

Seminar title: The Politics of Morality

Curriculum Unit Title: Reclaiming Native American Identity and Rejecting Stereotypes

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This past school year, I knew I had to focus on writing. The previous school year, the students in my class had the hardest time taking the writing portion of English Language Assessment of AZMerit (Arizona Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching). I knew we were not ready. The fact was, the students in my class lacked abilities in writing good opinion pieces and writing informative and explanatory text. Most of them were reluctant writers. Not only that, the students in my English Language Development class did not have enough skills for writing beyond a five-word sentence. Most of them did not make any kind of attempt to write anything down. Every day was a constant struggle trying to get the students to write. When it was time to take the state assessment, most of the students did not make any attempt or did not follow the writing prompt. The saddest part was that the students were finally asking for help when it was too late. I desperately wanted to explain that I could not help during the exam it but was against the test protocol.

This past school year, my goal was to get students ready for the state assessment. I did not want a repeat of what happened the previous school year. Again, I inherited a new group of reluctant writers. I finally realized that they were never taught the skills necessary for writing. I had to go back to basics. Descriptive writing was not part of the fourth-grade standards, but it was the foundation the students needed to reteach writing. I developed a descriptive writing curriculum specifically to teach students how to use descriptive words, both adverbs and adjectives, in writing using visual aids. The visual aids I incorporated were contemporary art pieces prepared by Native American artists. Right away, the students were hooked because the art pieces I choose were about their interests, something they are familiar with, and something that I could use to promote culture and build confidence. The students became more comfortable with writing, but the problem this time was that they had a hard time transitioning from descriptive writing to opinion writing and other forms of writing. The problem was not the students, but me. This time, I was not ready to teach opinion writing. I kept searching for lessons that would benefit my students, but most of the lessons that I found were not enough to establish competent writers.

Demographics

The town of Kayenta, AZ is located deep with the Navajo Reservation in northeastern Arizona. According to the 2010 Census, Kayenta has a population of 5,189 people, which consists of 92.27% Native Americans, mostly Navajos, and the rest other nationalities or ethnic groups. The town of Kayenta is served by two school systems, Kayenta Boarding School and Kayenta Unified School District. Kayenta Boarding School is K-8 Bureau of Indian Affairs School.

Kayenta Unified School District #12 a public school district that has three schools: Kayenta Elementary School, Kayenta Middle School, and Monument Valley High School. The school district serves over 2,000 students, mostly Navajo children. The school district serves Kayenta, and the surrounding communities including Chilchinbeto, Rough Rock, Denehotso, Black Mesa, and Shonto. Students are generally bused from within a 50 miles radius of the school. Some children spend up to two hours traveling to and from school.

Kayenta Elementary School serves over 500 children from Kindergarten through fourth grade. Most grade levels have 5 classes each, with one class dedicated to servicing English Learners (EL). The EL population at Kayenta Elementary school fluctuated between 12-15 students. A majority of students in my class are Navajo children who have been identified as English Learners according to Arizona English Language Learners Assessment (AZELLA), yet most of my students have English as a first Language. When new students first enroll into the school district, one of the requirements is that the parents have to fill out a Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE) survey. If they answer Navajo Language is spoken around the students, either by the student, by the parents, or by the grandparents, the student is automatically earmarked to take AZELLA test. Minor exposure to Navajo Language, whether the student understands or speaks the language, becomes an automatic label. Even if the parent indicates that only English is spoken in the home, the other way to identify EL students is by researching the student's previous school records. Our English Language Development coordinator is very good at going through the state department database too look for AZELLA records. If a student is identified EL, they stay in my class for the rest of the school year. However, if the results indicate that the child scored proficient, they are placed in a general education classroom.

The language gap isn't the only issue. Most of the students also have to deal with a gap in traditional and contemporary Navajo cultures. Students who are growing up in the contemporary culture have to juggle the traditional culture of the Navajo nation, and the western culture often heard and promoted on radios, televisions, and on the internet. These tools of modern communication frequently promote products of that result in competing value agendas within society.

Rationale

One of the ideas discerned from morality policy seminars was that some issues are non-technical and attract much public attention and commentary. For me, everyone has an opinion on any given topic, even children as young as 2 years old express their opinion based on what they like to eat, what they like to do or when they like to go to bed. Many students know how to express their opinions verbally. I hear students communicate their opinions in hallways and on any given topic, especially issues that interest them. Yet, that same skill is a struggle to transfer to an academic opinion piece. The trouble is that in order to write a decent opinion piece, the students have to be able to read at least two resources.

Often, the students are susceptible to influences, and easily believe that what they hear on the radios, televisions, and read about on the internet as truths. For example, Navajo students also access electronic images that are taboo in cultural terms. Often, they find it hard to distinguish facts from opinions, or even what is made up. The questions are: How much do they know about their culture? Is the entertainment industry a threat to Navajo norms of behavior and does it undermine morality? Do they know that how Native Americans are portrayed on TV is based on stereotypes? Do they know what stereotype is?

Responding to the questions above is important in the understanding of how identities are constructed. As we know, identity is a core value which determines how an individual defines themselves and places in society (Tatalovich, Smith, and Bobic, 1994). As a core marker of

one's belief system, identity when miscodified in movies, magazines, internet, video games and other forms of mass media accessible to public school children at young ages can pigeon-hole children in statuses with negative connotations. In the larger scheme of things, education policy is the battleground for formation of morality political ideas (Zimmerman, 2002). And, school, after all is the space where core morality values are inculcated and reinforced. Therefore, in developing a curriculum unit, I want children to be encouraged to be critical thinkers whose perceptions of themselves is positive.

I want to create a 3rd through 5th grade writing unit, specifically focused on developing writing opinion pieces. I want to use visual aids in the form of video clips from movies to help students establish the abilities necessary to write an opinion piece. The video clips I want to use are pieces that depict Native American stereotypes. Stereotypes in movies correlate with the historical oppression of Native Americans before 1968. The stereotypes continue to exist in movies and in all forms of mass media. These stereotypes continue to oppress the Native American population. The idea is to use the video clips, primarily to give me an idea about whether or not students are aware of the stereotypes perpetuated on their culture. Secondly, the video clips will also help me identify how much the students know about their culture and other Native American cultures.

The unit will explore cultural appropriation of Native Americans in a few selected movies. For starters, although the movie clip in Peter Pans Celebration of Tiger Lily's rescue is animated, do students realize the implication of the songs and interactions of the characters? Do they see it as entertainment? Most critics argue that many animated Disney films perpetuate Native American stereotyping, which we must confront as educators. There will be three parts to the unit.

First, the students will openly discuss the implication of a movie clip. Part of the exercise is to get prior knowledge on their culture, and their abilities to form opinions, especially on moral values.

Second, the students will read texts: newspaper reviews, and article reviews that explores the cultural implication of the movies. Students will read about what it means in their culture. The last part, students will write an opinion paper using their prior knowledge, new knowledge, and articles to form opinions about what they wrote.

Overall, I want to acknowledge the socio-political context around race and language when I create my unit because of the cultural and linguistically diverse learners. A majority of the EL (English Learners) are dependent learners. They expect me to carry the cognitive load. Most students will sit passively and wait if they get stuck because they are unsure of how to tackle new tasks or cannot complete task without scaffold. Often the students will not retain information because they are used to memorizing and regurgitating concepts. However, they have difficulty with application of knowledge in practical ways. The objective of the unit is to help students think critically and creatively.

In addition, I want to recognize the Native American actors who have to deal with the stereotypes in the entertainment industry and have made a conscious effort to change the stereotypes. Often, indigenous actors have to question themselves on whether to participate in continued use of Native American stereotyping or maintain cultural identity and integrity.

Navajo actor Brian Young chose the latter despite the scarce roles for Native Americans. He realized that he would not play “Indian” again after his discomfort in taking on a role as an “Indian” shaman, which required him to dress up in a feathered costume and painted face. He felt ashamed when the realization that wearing feathers and regalia mocked his own spiritually and other Native American cultures. He made a conscious decision to never play “Indian” again.

Another example of actors taking a stand against the entertainment industry was when a group of Native American actors walked off the set of Adam Sandler’s, *Ridiculous Six* in 2015. The actors walked off the movie set to protest the stereotypical portrayal of indigenous people, especially Native American women. The defense of the movie from Netflix was that it was a comedy. Since it was a satire, it should not be taken seriously. However, the response was classic ignorance for Native American women. According to leaked screenplay, the jokes depicted Native Americans as dirty animalistic backdrops. Women were depicted as promiscuous. In one case, a fart joke was made about a woman whose name was Sits-On-Face. However, the joke itself undermined the high level of sexual assaults and violence against Native American Women. The ignorance indicated that the writers were not aware of the disturbing statistics against Native American women.

Early History

“Indian” invention began with early settler’s stories of wild savages. Most Europeans, who had never been to the “new world” relied on memoirs of first settler’s perceptions and misinterpretation of inhabitants. The literary depiction of the inhabitants depended on the usually narrow author’s preconception and attitudes. Accurate reports often generalized all Native American populations despite distinct differences between the tribes.

The most popular savagery stories included captivity stories and adventure stories that have plenty of blood, sorrow, perseverance and danger. Captivity tales are often interpreted as violence pornography by today’s critics, but often not lost on the makers of the Hollywood films. The purpose of the stories is to show moralistic grace of God for capture’s deliverance. Occasionally, stories included a singular “noble” Indian, meaning that an individual could be good, but the whole group of Native Americans had to be depicted as bad to justify the beliefs of the government and for the sake of religion. The idea of a captured white woman by a savage Indian has become popular theme in Hollywood and popular culture in general.

Author James Filmore Cooper created a new American mythological expectation of how Native Americans were portrayed in literature. Although, his work appeared to be sympathetic to Native Americans, the reality was that the stories “dramatically polarized and simplified Indian experiences.” He often simplified complex societies of Native American tribes into a simple background for a colonial story. At the same time, he also built a mythological identification between Native Americans and natural landscape. Finally, Native American characters who were often in league with the hero were portrayed as “good” Indian. Cooper’s diverged representation of Native Americans were in line with how colonists thought of Indians. Civilization Fund Act of 1813 allotted ten thousand dollars annually to provide education for Native Americans. However, the ruling of *Johnson and Grahams Lessee vs William McIntosh* established that the government held the title to the land, and Native Americans were just mere occupants.

Modern mass media including films have played a major part in the production of national symbols. The symbols become a part of the norms to produce a nationalistic discourse that leads to create a myth of origin. In this case, the myth of how the West Was Won. This was the perfect scenario where white Euro-Americans tested themselves against a challenging frontier. However, acquiring land was problematic. The justification for the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was considered a proper course for “god’s will.” The concept of Manifest Destiny was a tale Americans told themselves to validate for expansion and progress.

However, the Native Americans fought back by initiating warfare. Reading materials from this time reflect the horror of frontier warfare. The reading materials offered no sympathy for Indians, but the hero of the story had many solutions for Indian problems. The stereotypes were intensified because of the disputes and conflicts. The genocide taking place was necessary and easily justified by the character. The author of *Nick of the Woods* (1837) further crafted the stereotype that Indians were stupid by introducing pidgin speech as a form of communications.

More and more Euro-Americans swarmed westward on the Oregon Trail and during the California gold rush. The government assigned thousands of military men to protect the Euro-American citizens from the non-citizen Indians. The real and imagined dangers of the frontier created a heroic Indian-fighter of the dime novels in 1860. The allure and danger of the frontier along with attitudes about Indians made for a good synthesis for western fiction that survived through the years and provided the basis for the Hollywood Indians.

As more and more Indians were removed to reservations out west, the west became the setting for western dime novels. The stories, however, did not resemble any historical facts. Newspapers and dime novels were responsible for the misperception of western native peoples.

By the late nineteenth century, the stereotypes of Native Americans and the heroic cowboy were clearly established in the American mythology. Buffalo Bill Cody was a self-promoter helped further the rise of western films by launching his own western show. His show became a success due to his flair for the dramatics and included real cowboys and real Indians. Real Indians included prominent leaders such as Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Chief Joseph.

Around 1880s, the assimilation of Native Americans, especially children, into mainstream America began. The Allotment Act of 1887 broke reservations into individual allotments, which eventually were sold to Non-Native Americans. Schools were also set up to train Native American youths with a trade, sent to live with “civilized” families, or sent to off reservation schools. Native Americans appeared to be assimilating and were no longer considered a threat and nostalgia for the Noble Savage began to creep into mainstream media, especially with the invention of the peep shows that showed a vignettes of a supposed “Sioux Ghost Dance” in 1894. However, the audience did not have the historical or personal experience to question the authenticity of the film. Movies images became a persuasive medium because they happen to be shown on the same screen as news reels.

The filming of the *Indian Wars* (1914) was supported by the secretary of state and War Department for the purpose of recruitment and to boost morale to help prepare the military to

enter the First World War. The War Department refers to The United States Department of War, which was the United States Cabinet department responsible for the operations and maintenance of the United States Army. The war department allowed Buffalo Cody to use the Pine Ridge Sioux because the military wanted a film based on historical event that displayed a noble history, invincible, and typical American military force. In the reenactment of the Massacre at Wounded Knee, few soldiers and more Sioux Indians were killed than in the real event. During the filming, the scenes being filmed desecrated the graves. When the Natives protested, Cody threatened to shoot them with real bullets. This was one example of rewriting history through the motion picture.

In the early 19th century, James Fenimore Cooper wrote the *Leatherstocking Tales*. Although he had access to nonfiction literature about Native Americans, he chose to write about the “fictional extremes of the Indian – noble savage and bloodthirsty savage – and introduced a depiction of Native American behavior that book and film audiences would come to expect.” (Kilpatrick 2000, p.2). His work often appeared to be sympathetic to Native Americans, but his character development and placement polarized and simplified the Native American experience. He developed an image of a backwoodsman with an indigenous sidekick.

Cooper’s work reflected the changing America, a move away from British aristocracy. His work often reflected the natural landscape and the original inhabitants, as a way to show a separation from British government, but also show imperialism in the new land. The idea of control over the land and the indigenous people greatly distorted historical events. “In developing this new American mythology, Cooper effectively threw into the same melting pot a number of tribes and cultures and then separated them into two groups – the good and the bad” (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 3) which greatly invalidated the positive depiction of Native Americans. The complex Native American societies were simplified for future stories about colonial stories.

Native American characters who were in league with the hero in the story were often depicted in a positive manner. Cooper’s depiction of Native Americans reflected how the union thought of indigenous people. Congress passed the Civilization Fund Act as way to demonstrate that Native Americans were valued enough. The act allotted \$10,000 annually to provide education. At the same time, Native Americans were “evicted” from their lands. In 1823, the Supreme Court Case *Johnson and Graham’s Lessee v. William McIntosh*, established that as long as they were peaceful, they will be protected, but were not capable of holding a title to their land; therefore, just mere occupants.

Cooper was criticized for romanticizing the Indian. His depiction and portrayal of the characters were unpopular in Cooper’s time. However, the noble savage and the “indianized” white mediator were popularized in the film industry until the mid-1900s. Critics believed that Cooper was a friend of the Indians, and some readers thought they were getting a glimpse of the real Indians, but his intent was to create a new American Mythology.

A New Nationalism

Modern Mass Media, including cinema, have played a major part in promoting nationalism. Nationalism allowed states to impose rules and regulations on Native Americans in their territory

in order for colonization to occur. Nationalism created a discourse that allowed Americans to justify how they acquired more land. The myth of the Wild West, the expanding frontier, taming wilderness led to the idea of manifest destiny, the righteousness of expansion and progress. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 allowed for Native Americans, especially the Cherokees, to be legally removed from their land.

Nick of the Woods (1837) by Robert Montgomery Bird created a character who had little sympathy for Native Americans and had his own solution to the Indian problems. The series depicted Native Americans as “brutal beasts who were beneath contempt and beyond redemption.” (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 7) The European Americans were a willing audience because of the stereotypes, the mythical Native American history, sensationalized Indian uprising, and preconceived ideas. Bird’s reading material reinforced the idea that it was necessary for the genocide of Native Americans to take place.

Bird was also known for inventing the pidgin speech to effectively show that Indians were stupid. The invented Tonto-talk, as it is referred to now, showed that they were pronounced challenged where all sentences began with “Me.” “Me injun.” “Me Kill.” The addition of “um” was also added on to Tonto-Talk. Unfortunately, authors who came after Bird adopted Tonto-Talk which eventually transmitted to the Hollywood Indian.
Oregon Trail/ California Gold Strike

The opening of the Oregon Trail and the California Gold strike created a greater rift between Native American tribes who lived in the west, and the numerous white men, women, and children who continuously moved across Indian lands. The fights between the Indians and the white people were frequent, so the government assigned the military to protect them. “It was the stuff of which legends are made, the excitement of real and imagined dangers created a reading public that was well prepared for the heroic Indian-fighter of the dime-novels,” published by Irwin P. Beadle & Company (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 9).

Clashes between Native Americans and whites escalated when more and more people started moving west on the Oregon Trail, and moving west for the California gold rush. To keep the white men, women, and children safe, the government assigned thousands of military men. It created the perfect setting for dime novels published by Irwin P. Beadle & Co. to write literature that included the real and imagined dangers of a heroic Indian fighter. The heroes in the novels were based on Cooper’s backwoodsman, but the attitude about Indians were created by Bird. The romance and danger of the frontier generated during this time was the perfect formula for a western genre that still exists in movies and novels today. The earliest movies based on the dime novels usually showed Indians killed off quickly and dramatically by a heroic Indian fighter, as soon as they appeared and slaughtered a few people. Bird’s creation of the linguistically challenged Indian was further reduced to silence, a pervasive “ugh”, and primitive blood curdling whoops. The incoherent speech of Native Americans was solidified, further degrading the ranking of Native Americans below even the worst white person. The popularity of the novels also hastened the removal of Native Americans onto reservations further west.

Newspapers and dime novels continued to sensationalize Indian attacks, while concealing crimes committed by whites. Most novels showed savages giving in to the dominant society.

Occasionally, Indians were portrayed as a noble savage and functioned as a trusty sidekick as a solution to audience members who wanted a painless solution to create racial equality and harmony. As the presence of Native Americans diminished drastically from the east coast, easterners learned about Native Americans through the dime novels that bore little resemblance to historical facts.

In the late 19th century, Buffalo Bill Cody, once a dime novel hero, created a Wild West Show. His show included elements of theatre, circus, and rodeo. It included rodeo events, shooting exhibitions, an attack on a mail coach, and a dramatization of Pony Express. It also introduced the notion of real cowboys and Indians; further reinforcing the misconception of who an Indian is. The infatuation for real Indians and heroic Indian fighters by easterners and Europeans made the show a success. Even presidents, kings and queens came to see the show.

To add more “authenticity” to the show, right after the Battle of Little Big Horn, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse joined the show. Often the crowd cheered on the heroes, while jeering the enemy. No one really understood why the Native Americans could allow themselves to be treated negatively and thoughtlessly. For Native Americans, it was a chance to show what real Indians were (first time Indians playing Indians.) Secondly, it gave the Native Americans a chance to travel to new places, and learn from dominant culture. Lastly, they were getting paid to live decent lives, as opposed to living on reservations that were riddled with starvation and disease. When Sitting Bull first joined the show, he was originally viewed as a villain just because the American audience held him responsible for the death of Custer. Custer was considered a hero of mythical proportions. Eventually, newspapers found it more useful to Sitting Bull to be viewed as a noble and dignified because it made for great stories. Around the same time, the press started criticizing The Wild West Show for the mistreatment of Native Americans in the show. However, the revival of the Ghost Dance in 1890 threatened the military and the American government because the Native Americans were gravitating back to their beliefs. This led to the massacre at Wounded Knee on December 29th, 1890. After the massacre, Buffalo Bill tried to get Kicking Bear and Short Bull to become part of the show but the Commissioner of Indian Affairs felt the show demoralized the Indians. However, the Nebraska congressional delegation overruled the commissioner and allowed Buffalo Bill to take the leaders across the ocean. Eventually, the Wild West show lost its allure and glitter because of the invention of the moving picture.

Moving Pictures

With the invention of moving pictures, powerful sympathizers got together and influenced the government and the film industry. Although, the sympathizers appeared to do good work on behalf of Native Americans, however that was not always the intention. The sympathizer outlined a plan to civilize the Native Americans. First thing on the agenda was the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887. The Dawes Act disintegrated tribal organizations so land could be allotted to adult males to whom were given citizenship. However, millions of acres of land changed hands from Native Americans to whites. Second on the agenda, was to remove young male Native Americans to be trained in industrial schools off the reservations. Schools such as Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania were set up to “train” the youth. However, the schools were set up in the same fashion as prisons, and the students were forbidden to speak their own languages.

Furthermore, in the summer time, the students were sent to live with white families to show them how civilized families lived.

It appeared that the remaining Native Americans were being successfully assimilated into mainstream America. Native Americans were no longer perceived as a threat. The idea of the “vanishing first American” became popular entertainment in such films as *Sioux Ghost Dance* (1894), *Eagle Dance* (1898), and *Serving Rations to the Indians* (1898). Most movie goers of the time included immigrants, the poor went to the movies to experience something beyond their reach. “Most audiences of the turn of the century did not have the historical or personal experience to question the reality of the screen images; seeing for oneself had always before been the litmus test for reality” (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 18). Furthermore, the movie images were very persuasive and trusted the image, especially since they were shown on the same screen as newsreels that brought the news.

The early movies were once again influenced by Dime Novels, literatures, and the Wild West to shape American stereotypes of Native Americans. Many people truly believed that they were viewing real Indians, but in reality it was the invention of Hollywood Indians. Early on, many studios tried to reinvent the stereotypes by portraying Native Americans as accurately as possible. Americans believed that Native Americans were assimilating and allowed them to enter the film industry. For the first time, Native American actors and actresses portrayed themselves. In some films, Native Americans were portrayed as the hero and antagonist were the evil white man. Unfortunately, it did not last long because the American audience preferred the All – American hero, especially with World War I looming. The heroes in the story resorted back to White man as frontier tamer, and negative depiction of Native Americans because it best captured the feelings and storylines.

Buffalo Bill Cody started his own film company. He starred in most of the films with embellished emphasis on the cowboys and Indians genre. The massacre of Wounded Knee was featured in Cody’s film *The Indian Wars* (1914). Because it was made around the beginning of World War I, the Secretary of State provided troops and equipment. In addition, the War Department put the Pine Ridge Sioux at Cody’s disposal. The movie received so much support because the war department wanted to use it for recruitment and records. “As the United States prepared to enter the first World War, it was important to bolster morale and present the military force with a noble historical, invincible, quintessential American” (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 20). In the reenactment of Wounded Knee, few soldiers were killed as opposed to the many Sioux including elderly, women, and children died. Furthermore, Cody used threat tactics, especially when the Sioux complained about the desecration of graves, when he wanted to film on the grave site.

D.W. Griffith’s work was immensely important in maintaining the noble savage and bloodthirsty savages to a whole new group of Euro-American audiences during the silent film period. Between 1910 and 1913, over one hundred films about Native Americans were made each year. In the movie *A Pueblo Legend* (1912), Griffith portrayed the Native Americans as noble savages. The film was romantic love story between a Hopi girl and the handsome war captain, Great Brother. The movie was a set in mystical time before the arrival of the Spaniards. Although the Pueblos appeared to have been portrayed in a positive manner, the pueblos were not impressed.

The Isleta Pueblo were offended because they believed that it's not a true representation of their culture, but a parody. "His depiction of the Isleta religious beliefs as distinctly innocent and primitive helped perpetuate the belief of many that mainstream American society had a responsibility to care for, feed, and save the souls of the noble, primitive, Native "children" of America" (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 23).

However, in his next film *Massacre* (1912), the autobiographical movie about Custer and his last stand against the Indian, the Native Americans, were once again portrayed as bloodthirsty savages prevented civilization. Although a historical event was once again romanticized, it was hailed as being produced with realism. The realism wasn't referring so much to the true representation of the historical event, but actually referring to Griffith's brilliant directing.

In the Progressive Era, movies continued to popularize the one-dimensional stereotype where the Native Americans were portrayed as villains. Often the villains got what they deserved, while the films ended with the dependable happy endings. Louis Reeves Harrison used films to provoke social change, especially since he and most Americans believed that Native Americans were now like everyone else, meaning that they were civilized. Because of that belief and the discovery of minerals on Indian lands, the white American started resenting Native Americans for "free ride" at the taxpayer's expense.

Frustration with the "Indian Problem" persisted. One group wanted to continue to assimilate and Christianize Native tribes, while the opposition fought and saw the value of Native Americans keeping their cultural identity. The secretary of the interior made an executive order to allow developers and drillers. Even though Native Americans tried to fight it, they could not provide or produce proof of title over their own reservations. At the same time, the deplorable conditions and injustices on reservations were discovered. The Indian agents were only concerned with enriching themselves, stealing land, and allowing cultural destruction to point of eliminating Indians entirely.

In 1925, Zane Grey wrote about the Native Americans as victims of greed, betrayal, and neglect. He used his novels and cinema to convey that message. Grey had first-hand knowledge about Indians of the southwest, and he wanted to use that knowledge to tell a story. In the *Vanishing American* (1925), the "villains" were the victors. The audience and Paramount Picture were uneasy with the plot, even though depicted with accuracy, so the script were rewritten. "The film is decisively sympathetic to the Indians, but the changes made between Grey's script and Paramount's film clearly define what was acceptable to the American public of that time" (Kilpatrick, 2000. p. 31).

Cinematic Language

Hollywood already had preconceived ideas about what an Indian should sound like. Often, Native American speaking parts were minimal, mostly a grunt or "alien sounding language", which could mean anything. And when they did speak, the speech sounded unnatural. In the early films, the dialogue of Native Americans usually lacked a command of the English Language. In 1939, a new Indian Language was born in *Scouts to the Rescue*. In this film, Indian dialogue were spoken in "Indian Language", and recorded backward. Body language was also

relevant in Indian communication in Hollywood stereotype. Often, Indians had scowling faces, rigid body, and dramatic gestures. Unfortunately, the stereotype of Indian language in films portray the Native Americans as linguistically and mentally lacking. Recently, Native Americans have been able to use their own language with the use of subtitles.

National Policy of the 1950s

US federal policies went through a series of changes regarding Native Americans. First, the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act granted citizenship to Native Americans living born within the United States. Although Native Americans were now considered citizens, they wanted to keep their own culture.

The Wheeler-Howard Act reversed the law of allotment of land, and encouraged tribes to form organizations. Unfortunately, 2/3 of the reservations were lost to allotment. Passing the Wheeler-Howard Act during the Great Depression helped shed light on the disenfranchised Native Americans. However, the stereotypes continued to be distorted.

The concept of land ownership is one of the fundamental ideals of being American. In Hollywood films, the quest for land was a “right.” The pioneers and settlers in the film declared land as their own if the land they “seized” was empty. It was easy to seize land from Native Americans who migrated, but often more difficult with Native Americans who had established agriculture and farms. Because Native Americans societies had oral history instead of written history, the pioneers and settlers used this as basis for claiming the land, and giving the land an established written history.

Civil Rights and Celluloid Indian

In 1961, Task Force on Indian Affairs endorsed a shift away from extermination of Indians to establish greater self-determination. The idea of unit and reverence for Mother Earth were some values worth preserving. Native Americans as mystical beings who believed in unity, respected Mother Earth and Nature, and peace was very attractive for the younger generation. A longing to be American Indian became popular to protest the government during the Vietnam War. The problem was that it homogenized Indian identity, and did very little to help Native American causes of contemporary Native Americans. The focus was not on Native Americans, but on the war.

Native Americans started fighting their own battles in courts, on the reservations, and in urban communities. Termination and relocation policies were being challenged. Tribal cultures were at risk as more and more Native Americans moved away from reservations. Native American tribes were finally recognized as the most oppressed minorities in America.

Native American organized themselves to maintain identity and survived. Seventy-five tribes convened at the University of Chicago to establish the Declaration of Indian Purpose. The purpose was for the tribes to discuss what they wanted and needed on their reservations such as economic development, health, welfare, housing, and education. Urban Indian activists

organized themselves to protest the oppression. Reservations received massive amount of money to allow tribes to establish doctrine for tribal sovereignty.

In the changing social and political climate, John Ford used the Indian character in *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) as a metaphor for the oppression, and attempted to correct some of the stereotypes of Native Americans. However, Warner Brothers reedited the film for the sake of producing a Blockbuster instead of making a statement. Despite the changes, the cultural awareness in the film is positive. Furthermore, the positive aspect of the film was that Ford attempted to use Cheyenne language.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson included Native Americans in the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which declared tribal governments to have jurisdiction over their reservation, and impacted the legal rights of Native Americans. During this time period, “The images and stereotypes of Native Americans during this period made them ideally complex, sympathetic subjects. Indians were seen as not only poor and oppressed but also mystical and natural.” (Kilpatrick 71) The stereotype of Native Americans were further modified and recycled with the American Indian Movement (AIM), which was defined as a separatist militancy. The new Native American stereotypes are apparent in moves like *Tell Them Willy Boy is Here* (1969), *Soldier Blue* (1970), *A Man Called Horse* (1970), and *Little Big Man* (1970).

The Sympathetic 1980’s and 1990’s

For the first time, Native American were viewed and connected to contemporary events and cultures. In politics, Native Americans succeed in establishing self-determination and declared sovereign nations with the help of President Nixon, President Carter, and President Reagan. They succeed in winning some major arguments over Indian Education, health, religious freedom, and retaining archeological remains. However, too much US government regulations and bureaucracy prevented the tribal governments from flourishing. In 1980’s many private industries invaded reservations. The documentary, *Broken Rainbow* (1985), shed light on the ongoing atrocities and oppressions on Native lands. Tribes established gaming industries to prevent private and government industries from migrating onto tribal lands. Unfortunately, it also created a new stereotype, that of a greedy tribal leader who takes all the taxpayer’s money. Native Americans were viewed as more contemporary, but were still misrepresented in films. Because of the sympathy for “Indian plight”, it was hard to define an Indian as bloodthirsty or noble.

Although there were attempts to make a western film, they were often unsuccessful. A remake of *Stagecoach* (1986) was a failure because it tried to correct the stereotype of Native Americans with the new awareness. The tone of the film from the original to the remake went from fearful to patronizing. In the *Emerald Forest* (1985), it used Native Americans as the metaphor to educate the public about the earth’s devastation due to deforestation. Although the film achieved awareness of the crisis in South America, it embellished a story about Native Americans in Brazil, also reintroduced some old Native American stereotypes.

Movie Clips

“What Makes the Red Man Red?”

Ever since the first encounters between Europeans and Native Americans, mainstream writing on identities of Native Americans was based on biased stereotypes. The very identity of Native Americans was mischaracterized through both documentary and entertainment movies. “What Makes the Red Man Red?” sing the Native Americans while the Chief Lights and passes around the “Peace Pipe” to celebrate the rescue of Tiger Lily from Captain Hook. This is one example of stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans in films. It is problematic just because the stereotypes in films are based solely on Plains Indians. The film industry often characterized Native Americans as savage and uncivilized, in need of conversion (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 2004). Native Americans were considered dangerous, wild, and uncivilized.

Still, Walt Disney’s portrayal of Pocahontas (1995), was based on historical untruths drawn mainly from Native Americans in Virginia (Dutka, 1995). The implication ignored the fact that Native Americans had diversity in culture, behavior, language, and social organization. Historically, the core moral values of Native Americans remain stable even in the wake of disruptive forces of colonialism, occupation, and forced assimilation. In particular, a good number of the Navajo (Diné) people retain their language and moral campuses.

The Thanksgiving scene in the 1993, Addams Family Values was frontloaded with Native American stereotypes. The summer camp students were allowed to create a play that depicted the pilgrims as superior white Caucasian, and Native Americans as inferior outcasts. The roles for the pilgrims went to the popular white kids of camp, whom often showed their superiority by bullying the kids who were different. The roles for the Native Americans were given to kids who were often outcast due to their differences in traits and characteristics. The nerds, small frame, and not dressing up well were reasons for being given the role of Native American, including Wednesday Addams. The fact is, none of the actors were Native Americans. The beginning scene was full of classic Native American stereotypes. Although the scene drastically changed with the revolution by the “Indians” in a fight scene; you want to cheer for the “Indians” for standing up against the bullies, the stereotypes were still present. The scene still portrayed Native Americans as uncivilized savages who had no interest in honoring a peaceful gathering. The intentions were meant to dispel the stereotypes of the first Thanksgiving, but it didn’t work.

Stereotypes in Cartoons

Animators at Hollywood studios such as Merrie Melody and Paramount have depicted Native Americans racial stereotypes in their cartoons. Often, the Indians spoke in English that were devoid of command of the English Language. They were exploited by inaccurate depiction of Native Americans as savage beings, often shirtless buckskin, and wore feathers in their hair or wore a headdress. They often carried a bow and arrow.

Popeye

In Paramount’s *Popeye the Sailor Man* Episode 60 Big Chief Ugh Amugh Ugh, Chief Ogopogo is the antagonist. The chief is depicted as a stereotypical Hollywood cartoon Indian. He wears a headdress and speaks in Hollywood Indian speech. “Gotta have a squaw,” “Me make squaw

beautiful,” and often started grunting when he became frustrated. The chief utters words like, He spoils Olive Oil with jewelry hoping to make her his princess. Olive Oil has a temporary fascination with the Chief. However, in typical Hollywood fashion, Popeye becomes the hero by fixing a fight with the chief and wins back Olive Oil. In the cartoon, the other tribal members dress in stereotypical fashion with feathers in their hair, shirtless buckskin pants, with bows and arrows. They only communicated in grunts.

Bugs Bunny's Hiawatha

Warner Brothers Bugs Bunny cartoon is known for its racist past. Native Americans were racially stereotyped in the form of *Hiawatha*. *Bugs Bunny in Little Hiawatha (1944)*, the Native American is dressed as shirtless with buckskin bottom, and wears feather and headband in his hair. He carried a bow and arrow and even lives in a teepee. The other stereotype that is that he often depicted as silly and unwise.

The Lone Ranger

The Lone Ranger (2013) directed by Gore Verbinski has been one of the recent movies that have depicted Native Americans with negative stereotypes. The character wears a crow on his head, and wears face paint. The character of Tonto, a spiritual warrior who talks to horses, often speaks in broken English an, typical of Hollywood stereotype. The other stereotype is the idea that the character of Tonto, played by Johnny Depp, was whitewashed. Whitewashed meaning that a Native American character in a movie is not played by a Native American, despite claims that Johnny Depp has some Native American heritage. However, William Two-Raven Voelker, a Comanche, who served as the Native American Advisor on *The Lone Ranger*, defended the movie. According to Voelker, his job was to authenticate the historical accuracy of the representation of the Comanche tribe, not specific to pan Indian. Pan Indian are refers to the commonalities of all indigenous tribes such as powwows and fry bread. He describes that for the first time in Hollywood history, the teepees that were used were accurate to his tribe. Other things like the marking on the horses, and the types of feathers used on the characters were accurate. He believes that there is nothing wrong with Tonto speaking broken English because he has seen many Comanche tribal members speak in the same manner.

Strategies

This or That

Fourth grade English Learners have the hardest time listening and speaking, let alone knowing how to form opinions. *This or That strategy* is a talking strategy that will help students to establish both listening and speaking skills, and to form opinions with confidence. There are many variations, but in this variation, the students are given two choices. The students utilize a t-chart, one column for each choice. Under each choice, the students brainstorm reasons why they would choose one item over the other. The students will use a sentence frame to help students organize and clarify their thinking before sharing. The sentence frame students will use is: *I would rather choose ____ than _____ because _____*. First, this strategy helps students establish verbal communications skills. The sentence frame especially helps students

establish sentence structure through oral communications. Second, the students learn to establish opinions, and give reasons for the choice with confidence. The students need to learn how to organize and present information in logically and coherently. The students need to also learn how to support topics with relevant facts. Lastly, the students learn how to respect the opinions and perspective of others by listening.

Color-coding

Writing in any form is especially hard for English Learners. Opinion writing is especially hard for any 9-year-olds because they have not formed the notions of what it means to have an opinion. In this strategy, the students will use the colors of a traffic light to help them write an opinion paragraph. Green means *go*. The topic sentences are color coded green because they reveal the opinion that is writer is going to explain. In other words, the writer states their opinion in the topic sentence. Yellow means *slow down*. It reminds the writer to slow down and support his or her opinion with key/ star ideas or reasons. The star ideas should be introduced clearly with a transition word. Red means *stop*. It reminds the writer to stop and add elaborations that help explain each star idea. Green is used again for the conclusion that tells the writer to go back and remind the readers about his or her opinion and what the writer wants readers to agree with or do. (Step Up to Writing 383)

Scaffolding

All students, especially English Learners need some type of scaffolding to achieve learning. Scaffolding is the breaking up the learning into chunks and providing structure. To prevent overloading the student's learning, the writing process would be broken into planning by using informal outline, writing a paragraph an informal outline, revision and editing using color-coding, key vocabulary, and introducing key phrases that indicate personal beliefs. For students who are still struggling, modifications of the assignments and making accommodations where needed can be done by the teacher. The most important scaffolding that students need to learn to use are the visual aids, especially the graphic organizers, an informal outline. Informal outlines help students organize ideas and information for writing. It will help students elaborate ideas using any of the E's: events, explanations, experiences, exact information, examples, effective quotations, everyday life, and expert opinion.

Activities

Historical Stereotypes and Realities

In order for students to understand the topic of stereotypes, I will introduce key misconceptions about Native Americans, then give examples using video clip or pictures, and provide background information. For example, one stereotype is that Indians are all alike, and are often lumped together under one culture, that they have the same physical characteristics, and the same values. "Filmmakers and non-Indian artists, however, devote most of their attention to the Plains tribes that historically hunted bison and lived in tipis" (Mihesuah, 2004, p. 20). The reality is that there are more than 2.1 million Native American tribes, belonging to 511 culturally distinct federally recognized tribes. They live in a variety of environments. Many tribes in the west and

northern regions of the United States do not live in tipis, nor did they wear their hair in braids, or wear headdresses. Most Native Americans lived in various structures depending on the environment and available resources. Some lived in thatched roof structures with poles holding up the roofs. Some lived in longhouses, Pueblos, and so on. However, in the present time, most Native Americans live in Modern housing. Other stereotypes include that Indians were conquered because they were inferior. In reality, a lot of Native Americans died from the diseases brought over by Europeans than during warfare.

Listening and Speaking

Part of the listening and speaking activity would be to discuss the stereotypes and realities. One example of Native American stereotypes is that Native Americans were warlike and treacherous. Often, Native Americans were referred to as heathens or savages. In movies, they were often portrayed as bloodthirsty villains. I want to show them the lyrics to *Pocahontas's Savages*. The lyrics really defined the meaning of savages. I will ask the students to think about whether or not Native Americans are really *Savages*? Are we villains? If they are having difficulty about the meaning, I will show them the clip from the movie, and several other clips that portray Native Americans as savages. Then I will explain that most of the time, Native Americans fought to defend their lands, sovereignty and way of life from invaders. Although some Native Americans practiced scalping, they were not the ones who invented it. Scalping was actually introduced in America by the Dutch. They offered bounties for the scalp of Native American men, women, and children. When students are responding to the questions, I will use sentence frames to help them generate and organize their ideas.

Writing activity

In Arizona, one of the two main writing skills that students need to acquire is the ability to write an opinion piece on topics or text with a supporting point of view. The students need to be able to introduce topics or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure, provide reasons that supported by facts and details, use structure and craft of writing, and finally provide a concluding statement related to the opinion presented.

Before starting our writing, I will explain to the students that they will often encounter writing prompts that tell them to respond to a passage, but today instead of reading a passage, we will watch a movie clip. Then I will show a movie clip that displayed Native Americans. I will use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to illicit opinions about the movie clip. To guide, I will prompt them that they need form an opinion about the film clip. Did they see any stereotype? If so what are they? Why do you think that's a stereotype? If they are having trouble, I can guide them to look closely for certain stereotypes, like do all Indians wear headdresses? You are Native Americans. Do you talk like that? Do you know anyone who talks like that?

Student Assessment Plan

Oral Response

Students will be assessed base on their oral communication. The students will be observed on their ability to communicate their response to a prompt using a sentence frame, and the ability to choose ideas from previous brainstorming activities for possible answers. The final oral response activity will require students to response to a prompt without group brainstorm or a sentence frame.

Pre and Post Writing Test

Students will be given a pre-writing test to determine their abilities and strategies for writing. The pre-assessment will be evaluated based on sentence structures, paragraph structure, and the details and supporting details. Finally, the assessment will determine their ability to stay on topic. They will be given a post writing test at the end of the unit. The two writing assessments will be compared to pretest to determine if they had made any improvements in their writing abilities.

Standards

Language Arts standards for comprehension, and ability to write an opinion paper will be used in this unit. Students will be about to write an opinion on a video clip that shows stereotypes towards Native Americans. Students will be about to introduce the topic clearly, provide reasons that are supported by facts, and produce a concluding sentence. **(4.W.1)**

Students will be able to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. **(4.W.4)**

Students will be able to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on Native American stereotypes in films and be able to building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Students will be able to review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. **(4.SL.1)**

Students will identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points. **(4.SL.3)**

English proficiency standards to Listening and Speaking will also be utilized at a guide for learning that correlate with the fourth grade standards above.

Teacher Resources

Addams Family Thanksgiving <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJE3KDxTbWI>

Bugs Bunny in Little Hiawatha (1944) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UvR9A6dw4I>

Popeye the Sailor Man Episode 60 Big Chief Ugh Amugh Ugh
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMftkJDgQes>

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