

Navajo Peacemaking

Peacemaking in the Classroom

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Diné Institute for Navajo Nation Educators (DINÉ)

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Introduction

I am an American white person living in a border town outside of the Navajo reservation. I began taking Diné Institute classes from Northern Arizona University for a number of reasons. First, I took them because I have always had numerous Native American students in my classes and want to provide culturally inclusive, respectful learning opportunities for them. Secondly, as time goes by, I have built more and more friendships with Native people, mostly Navajo, and it is a natural progression to want to learn more of their culture over time. When I saw that a course on Native Law was available through the institute, it triggered my interest. I have only had experiences with the Western World style of adversarial court systems, and those have not been pleasant. I have also experienced mediation, but that did not rise to be much more pleasant. On top of that, my own school system had switched behavior management systems to the restorative justice model. It is not the same as Navajo Peacemaking, but many of their ideas actually came from peacemaking, though they were changed for non-Navajos.

Now that I have spent uncountable hours researching peacemaking, I understand what a rich, full method of dispute resolution that it is. It is almost insulting to simply label it dispute resolution because it is so much more than that. I am sure that as you read on, you will soon see what I mean.

Context

This curriculum is designed for students in the fifth grade at Eva Marshall Elementary School in Flagstaff, Arizona. The students live in or near Flagstaff, a large border town 20 miles outside of the Navajo Nation. The most recent statistics available for Flagstaff Unified School District from the Arizona Department of Education are for the 2018-2019 school year. Eva Marshall Elementary school is a Title I school with 56% of the students on free or reduced lunches. The student makeup is 40% Hispanic, 37% white and 19% Native American. (“Arizona School Report Cards,” 2019) The chronic absenteeism percentage for the school is 34%, more than double that of the district’s 16%. (“Arizona School Report Cards,” 2019)

Flagstaff has a population of 75,752 people, 5,500 of whom are Navajo. Native Americans in Flagstaff have an 88% high school graduation rate, exceeding that of Hispanics at 79%. However, Natives have only a 16% rate of having obtained a bachelor’s degree, the lowest of any Flagstaff ethnicity group. (“World Population Review,” 2020) Flagstaff is an expensive place to live, with housing costs 43% higher and grocery costs 15% higher than the national average. (“Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce,” 2020) Annual income is largely affected by education level. The average income for someone with less than a high school diploma is \$22,000, with a high school diploma, \$27,000, but with a bachelor’s degree, \$41,000. (“World Population Review,” 2020) Flagstaff sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, one of the four sacred mountains of the Navajo people. Many residents of the Navajo Nation drive to Flagstaff to do their shopping or obtain other services.

Rationale

Navajo and minority students within the Flagstaff Unified School District need to be engaged in the classroom, to enjoy learning and feel they are a vital part of the educational community. Engagement increases, and absenteeism reduces when a student’s ethnicity is treated with

respect and honor within the curriculum and classroom. Higher levels of engagement and focused classwork completion due to higher attendance, in turn, increase grades and graduation rates. Additionally, all students benefit when they begin to understand each other's cultures and appreciate the strengths that diversity brings to the community. There is a need for inclusion of all local ethnicities within the curriculum and understanding by the non-Native American majority community members of the culture of their neighbors and friends. FUSD websites currently state, "We are committed to working side-by-side with our community to raise up kindness and inclusion." ("Flagstaff Unified School District," 2020)

The inclusion of Navajo peacemaking within the classroom is especially timely with Flagstaff Unified School District's recent decision to implement the restorative justice model of behavior management within the district schools. Peacemaking and restorative justice differ, despite their similarities, so a Navajo peacemaking model would accomplish the same objective in a solidly applicable, more understandable and meaningful way for the students, complementing the restorative justice model of the school district.

Each teacher at my school is directed to set up a classroom management plan at the beginning of each school year, including a student behavior management plan. Navajo peacemaking is an excellent fit. This process builds life-long problem solving and critical thinking skills. It allows all students to feel the classroom is personally relevant to them because it reflects collective student values and supports respect for each child. Instead of resorting to strict rules and punitive measures for infractions, peacemaking allows students to respectfully have full input into a constructive process that leads to making restorative decisions for all parties and results in consensus agreements. The result is to bring harmony to the group, peace to the individuals and the construction of a consensus solution that is then applied. That consensus agreement is considered final. (Austin, 2009, p. 63) A contract is sometimes written and signed to record the terms of the agreement and indicate individual agreement that participants commit to personally carrying out their part of the agreement decided upon by the whole group. In order to assure a positive process is maintained, the classroom teacher will usually need to act in the peacemaker role. Students can choose to 'talk out' their conflicts in the class peacemaking sessions, or even as sometimes happens in Navajo Courts, they can choose to not participate. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 187) In addition, sometimes a consensus agreement is reached, but a student does not follow through on the signed agreement in place. In those cases, the western style system of problem resolution would be applied for the student declining peacemaking or the student not carrying through on their part of the agreement, though the class may still hold a peacemaking session for the benefit of the other students affected. Anytime a student misbehavior qualifies as a mandatory reporting offense, matters would revert directly to the school's administrative process. (Pinto, 2000, p. 6)

This curriculum unit is designed to begin being taught in the fall when many classes would be designing their class rules and learning to follow school procedures. Teachers must take care not to teach winter stories at the wrong time of year, as this is disrespectful to Navajo cultural beliefs, although behavior principles can still be taught using children's story books.

Content Objectives

Common Law

Peacemaking's solid foundation is common law. Common law is the basic everyday moral understanding of right and wrong formed by a group of people over time with their tradition and culture as the basis for those beliefs. (Austin, 2009, p. 55) This means that different cultures will naturally have their own versions of common law. Navajo common law is based on Navajo "philosophy, customs, traditions, language, spirituality and sense of place." (Austin, 2009, p. 18) They are the values upheld by respected community elders and the values and ways of thinking taught by grandparents and parents to their family's children by daily example and sometimes direct teaching. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, pp. 329, 330) The members of the community are in basic agreement about these ideals and they are the basis upon which the population determines how they should behave and interact. (Austin, 2009, p. 54) How can a person recognize common law? Common law is found in stories, in cultural spiritual teachings, in human interactions and in sometimes unspoken, but inherently agreed upon ideas within the community. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, pp. 329, 330)

Creation Stories

For the Navajo people there is a strong connection to spirituality. Their creation stories explain that Mother Earth was created as the Dark-World where the Earth-Surface-Holy-People were created to dwell with the guidance of Holy People. Father Universe was also created at this time and they "became the mother and the father of all life on the earth," and set in order the foundational laws of life, nourishment and shelter. (Barber, 2002, p. 7) The misuse of freedom and power by the Earth-Surface-Holy-People caused changes that resulted in their emergence, first into the Blue World and then into the Yellow World, followed by the White World. At each level, a significant mistake was made that initiated the transfer into the next world. Self-interest and participation in forbidden acts of sexual indiscretion in the Yellow World developed into monsters, supernatural evils and disorders in the White World. At this point, the Holy People recognized the need to restore the laws and the uprightness of the Earth-Surface-Holy-People. The Holy People created White Shell Woman, also known as Changing Woman, with spiritual knowledge with which to instruct her people. She created the clan system, of which k'e' is the foundation. K'e' was originally given as a way to communicate with the Creator, and is the law that all other laws are based on. (Barber, 2002, p. 7) Her twin sons, Monster Slayer and Born-for-Water, restored the world back to righteousness by killing most of the monsters. (Vecsey, 2015, pp. 89, 111) At this point, healing and blessing ceremonies and guiding moral principles were introduced. (Barber, 2002, p. 8) With this restoration, the Earth-Surface-Holy-People moved into the Glittering World that they are now in, and were changed into the Holy-Earth-Surface People or the five-fingered beings that they currently are, also known as Diné, meaning "the people." (Barber, 2002, pp. 8, 9) The Holy People throughout this time interacted with and influenced them, sometimes helping and occasionally hindering them. (Vecsey, 2015, p. 106) These stories, taken together, inform the Navajo people about how life works. Medicine men and elders have carefully learned these stories and have based their decisions upon them. They have taught their values to each generation in turn. This is the foundation of the values passed down from Diné parents to their children. (Yazzie, 2005, pp. 175, 176)

Ceremonies

The Navajo have had a strong oral language tradition. Each ceremony performed by a medicine person must be exactly without mistake in order to produce the correct results. (Austin, 2009, p. 57) This exactness is needed to drive off the illness or get the results needed to bring the

person back into good relationships with both himself or herself, those around him/her and the cosmos. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 181) Aspiring medicine men spend at least ten years under the daily tutorage of a practicing medicine man. (Austin, 2009, p. 56) All of this information is taught orally, passed from the mentor to the student, until the student can perform with perfection the same ceremony as it has been performed since its inception under the direction of the Holy People. This strictness provides continuous authentic preservation of the Navajo spiritual foundation. Over time, with exposure to other cultures and their spiritual beliefs, such as Mormonism and Christianity, the Navajo have held onto their own spiritual base. They are enabled to do this because of the basic spiritual belief that truth is not held by one singular viewpoint, but others may also have legitimate understanding to add to that truth. This makes the Diné able to add new information to their belief system as additional truth, while not being required to discard their own cultural creation stories as a way to understand life. (Austin, 2009, p. 59; Fixico, 2013, p. 201) This has allowed the cultural effect of other religions on Navajo beliefs and common law to be minimized.

Navajo Language

Some of the cultural and spiritual understanding is embedded in the Navajo language, much of which does not translate well into English due to differences between Navajo and Western World cultural origins. Precise English word equivalences do not exist for many Navajo terms, so using several words or general definitions can help get closer approximations of meaning. (Austin, 2009, p. 53) The hogan is an important word for this curriculum. Traditionally, family life begins in the hogan, with the father, mother and child. The continuous central fire testifies to the fact that the family is the central unit of the nation in perpetuity. (Austin, 2009, p. 76) The hogan is the center of "...Navajo nation building, because Navajo culture, knowledge, language, spirituality, identity and all things that compose the Navajo Nation flow outwards from inside the hogan." (Austin, 2009, p. 159) Family life then extends outward to the extended family and then to the clan. The hogan is where the child's spiritual understanding begins as ceremonies occur and prayers are given. This is also where, through intentional instruction, the child begins to learn the structure of k'ei and their own absolute responsibilities to their clan members. (Austin, 2009, p. 75) K'ei is the clan system by which all Navajo people are related in a powerful bond. K'e is the deep emotion of solidarity a Navajo has with their clan members. This bond causes all members to be treated equally as valued members of the tribe and is the motivation during peacemaking for restoring tribal members back to right standing with the tribe and themselves rather than punishing them. (Yazzie, 2005, pp.180-182) The child is "born for" and "owed obligations by their father's clan, and have obligations to it" although they "are said to "belong" to the mother's clan." (Austin, 2009, pp. 76, 77) K'ei provides a strong system of support for the central family unit. This is emphasized as the child learns to introduce themselves to others by the clans of their parents and grandparents. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, p. 329) The hogan is considered to be a living entity that protects its inhabitants both inside and outside the structure via the Holy People. (Austin, 2009, p. 76) As a Hogan is built, hogan songs are sung to remind the people to build a place that radiates beauty. It is a place expected to be an environment surrounded by and filled with hozho. Hozho is "that state of affairs where everything is in its proper place and functioning in harmonious relationship to everything else," including the interconnected elements of nature. (Austin, 2009, p. 54) There are too many fundamental elements of hozho to describe it in completeness, but some key parts would be living a full life,

healthy, at peace, in harmony, with satisfaction and understanding, and in right relationships with others and with nature. (Austin, 2009, p. 54)

Monsters

In the creation stories, the twin sons of Changing woman faced the naayeé or the monsters. This concept has been carried forward into modern Diné society, acting as a metaphor to describe disrupters of hozho. Things such as alcoholism, diabetes, social disputes, family breakups, domestic and gang violence, selfishness, jealousy, fear and child misbehavior can be termed as naayeé or monsters. (Austin, 2009, p. 61; Yazzie, 2005, p. 176) Many of these monsters have their origin in the long-term mistreatment of Navajo people by the US government, causing a loss of hope and self-respect. This cultural PTSD in turn creates some of the monsters. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 177; Zion, 2005, p. 89) Fortunately, there is a ceremonial problem-solving solution for these monsters so that hozho can be restored for the individual and those around them. (Austin, 2009, p. 61) These traditional ceremonies can provide healing because they are an exact match to Navajo culture.

Law Given by Holy People

Historically, the Diné people did not need a western civilization type of court system. The Holy People gave them their law or beehaz'annii from the start of time and "life comes from it" because it holds the core considerations of life. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 175) The held belief is that everyone is a valued member of the community and is serving a purpose by being in harmony, or even by not being in harmony, and that all of these behaviors together form a balance. (Vecsey, 2015, p. 99) The goal has never been to punish those out of harmony, but instead to return them to hozho and good relationships. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 181) Because of this, having a respected person speak to counsel the struggling person, or to hold a community meeting to help this person return to good relationships was enough. On occasion, a person was removed from the tribe, but even this was not a western civilization court-type action. (Barber, 2002, p. 22)

Peacemaking

Diné people did not need a court system specifically because they had an effective, functioning peacemaking process. (Craig, 1999, p. 297) The peacemaking process is essentially the same one still in use today. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 189) Before the meeting occurred, the parties mutually chose a peacemaker with the wisdom to guide the process with the ability to assist group thinking with connections from creation stories. The peacemaker's role was to guide the participants through the process. The process was to have all of the affected tribal members gather, including relatives and community members, to "talk out" their perspectives of the problem at hand, their needs related to the problem, and also to suggest possible solutions. The peacemaker likely had an opinion; however, he or she would not determine what decisions the parties must make. (Craig, 1999, p. 299) As the session began, the peacemaker would open with a prayer. This request for supernatural help would set the stage for being harmonious and having right attitudes as the meeting began. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, p. 333) There were no formal rules about how the meeting would proceed, allowing flexibility to work through the process as it fit the needs of the participants. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 183) It was the goal of the parties to be involved in full participation in this problem-solving process and come to a consensus decision that was final. (Craig, 1999, p. 299) Because punishment was not the goal, but restoration, all participants were able to openly address the situation. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 184) Every person who had a concern or

was affected by the situation was allowed to fully speak and be heard, not only about the event, but also what their feelings were and about how it affected them. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 182; Zion, 2005, p. 94) If one of the parties made excuses for their actions, the participants were able to respond to them by sharing their values or perceptions. (Zion, 2005, p. 95) Once the participants had “talked things out” and the dispute was resolved, it was considered strongly disrespectful to try to raise the matter up again. This is called the Navajo doctrine of finality today and is backed by a Navajo Nation Supreme Court decision. Complete resolution without later appeal is important in order for hozho to be restored because lingering issues can disturb peace. Finality of the consensus agreement allows forgiveness and healing of participants. (Austin, 2009, p.70-71) The focus of the Diné peacemaking session is the restoration of the wrongdoer to himself, restoration of tribal relationships, and the return of everyone to a state of hozho, or harmony and balance. Today, these decisions are filed with the trial courts so an official record is kept. (Yazzie, 2005, pp. 180, 181) This is a system where everyone is heard as well as all of their concerns considered in forming the solution and would be classified as a win-win situation. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 178)

Cultural Misunderstandings

A number of differences in core knowledge between cultures make Navajo understanding of adversarial courts difficult. For one, the adversarial court system has a history of trying to find out the “truth.” To that system, there is only one truth, and any variances from it are lies. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 179) In the Navajo culture, it is understood that there are many truths. One person may see something one way and another person perceive it another way. Both perspectives are accepted as truth. (Austin, 2009, p. 59) This causes difficulty with testimony in a one-truth courtroom. Secondly, the Navajo language has no word for guilty. Guilt is not a concept given by the Holy People because it indicates character faults and requires restitution. (Craig, 1999, p. 285) Instead, the perceived issue is a matter of being in hozho (harmony) or hochxo’ (disharmony) and the need to be reconciled back to a state of hozho. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 182) This makes it difficult for a Diné person to understand what they are agreeing to when asked to enter a plea of innocent or guilty for court matters. Thirdly, the Native solution is clearly to be returned to hozho, so punishment is a cultural disconnect that is not understandable as a reasonable choice for resolution. Another issue is the sacredness of the Diné language as given by the Holy People. This has many effects. One example is that when a consensus agreement is made in peacemaking court, the participants give their sacred word that they will follow through and carry it out. Deception is not expected to occur and their sacred word is binding. (Austin, 2009, p. 63) In contrast, in adversarial court systems, decisions can be appealed.

Introduction of Navajo Courts

The United States government required the Navajo people to begin their first U.S. government style court system in 1892. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 177) The Navajo people had just endured the infamous forced relocation to Fort Sumner by the US government. Upon their return to their homeland, which was also the newly established Navajo reservation, they were instructed to set up a representative Navajo government system. They did set up a three-branch government, but refused at that time to adopt a Bureau of Indian Affairs pre-determined constitution for their new government. Under pressure, they established the required Navajo Court of Indian Offenses, lasting from 1892 until 1959. This US government styled court was a “puppet” court strictly

controlled by the federal government, despite it being a Navajo Nation court system. The court was revamped in 1959 to adopt the Bureau of Indian Affairs Law and Order Code, and at the time the system was renamed the Courts of the Navajo Nation. The Navajo felt compelled to set up this judicial branch in 1959 because they were afraid that if they didn't that the states would take over court jurisdiction on the reservation. (Lopez, 2000, pp. 290, 291) This BIA system also was alien to Navajo custom because of its use of force and power instead of consensus, but it was better than the former system of 1892 because the Navajo had more control over it. This court remains to the present. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 186) Ninety years after the creation of the Navajo court system, in 1982, Navajo peacemaking was officially brought back into the Navajo government court system through the addition of the Navajo Peacemaker Court. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, p. 328; Craig, 1999, p. 297) The peacemaking process is a legal option on the reservation that is often encouraged by judges and chosen as an option by many Navajo citizens today. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 187) The Western style adversarial court system of litigation is still being used on the Navajo Nation, but there has been a change in its focus since 1982 to working to return to more traditional ways, giving it a culturally different basis than those off reservation courts. A strong move has been made to research Navajo values and reflect those in the Navajo Nation courts, both procedurally and in judgments. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, p. 328) There has also been a new emphasis since 1982 to restore participants to hozho, or harmony, even in the Navajo courts of litigation. (Austin, 2009, p. 66)

US Government Courts

The newly established nation of the United States, formed in 1776, structured their own legal system after the monarchical Western World's courts due to their familiarity with that system. As a result, the United States has used an adversarial court system model since its conception. A judge with hierarchal power controls all participants' actions in the courtroom. He makes decisions that affect the disputants, but the parties have very little say or input into those decisions. He dictates his decision according to set law and the parties must obey or be penalized. There are winners, losers and strict rules for punishment if the defendant is found guilty. Justice is perceived as the punishment of wrongdoers to teach them a lesson rather than addressing the multiple needs of the people involved or solving the underlying issues. (Craig, 1999, p. 289; Yazzie, 2005, pp. 177, 178) The proceedings are very formal. Parties often do very little talking themselves, their lawyers instead talking in their behalf, and what the parties do say is strictly limited by the judge. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 178) Often, disputants leave the courtroom still feeling that they have not been heard and in a state of turmoil rather than healing. They often continue to bear ill feelings toward the other parties of the dispute. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 179) The Native peoples had difficulty with this Western court system from the moment that they encountered being affected by it. They did not understand this form of justice and were unable to effectively participate in it due to the learned core concepts of their tribes. It was a cultural disconnect. (Yazzie, 2005, p. 177)

Comparison of Resolution Methods

The US government court system has been using some alternative dispute processes such as mediation and arbitration to assist settling disputes outside of the courtroom. These differ from the Navajo peacemaking system. The peacemaker is representing cultural values and understandings and is allowed to be a relative of the parties in the meeting. Since Navajo common law is based on creation stories, the peacemakers can pray and relay spiritual messages

to influence the participants. The peacemaking sessions can allow anyone affected by the situation, even the whole community, to participate. Participants are encouraged to share how they feel about the events that created the dispute. Mediators and arbitrators, on the other hand, cannot be relatives of the parties, must be considered neutral and cannot encourage spiritual values for dispute resolution, such as prayer or religious stories. Mediation generally excludes third parties from participation. It encourages coming to an agreement, but it is usually focused on finding a solution, rather than repairing emotions, a return to harmony, and restoration of relationships. Mediation and arbitration have time limits and a format to follow, but peacemaking continues on as long as needed and the format is flexible within the meeting to ensure full participation. Peacemaking includes elements of mediation and arbitration, but it is clearly not the same thing. (Bluehouse & Zion, 1993, p. 334, 335)

Navajo Nation Government Structure

The Navajo Nation formed a three-branch government system in 1892 at the instruction of the US government when they moved onto the newly formed Navajo reservation. It works on a system of checks and balances. The three branches are the legislative branch that legislates and amends laws, the judicial branch that interprets laws and disperses legal judgments, and the executive branch which implements and upholds the laws. The legislative branch is made up of the 24 members of the Navajo Nation Council, representing the 110 chapters. Council members are elected by the nation's citizens to four-year terms. They can be re-elected unlimited times. The Navajo Nation also has a second layer of government, which is the chapter system made up of smaller population areas with 110 chapter houses where members meet for discussion and where various services are provided for the people. The President and Vice President of the executive branch are also elected by the citizens for no more than two 4-year terms. (Austin, 2009, p. 16, 17) The Navajo Nation has a bi-level court system, consisting of the basic Trial Courts and the Navajo Nation Supreme Court of Appeals. Under the supervision of the trial courts is an extension called Navajo Peacemaking Court, to which both criminal and civil cases can be referred. (Barber, 2002, p. 22) (Austin, 2009, p. 22) The Nation has never adopted a constitution, but did enact its first Navajo Nation Bill of Rights in 1967 to protect the rights of individual citizens. (Austin, 2009, p. 16) It does have a code of laws referred to as the Navajo Nation Code. The capital is in Window Rock, Arizona.

Teaching Strategies

Role Play

Students are given a scenario, the name of the person whose role they will play, the basic information that everyone knows, information that only they know, and a little bit about what that person is like. They will participate in this fictional scenario using impromptu acting and try to resolve a dispute using peacemaking procedures.

Basketball

Students answer a question on a blank sheet of paper, using only the top half to write on. They do not need to write their name on it. They wad it up and throw it into a basket on the floor. When all the papers are in the basket, the students go back up and pull out one piece of wadded up paper that is not their own. If they get their own, they must trade. Next, they write whether

they agree or disagree with the original writer and explain why in detail or add a suggestion. The teacher pulls name sticks and has the students called on share quickly about their paper.

Peacemaking Circles

This will be done on a day that there is an evident dispute among students in the class. Students will sit in a circle with a talking stick provided. A peacemaker (teacher) will begin the session by having everyone practice some relaxation to put them into an appropriate problem-solving frame of mind. The teacher will ask if anyone wants to indicate they want to speak by doing a motion, such as waving at the teacher or putting their hand on their elbow, etc. Only the student with the talking stick may speak. Everyone else needs to use active listening skills. Students who feel they have been slighted or injured should speak before the person who slighted or injured them. By this time, they will have role played fictional scenarios, should know the rules of participation, and will be able to follow the procedures for peacemaking. Each student that is affected and wants to speak may, including what happened, how they feel about it and any suggestions for a solution. Students must not show rudeness or be inconsiderate to other students. Student may comment about values, class rules that apply, tell a story that might help, etc. The end goal is that in the end, the affected students work out a consensus agreement over a solution. This basic plan can be written down and all affected parties sign it. The agreement is considered to be final.

Classroom Activities

Create Classroom Rules

Have the students tell the whole class different rules that they have had at home. Ask if any of those rules might work at school. Have them tell the whole class rules they remember from other classes at school before. Did they find them useful or not? Tell the students that this year they should think of either rules or positive ideas about what they should do instead of always what they shouldn't do and why they believe that. Have students work with a neighbor to discuss what they think the most important idea for the classroom is. They should either write this on a sticky note and put it on a poster which two students will sort into categories, or, if they have technology, the pairs of students can compile their rules on one shared Google Doc with all class members' editing enabled. If they are online, read the rules to them and have them thumbs up the ones they think should go on the class rules list. Tell them that this is a living list and will be reviewed after a few lessons as a living document that can be changed once it becomes clearer just what rules this particular class feels it needs. Tell them you will return to the idea of class rules after you do some storybook analysis together.

Return to this list after the Small Group Book Analysis for common law themes presentation and revise the class rules. Consider charting the rules and labeling it "Common Law." Tell them that means the whole class naturally agrees that this is how we should behave. Revise it again after the hogan lesson and occasionally after that as well. Keep the list active in the students' minds. This will help during peacemaking sessions.

Small Group Book Analysis

Explain the concept of common law. Students will need to understand what common law is, as it applies to any cultural group. The students will read some short, well known varied-culture children's books or stories to begin to notice common law ideas, or cultural moral

understandings are written into stories. The class will focus on the idea that stories are used by adults to train youth in the values of their culture. This can be done whole class or cut into smaller groups. Appropriate stories would be any Aesop's Fables, the Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, or similar stories.

Use "basketball" from the teaching methods listed above. The students can take notes on identical sheets of paper as they/you read the stories in the paragraph above out loud. They don't need to put their name on them. When the reading is done, have them wad them up and throw them into a basket. Each student then pulls out a wadded paper that is not their own. They write below the other students' notes whether they agree about the book's common law themes or not and why. They can add suggestions or comments about what they think the common law ideas might be. Complete this with a share-out by pulling name sticks and having students share about the paper in their possession.

On another day, put the students in small groups of four using the books listed in the Student Reading Resources list in this curriculum, or choose other Native American books that have common law themes. Give each group a different book. One student should read the book to the others, or take turns reading a page. Each student takes their own notes about the common law themes or they pass the same paper each time a new one is identified. When the reading is done, they take a highlighter and highlight all of the common law ideas they agree on from their notes. Now they make a quick sketch poster to present to the class of what the common law themes of the book are. They will read the book to the class and then make a quick presentation of the common law. The students listening to the book can add new common law ideas onto sticky notes and add them to the poster.

The online school version of this would be to use pre-recorded audio versions of the books and assign one book to each group of four students to listen to. In this way, without the physical book available, the students can still hear the book and each group can take notes on their own book's common law themes and make a slide or two in Google docs to share with the class during a class-wide presentation day.

Role Play

I will introduce the students to a peacemaking handbook that I have created to familiarize them with the process. Students will learn about the Navajo peacemaking process as described above, with the points included of "talking it out" without making accusations or devaluing others, negotiating towards a solution acceptable to all affected parties, gaining group consensus, and the finality of the agreement. They will then use the peacemaking model and the class' previously constructed living common law document to resolve some fictional practice cases. They will sit in a circle so that all students are equals, using a talking stick to pass to promote speaking in turn. After these practice sessions, the class will begin to use this process at the request of students for real incidents that occur within our classroom.

Note: the hand book and several role-playing scenarios are included as an attachment to this curriculum.

Hogan Lesson

Students will make individual posters showing the parts of a hogan (sometimes spelled differently) to the best of their ability. They will label the ideas that show how the hogan

represents ke'i', family unity, protection and nation building. Don't forget to note songs as it is being built and to add hozho to it. Students should write the words hogan, ke'i', k'e and hozho on the back of their poster and define them.

Note: use the information about hogans under the content heading "Navajo Language" to get information about hogans.

The online school version of this is to make a poster at home, take a picture of both the fronts and back and upload the picture to submit it to the teacher online. Another option is to use a program such as Paint to design a drawing to upload into Google slides or onto one long shared Google doc having the students upload as they finish so they can all enjoy each other's submissions.

Navajo and US Government Structure Comparisons

Fifth grade Arizona state standards cover teaching U.S. government structure as well as how different groups affect society. There are four choices here. Choice 1: Students will use a pre-made Venn diagram to compare the format of the U.S. government to the format of the Navajo government. Choice 2: An alternative could be to compare and contrast the U.S. and Navajo court systems. Choice 3: Comparing the court systems could also be accomplished as a timeline with the Navajo peacemaking extending far before the U.S. government existed since peacemaking existed first. Choice 4: Lastly, the methodology of the two court systems, U.S. and Navajo could be diagrammed. All of the information you need to do any of these projects is included in the content section of this curriculum.

Assessments

Choice 1: Each of the individual assignments above could be used as an assessment to check for understanding in an online school setting for that section of the curriculum. Choice 2: A strong option for a final assessment would be for each student to develop a five paragraph essay with an introductory paragraph, three detail paragraphs and a concluding paragraph that explain the three most important things they learned or understood from this curriculum. Choice 3: A third option would be for each student to design their own version of what they learned to present to the class. They could submit ideas for approval by the teacher for projects representing peacemaking such as a shadow box, a painting, a role play script, a game they invent, a video production of their own design, a puppet play, a story book they designed explaining peacemaking, an interview with someone involved in peacemaking, or any other project the teacher approves in advance.

Alignment with Standards

Diné standards:

SIC-F2. PO1 Understand the roles and responsibilities shared by primary and extended clan family members in the past and recognize how each member contributes to the well being of a clan family.

This standard is found in the study of the hogan, which reveals the place where the family unit builds the nation from within their home, extending outward to include the roles and responsibilities of clan members uniting in powerful bonds.

S2C F1. PO5 Identify acceptable and unacceptable cultural traits: exemplify an understanding for honoring and respecting the privacy and belongings of other people (e.g., rumors, gossip, stealing, destroying property, being deceitful, dishonest)

The basis of peacemaking depends upon these standards being upheld. This is supported by students analyzing storybooks for common law themes.

S3C F1PO8 Work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals; utilize the traditional Navajo concept of k'e.

As students use teamwork to build class rules and to support each other in peacemaking meetings, they will build bonds of support.

S3C F4. PO7 Participate in setting up a system to resolve conflicts utilizing the fundamental concepts of Navajo "Peacemaker" court system.

Identifying key rules and the structure of supportive interactions will enable students to structure and participate in peacemaking within classroom meetings.

Common Core Standards:

5.SP1.3 Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant changes and continuities. (diversity represented)

Students will compare and contrast the United States government court system to the Navajo peacemaking system.

5.SP2.2 Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

Students will look at differences in perspectives as they consider tribal structure and compare and contrast the US court system to the Navajo peacemaking system.

5.C4.2 Use a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions about and act on issues and civic problems in their classrooms and schools.

The students will form a peacemaking court structure within their class meetings.

Resources

Recommended Teacher Background Reading

Barber, H. (2002, October 6). Navajo common law project.

<http://www.navajocourts.org/indexnclp.htm>

Pinto, J. (2000). Peacemaking as ceremony: The mediation model of the Navajo Nation. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(3), 267-286

Vecsey, C. (2015). Navajo morals and myths, ethics and ethicists. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 43(1), 78-121. doi:10.1111/jore.12087

Yazzie, R. (2005). "Life comes from it": Navajo justice concepts. *New Mexico Law Review* 14(1): 175-184.

Student Reading/Resources

Browne, V. F. & Yazzie, J. (2008). *The stone cutter and the Navajo maiden*. Flagstaff, AZ: Salinas Bookshelf.

Hunter, S. and Julia Miner, J. (2007). *The unbreakable code*. Cooper Square Publishers.

Oughton, J. (1992). *How the stars fell into the sky*. Sandpiper Houghton Mifflin.

Roessel, M. (1993). *Kinaalda*. Scholastic Books.

Tahe, R.A, Flood, N. B. & Nelson, J. (2018). *First laugh, welcome, baby*. Penguin, Random House.

Whitethorne, B., Sr. (2001). *Father's boots*. Flagstaff, AZ: Salinas Bookshelf.

Whitethorne, B. (1994). *Sunpainters: The eclipse of the Navajo sun*. Flagstaff, AZ: Salinas Bookshelf.

The proceeding books read aloud can be found online via an internet search. The ones I couldn't find already pre-recorded, I recorded myself. The links are below.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UfEwStNQLLf9wbf9Z1_LiimsqCI6b7/view Link to Read Aloud "How the stars fell into the sky" by Jerrie Oughton

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zb1o4sHCRv6zMAxcHtlKmVDeSo9j8m_r/view Link to Read Aloud "Father's boots" by Baje Whitethorne, Sr.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15LhR4go7OuZGzb9FmtxY_jQqgF5EU8Ov/view Link to Read Aloud "The stone cutter & the Navajo maiden" by Vee F. Browne

Materials for Classroom Use

1 talking stick

The three Scenarios attached at the end of this curriculum

Talking Circle handbook attachment to this curriculum

Student books to read or pre-recordings of these books (see list above)

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Scenario #1

The Big, Bad Bike Dispute

Jared

Jared rode up to the school and tried to put his tired old red dirt bike in the bike rack. He parked his bike in the same spot every day. He didn't feel real secure about himself. His dad isn't around anymore and his mom is tired when she gets home because she has to work. She tries to help him with his homework some, but she has to get supper ready, and sometimes he just doesn't even do his homework. She is too tired to care much.

Jared gets a little defensive sometimes because he needs some good attention. He gets some, but it doesn't feel like enough. He'd like to stay after school sometimes and mess around with some of the kids at the park across the street, but his mom won't let him. She wants him at home when she arrives home from work.

He sees someone has put their green bike in his spot. Somehow this doesn't sit well with him. Their safety chain is really loose, so he just shifts the bike over one slot and puts his in where it usually goes. He feels a little smug about moving the other kid's bike and hopes that it sends a message that they shouldn't have taken his spot.

When Jared came out after school to go home that day, he found his bike in the rack at an angle. The bike beside his was gone. Then he noticed that there was a wad of messy bubble gum on the seat of his bike, and he couldn't get it cleaned completely off without better cleaning supplies.

He saw two girls from his class, Mable and Kleck standing not far off chatting and giggling to each other. The buses had already left. Must be parent pick-ups. He wondered what they thought was so funny?

Just then a kid in his class, Erick, walked up and asked "What's up?" Jared told him about the bubble gum and the bike being at an angle. Jared thought it was all done by the kid whose bike was next to his that morning. He didn't tell Erick that he had moved the other kid's bike earlier.

Erick said that he had noticed the new kid in their class, Alex, was standing over in that area after school. He hadn't noticed what the bike looked like that Alex rode off on, but it might have been him.

Jared is very frustrated, but he knows he can ask for help at the peacemaking class in the morning. He thinks he knows who did all of that to his bike and he just wants the new kid, Alex, to admit it and stop it.

Scenario #1

The Big, Bad Bike Dispute

Erick

Erick had come out of the school early when school got out. He had asked the new kid, Alex, for a piece of bubble gum since he seemed to be sharing with kids. Alex had told him he was sorry, but no, so Erick had headed on out the classroom door and now he was in front of the school.

Erick was a walker, but he stalled even though the crossing guard asked him if he hadn't better get going. He was having too much fun teasing girls, and besides, if he went home he'd probably just have to walk the dog or start his homework and he didn't want to. He loved to goof around more than anything.

He had seen Mable and Kleck standing far from each other earlier. Mable was clear past the bike rack and Kleck was near the school panther statue. He decided to tease Mable a little just to keep things interesting. He sauntered over near her. "What's that leaking out of your backpack?" he asked. "Better clean that up before it gets on your new shoes!" There wasn't really anything leaking out of her backpack, but he had fun seeing the sudden disturbed look on her face. Then he walked away while Mable quickly took her backpack off. She smelled good, kind of like bubble gum.

As he walked away, he vaguely noticed the new kid, Alex, in the bike rack area struggling a little bit. It looked like he was having some trouble getting some smaller kid to cooperate. Little kids sometimes get in the way when you're trying to get things done.

Erick kept on walking. He had seen that Kleck had some cookies. Maybe he could get one from her. "Those cookies look good! Got an extra one?" he asked. "It's my friend's birthday," she answered. "I'm supposed to hold them for her, not give them away."

"Can't you spare just one?" he begged. He could see that she wasn't going to give in and Mable was headed their way, so he turned to move on when he saw Jared. It looked like Jared was irritated and was shifting his bike around in the rack. Erick walked over to him.

"Just look at this!" Jared said. "My bike is all pushed around and there is bubble gum on the seat!"

Just then Erick remembered seeing the new kid, Alex, standing near the bike rack a little bit ago. He made sure to tell Jared that information before he left to cross the street and head for home.

#1

The Big Bad Bike Dispute

Mable

Mable had followed the kids down the hall and out the front door when the dismissal bell rang. She had a new wad of bubble gum in her mouth that she popped in just as she exited the school door. She saw Kleck already outside. Just then, Kleck's little brother stepped up and was all excited because he had made a super paper airplane. He held it high in the air and excitedly jumped around. Just then, a bigger kid ran past, grabbed the airplane, kept running and then threw the airplane past the bike racks.

Mable had a very kind heart. She couldn't bear to see anyone get their feelings hurt. She saw that Kleck had her hands full with a partial box of cookies and, when her little brother dropped to the ground crying, she needed to help him settle down. Mable offered to go get the airplane and took off toward the bike rack.

She noticed the new kid, Alex, struggling a little with some kid at the bike rack. She thought she might help him when she got done helping Kleck's little brother, if he was still there.

She bent over to pick up the paper airplane, but just then she tripped a little and started to say "Ouch!" Just as she began to open her mouth, her bubble gum slipped out into the grass. She didn't want to leave it there for someone to step in, so she looked for a bit and, having no luck, straightened up. Just then Erick came by and told her she had something dripping out of her backpack. Dismayed, she jerked her backpack off to look, but there was nothing leaking. That Erick! He was always teasing everyone.

She slid her backpack back on and glanced around once more for her missing gum. Then she remembered Alex, but he was already gone. It looked like he had solved the problem himself, she thought. She knew that a new kid at school must need people to be extra kind so they could feel like they fit in.

Kleck's little brother seemed better already, too. He was running around the flagpole now. She walked toward Kleck, noticing Erick just walking away from her. She told Kleck about her missing gum and she and Kleck started giggling.

Mable still felt a little frustrated that Erick had tried to play that trick on her and had made her remove her backpack for no reason. She wished he'd stop teasing everyone. It wasn't very kind or helpful. She thought she might bring it up in the morning during peacemaking circle.

#1

The Big Bad Bike Dispute

Kleck

Kleck wasn't feeling very well. She had stayed up late playing video games, and the school day felt like it was so long! She stepped outside the front door of the school after dismissal, when her good friend Abby had asked her to hold a half empty box of birthday cookies so she could go back inside the school to use the bathroom. Boy, was she ever gone a long time!

The new kid in class, Alex, came by half running after some little kid with a nosebleed. Alex followed him toward the bike racks.

In the next few minutes, her friend Mable was passing by when her little brother, who was very happy and waving something in the air for her to see, suddenly was throwing a tantrum. He dropped to the ground and wailed. Kleck was starting to develop a bad headache. Everything was just happening too fast and her head was spinning. She didn't even know why her brother was crying.

Mable stopped and said "Are you okay, Kleck? You take care of your little brother and I'll go find it." Find what? Things were happening so fast that Kleck had missed parts of what had gone on.

"Get up!" she said to her brother, but he just lay on the ground at her feet and snuffled and looked in the direction Mable had gone.

"She's nice!" he said. In another few minutes he was up and moving toward the flagpole.

Erick, the class practical joker, was on his way walking over to Kleck. His practical jokes weren't always that nice. He asked her for a cookie, but they belonged to Abby and she told him no. He saw Mable approaching and left to go visit Jared at the bike rack. They didn't seem too happy, but Mable handed Kleck the little brother's lost airplane. "So that's what it was he was crying about!" thought Kleck. She took a deep breath of fresh air and felt a little better. Things were calming down.

Mable told her about her missing gum that she couldn't locate and they both giggled. That felt better! Abby came out and took her cookies from Kleck. Whew! It was about time!

Scenario #1

The Big Bad Bike Dispute

Alex

Alex was the new kid in school. He was trying to fit in, but it was a slow process. He believed things would be okay and he'd find some friends in the next few days. He had brought some bubble gum to school, not as a bribe exactly, you know, but maybe if he handed a piece or two to a few kids one of them might want to at least say "hi" next time they saw him. That might speed things up. He had handed one on his way out of the classroom door to Mable, the super nice girl in the class, as she was putting on her backpack. He hoped she was as nice as he thought she was. Erick had asked him for one too, but he only had one left, so he had saved it for his own little brother.

It had been a long school day and he had tried to do everything just right all day to fit in. As he was walking down the hallway at dismissal, his little brother saw him and ran right up to him to grab the piece of bubble gum Alex held out to him. It was kind of nice to see him until he ran right into Alex's elbow and suddenly had a bloody nose. Now that was something he could get teased about for sure, but Alex loved his little brother and Alex knew he was suffering from the new school blues too, so Alex grabbed a couple of Kleenexes from a classroom they were passing. When they got outside, his little brother had gotten ahead of him and was at the bike rack already. Alex held the Kleenexes over his brother's nose and pinched it a little to show him how to stop the bleeding. It worked, but not before he had taken a sudden breath from the lack of oxygen and sort of coughed. The little brother looked around a little bit with a sort of confused look on his face and shoved a red bike next to his own over a little bit. When Alex asked him what was wrong, he said "Nothing."

It was strange that his little brother's bike chain was kind of twisted around, and that made it difficult to get it off the rack, but Alex managed. Wasn't his brother's green bike on the very end this morning? Oh well. It didn't really matter. He just wanted to get home. His little brother rode his bike as Alex walked quickly alongside him. They were headed for home.

Scenario #2

The Case of the Missing Takis

Shelby

Shelby was tickled. Her mother had finally given in and packed her some Takis for lunch. For sure, it was a very small package, but still it was a package all of her own. Some of her classmates had been feeling sorry for her and had been giving her one or two when they ate theirs. They were so good, and it felt good to be part of the group. But that would come later. For now, she had to endure the bus ride to school.

"I have Takis in my lunchbox," she sang out as she dropped into the bus seat next to Angel. Angel just grinned and held up her hand for a high five.

"I'm glad for you," she said

"I'm not!" said Catt, who was a sour old grump most of the time.

What did she have to be so sour about anyway? Shelby had never done anything to her. She just pretended like she didn't hear Catt's grumpy comments on the bus.

Shelby opened her backpack and pulled out a ruler. She wanted to use it to help her draw a straight line on a picture she was drawing. She didn't bother to zip it back up because she was going to have to put the ruler back in. Before you knew it, they were at the school.

Shelby got all the way to the classroom before she noticed her lunchbox had fallen out of her backpack. It was probably still on the bus, or in the hallway, or.....???? She wondered whether Catt had found it since she had to exit the bus behind Shelby. She hoped so. Catt would probably bring it to her when she entered the classroom in a minute, but Catt didn't come in a minute. She was even late for the bell.

Shelby didn't want to ask about the lunchbox right then, so she put up her hand and waited until the teacher called on her. "Can I go look for my lunchbox?" she asked the teacher.

"Okay, but don't be gone long," she said. "Try the front office if you don't see it in the hallway."

Catt didn't say a word, so Shelby was pretty sure she hadn't seen it. Catt could be hard to get along with, but surely she would have picked it up or told her she knew where it was. That was just the right thing to do!

Shelby walked down the hall, but no lunchbox. She stopped at the front office, and sure enough, it was there. It didn't look quite right, though. It was wet and a little smashed like it had been jumped on. She quickly unzipped it and found her drink container and her Takis missing. Her lunchbox was wet.

She returned to the classroom just as mad as could be. Who had taken her drink and her Takis and smashed her lunchbox?

Scenario #2

The Case of the Missing Takis

Angel

Angel was a happy girl, but if there was one thing she just could not get over, it was her fear of people getting mad at her. It made her so uncomfortable when they did that she would actually break out in a heavy sweat and have some trouble breathing. When it happened though, she tried to act normal and be by herself until she felt better. That usually only took a few minutes.

Today she had almost missed the bus. She knew how mad that would make her mother. The thought of it made her feel stress, and with stress, well.... Then Shelby got on the bus and sat next to her. That made her relax. She felt so much better as Shelby shared her good news about her mother finally sending Takis to school in her lunch. For once, Shelby would feel like one of the rest of the girls. Angel was truly happy for her. They high-fived before they settled in for the ride.

When the bus stopped, Shelby jumped right up and moved down the aisle. Angel had to gather her stuff up first. Another girl on the bus, Catt, had been a little bit grumpy this morning. She had even said to Shelby that she wasn't glad she had Takis. That wasn't very nice, but Catt was often not very nice and so Angel just tried to stay out of her way.

As Angel picked up her last item, she noticed Shelby's lunchbox knocked under the seat. "I know she will really want that," Angel thought. Her hands were awkwardly full, but she managed to pick up the lunchbox.

She walked up the aisle and stepped off the bus. That little step off made her drop the lunchbox just next to the wheel of the bus. She turned to pick it up, but a teacher yelled at her to get off the curb and the bus pulled out, partly smashing Shelby's lunchbox.

All of a sudden Angel was hot and miserable. She was afraid her friend Shelby would be disappointed, or even worse, angry. Angel just couldn't bear it. She ran into the school building, leaving the teacher to pick up the lunchbox.

She turned around once and saw the teacher zipping open a dripping lunchbox. That looked so bad! She made up her mind not to tell anyone what had happened.

Scenario #2

The Case of the Missing Takis

Catt

Catt had already had such a bad morning. She lived with her grandma and grandpa, and her grandpa was in the hospital. They had taken him to the hospital several days ago to have heart surgery and she wasn't sure how long it would be until he came out again. Even when he did, there would be doctor bills to pay, and Catt knew they still hadn't paid off the last ones. Her poor grandparents! She was afraid she was a burden to them with so little money to go around. Catt even tried to eat more free lunch at school and less food at home as a secret way to try to help out. She was sure hungry right now!

She had made up her mind that as she entered the school that she would stop at the front office and ask to see the counselor. She needed to talk this out with someone. All of this had made her want to cry all the time. She found herself being grumpy with people so they wouldn't ask her any questions and just stay away. On one hand that was what she wanted, but on the other hand she really just wanted someone to tell her they cared, to cry with her and let her cry until she was all cried out. But no, she wouldn't show that to her classmates. She would put on her strong face.

She came into the room late, feeling a little better after telling the counselor what was going on and eating a granola bar the counselor had given her

Shelby was saying something to the teacher about her lunchbox, and she left to look for it. Catt noticed that Angel was acting a little strange. She seemed a little bit pale and like she was having a little trouble breathing. Catt wondered if it would help Angel as much as it had helped her to go visit the counselor's office. She wished she could suggest it, but class was starting. She wanted to tell Angel she was sorry for being so irritable this morning on the bus, but she couldn't. It would have to wait.

Scenario #3

The Other Case of the Missing Takis

Brett

Brett was waiting at the bus stop. He had the good luck of having a big bag of fuego Takis that he was showing off. He loved to play football and he loved to eat Takis. He liked it that his friends liked to eat Takis. Sometimes they would bring a bunch of them to lunch and all of his buddies would eat them at the same time. They'd have a contest to see how many they could eat in a row before they had to drink something to cool themselves down.

He threw the Takis back into his backpack as the bus pulled up. He didn't want to get yelled at by the bus driver because the driver mistakenly thought he'd opened food on the bus. No. That would ruin some of his fun.

He got on the bus and sat about halfway down the aisle. He saw Angel and Catt on the bus already as usual. They both looked a little down in the dumps. But for him, it was going to be a great day.

The bus jerked forward, and at the next stop, Shelby got on. She was all excited about the tiny bag of Takis she was waving around. He pulled his out to show her just to make her jealous. The bus driver started yelling, "No food on the bus!" so he put his away.

"I might share some of my Takis with Shelby later," he thought. She was so excited about that tiny bag of Takis and he felt a little bit bad for showing his big bag of Takis off to her.

At lunch time, the boys had their usual Takis contest. He didn't want to actually win. He wanted his stomach to feel good while he played football, so he still had about half of the bag left. He saw Thomas sitting there and asked if he could take the rest of his Takis back to the classroom and throw them in his backpack. Thomas said he was going back to do a make-up test anyway, so no problem.

Brett went outside to play football during recess, and when everyone came in from recess, he sat in his seat and got quickly to work on his warm-up. When the last bell rang, he grabbed his backpack and

started to shove his books into it, but then he remembered to move his Takis so they wouldn't get crushed. They weren't there. And Thomas wasn't there either. He had raced out the door as fast as he could.

Brett usually wasn't suspicious, but there was Shelby with her little bag of Takis all gone, and there was Thomas who was already out the door. He told the teacher about the missing Takis before he left for the bus.

Scenario #3

The Other Case of the Missing Takis

Thomas

Thomas went to school in the morning knowing that he had a dental appointment right after school. He was looking forward to getting his braces off. He was so excited about it that he had trouble going to sleep the night before.

Thomas didn't like to play football. He liked to play video games and he liked to build crazy looking contraptions out of things he found around the house. He had made some pretty cool stuff. Sometimes he went into the classroom at lunchtime to "catch up on work" when he really wasn't doing work at all. He was just drawing.

Today at lunch, Brett had asked Thomas to put his leftover Takis in his backpack for him, and Thomas had been glad to do that. No problem. He knew what Brett's backpack looked like. It had a cool design that said Fortnite on it. Once he got in the classroom, he glanced around the room for the Fortnite backpack and threw the Takis into it.

When school was over, he had to run outside quickly to meet his mother to get to the dentist appointment on time.

Hooray! The braces were coming off!

Scenario #3

The Other Case of the Missing Takis

Sam

It was just any ordinary day. Sam had been thinking about the next thing he would program onto his computer. He had just learned some cool new coding and he loved to mess around with it for hours. He was a little bit shy, so he sometimes felt more comfortable with the computer than with people.

It had been a pretty normal day at school. Everyone had been fussing about Takis again. Sam didn't really care for them, but he pretended to in order to sound like everyone else. Truthfully, he'd rather eat healthy food. Sometimes the Takis could make his stomach hurt, but he'd never tell anyone that.

At lunch, kids had been eating their Takis and he had to act eager when they offered him some instead of just saying no like he wanted to. He had eaten a few of Brett's when someone asked him why he didn't ever have his own. He just said his parents didn't want to buy them, so he had to do without. Brett listened in and then offered Sam two more Takis, which Sam felt like he had to accept. He smiled at Brett and said, "Gee, thanks!" Just then Brett took off, disappearing along with his Takis, and Sam didn't see him again until after recess. Sam had gone outside and messed around on the monkey bars a little. It was good to be outside.

When the bell rang that afternoon, Sam lingered at his desk and picked out the books he wanted to take home. He slid them into his backpack. He could hear some boys talking about Takis and something about Thomas at the back of the room, but he had no interest in their conversation, so he left for his walk home.

At home, he did some coding. It got kind of late, so he thought he'd have to get out his schoolwork and get some of it done. When he slid his books out of his brand new Fortnite backpack, he discovered a half bag of Takis. He sure did like his new backpack. This was only the second day he had taken it to school. Thinking about it now, he thought Brett had probably stuck his leftover Takis in there. After all, Brett had

been sympathetic at lunch earlier that day when he heard Sam say that his parents wouldn't buy them for him.

Sam felt a little bit honored, and he really considered eating a few, but he actually, truly didn't care for Takis. He thought he would thank Brett tomorrow for the Takis and think of something nice to do for him in return. When his homework was finished, Sam walked into the kitchen and threw the Takis into the trash. After all, Brett would never know he had tossed them out instead of eating them.