



TEACH THE COLUMBIA

Governance and Truth and Reconciliation (Bringing the Salmon Home Case Study)

Guiding questions

What is the meaning of governance? What does it mean to advance truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? What is happening with efforts to restore salmon in the Columbia River Basin (in Canada and other parts of the watershed)? What is the governance system for the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction initiative? How does it advance truth and reconciliation? How could this project be a model for other places?

Learning goals

Students will:

- Gain a basic theoretical understanding of two broad concepts: (1) governance, and (2) truth and reconciliation
- Apply and refine these theoretical understandings through consideration of a specific case study
- Consider if and how this case study could be a model for other governance processes to advance reconciliation

Materials

- [Indigenous communities and salmon habitat map](#)
- [Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative \(CRSRI\) website](#)
- The first annual report of the [Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative \(2019-2020\)](#)
- Whiteboard/Large writing surface

Preparation

- Prepare to distribute the Indigenous communities and salmon habitat map (either print copies or digitally)
- Gain a basic familiarity with the layout and content

of the CRSRI website and annual report

- Brainstorm other examples of governance and reconciliation that can be used to seed class discussion

Instructions

Total time: 85 minutes

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to think about the meaning of the two key concepts: (1) governance, and (2) truth and reconciliation. Encourage them to think about actual examples to help them work towards theoretical definitions. Give students time to pair and share with their classmates. After they've had some time to think about it on their own, share the definitions provided in the appendix. 15 minutes
2. Distribute the map of Indigenous communities and salmon habitat in the Columbia River Basin produced in 2014 by the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). In small groups, ask the students to explore the map. Get them to figure out what the different colourings and markings on the map mean and answer the following questions. 15 minutes
 - a. Where were salmon historically present? What portions of salmon habitat in the Basin have been blocked by dams? What portions of the Basin never had salmon? Note that the map is out of date: As of 2019, salmon have been restored to Okanagan Lake.
 - b. Which Indigenous communities still have direct access to salmon? Which communities have lost their access to the salmon? Note that the locations of present-day Indigenous communities do not reflect the boundaries of their traditional territories or the historic seasonal rounds of Indigenous peoples.
3. Explain that salmon have been blocked or harmed

by decisions made in governance systems that have historically excluded Indigenous peoples. Now, Indigenous Nations across the watershed have been leading efforts to reintroduce salmon to blocked areas and increase populations everywhere. For this lesson, we will focus on a reintroduction project happening in the Canadian portion of the Basin led by the Syilx Okanagan, Ktunaxa, and Secwepemc nations in partnership with the governments of Canada and British Columbia. This project is known as “Bringing the Salmon Home” or the “Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative” (CRSRI). However, there are other projects led by different nations in different parts of the watershed. See extension #1 for an example that is connected with the CRSRI. 5 minutes

4. Direct students to the website and/or the [2019-2020 annual report of the CRSRI](#) (digitally or with paper copies). Split students into small groups, ask them to read through the resources and answer the following questions. 30 minutes

- What is the governance system for the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction initiative (CRSRI)?
- Do you think it advances truth and reconciliation? Why or why not?
- Do you think this initiative could be a model for other projects in other places? Why or why not?

5. Give small groups the opportunity to share back with the whole class. Facilitate a discussion based on the most meaningful ideas. 20 minutes

Extensions

- Building from point 5 in the appendix, watch UCUT’s [10 minute video](#), read about [their work on salmon reintroduction](#) and consider how it is similar/different to work by the CRSRI, and consider what it might look like to connect these two initiatives.
- Building from point 2 in the appendix, get students to read [this essay](#) on Indigenous-led salmon reintroduction efforts, which blends historical background with personal opinion. Facilitate a discussion around any new information learned and whether or not students share the opinions of the author.
- Read and discuss the [subsequent annual reports of the CRSRI](#) (from 2020-2021 onwards). What were

the key accomplishments in the last year of the project?

- Check out the CRSRI social media accounts, [news articles](#), [videos](#), events, and [petition](#) of support. What do you observe about the way that the initiative is trying to engage members of the public?

Curriculum links

[Social studies 10](#)

[Social studies 11](#)

[Human Geography 12](#)

[Physical Geography 12](#)

[Earth Science 11](#)

[Environmental Science 11](#)

Appendix

- [Indigenous communities and salmon habitat map of the Columbia River Basin](#)
- Wildsight [essay overviewing Indigenous-led salmon reintroduction efforts](#), which blends historical background with personal opinion and reflection.
- [Annual reports of the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative](#) (CRSRI)
- [Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative \(CRSRI\) website](#)
- There are nine dams on the Columbia River that do have fish passage. The first dams that block the return of salmon to the upper watershed (including to the Canadian portion of the Columbia River) are in northeast Washington: Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee. In the American portion of the Columbia River Basin, most Indigenous nations identify as ‘tribes’. U.S.-based efforts to reintroduce salmon to the upper portion of the watershed have been led by [the Upper Columbia United Tribes](#) - a coalition of five member tribes whose communities are located in northwest Washington and northwest Idaho. To reintroduce salmon successfully in Canada, the governments involved in the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative will need to collaborate with partners in the U.S.

Definitions

1. Governance

In short, governance refers to the ways decisions are made between multiple parties.

In greater detail, governance has been defined to refer to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive.

Governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable. In a broad sense, governance is about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs. It is more than the organs of the government. Governance can be envisioned as 'power relationships,' processes of decision-making and mechanisms for holding decision makers accountable (source: [UNESCO International Bureau of Education](#)).

of where do we want to be in three or four or five or seven generations from now, when we talk about the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country. And if we can agree on what that relationship needs to look like in the future, then what we need to think about is what can we do today that will contribute to that objective? Reconciliation will be about ensuring that everything that we do today is aimed at that high standard of restoring that balance to that relationship" (source: [Murray Sinclair](#), Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada).

2. Truth and Reconciliation

General definition of reconciliation:

The act of reconciling or the state of being reconciled.

Reconcile: to restore to friendship or harmony (source: Based on [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#))

Definitions in the context of Indigenous peoples and Canada:

"... Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (source: Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. with reference to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada)

"We also believe that what's important... is to understand that because it took us so many generations to get to this point, it's going to take us at least a few generations for us to be able to say that we are making progress. We cannot look for quick and easy solutions because there are none. We need to be able to look at this from the perspective