections made between land, relationships, learning, and reconciliation.**
- **Respectful engagement with diverse perspectives.**
- **Reflection on personal learning and responsibility.**

Evidence of learning includes:

- **Ecosystem Investigation chart.**
- **Class and small-group discussions.**
- **Outdoor observation notes (if completed).**
- **Teacher observations and conferences.**
- **Exit slip reflections.**
- **Student self-reflection.**

At key points throughout the lesson, opportunities for sharing and discussion will allow students to express their thinking orally. The teacher will record observations related to participation, understanding, respectful engagement, and reflection.

Assessment methods:

- **Observation**
- **Conversation**
- **Reflection**
- **Written response**

This assessment honours Indigenous principles of assessment by valuing relationships, observation, oral communication, reflection, experiential learning, and multiple ways of demonstrating understanding. Students are provided with opportunities to share their learning through discussion, observation, written reflection, and collaborative inquiry rather than relying solely on traditional written assessments.

Assessment Criteria

Demonstrates understanding of Two-Eyed Seeing

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

Recognizes strengths of multiple knowledge systems

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

Makes connections between land, relationships, and learning

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

Participates respectfully in discussions and collaborative inquiry

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

Reflects thoughtfully on reconciliation and personal responsibility

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

Communicates learning clearly using examples and evidence

- ☐ **Emerging**
- ☐ **Developing**
- ☐ **Proficient**
- ☐ **Extending**

References

Jagged Worldviews Colliding by Leroy Littlebear in Walking Together: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum by the Government of Alberta

Two-Eyed Seeing: Building Cultural Bridges for Aboriginal Students by Annamarie Hatcher and Cheryl Bartlett on Integrative Science (2010)

Unpacking the Indigenous Student Experience (12:41) with Matthew Provost from TEDx SFU

2019 Global Symposium: Albert Marshall, Two-Eyed Seeing (36:18) from Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness