

Indigenous Literature as a Window into Social and Emotional Learning

Say what you mean!

James Jones

Diné Institute for Navajo Nation Educators (DINÉ)

2022

Author Note:

James Jones is a Navajo Language teacher at Mount Elden Middle School within the Flagstaff Unified School District which is located in Flagstaff, Arizona. Correspondence about this curriculum unit can be addressed to James Jones. Email contact: [jjones1@fUSD1.org](mailto:jjones1@fUSD1.org) or [jamesjones.edu@gmail.com](mailto:jamesjones.edu@gmail.com)

## Context

Sinagua Middle School or SMS, one of the two middle schools, part of the Flagstaff Unified School District. The school was part of three high schools within FUSD from 1989 and closed 2009. Then it reopened as one of the two middle schools. The school has grades from 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Currently, the school has enrollment about 1000+ diverse students (Anglo, Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, and other nationalities). The school has certified and classified staff, employed, including administration, teachers, para professional, admin, cooks, and janitors.

Students who attend SMS, come from nearby communities of Flagstaff like Kachina Village, Mountaineer, Doney Park, Munds Park, Parks, Lake Mary area, Mormon Lake, Belmont, to name a few. Some students also come from small communities from the Navajo reservation like Leupp, Birdsprings, Dilkon, Cameron, Tolani Lakes, etc. The students that go to school at SMS live within their school boundaries or come to school within a 90-mile radius either by bus or other means of transportation.

According to the information provided by the district, the classes for each of the grades (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>) has a student-teacher ratio of 17-1. That is because there are multiple classes of the same subjects to balance out the student enrollment and participation. The students take core classes with some elective classes. Core and elective programs were created so students can select their elective programs, however, their core classes have been selected for them. Among the elective classes being offered is the Navajo Language. The other language class that students take is Spanish.

Students whom are new to the Navajo language have struggled because students did not learn in a way the teacher presented the lessons. Students in the Navajo classes knew the very basic meanings and two-word conversations. Another factor to their struggles was that they came from other elementary schools within the school district, where Navajo language and lessons is being taught only focusing on basic animals, numbers, and basic questions and answers and not so with writing or reading in the language either. Some Navajo language and culture are taught in the English language for translation purposes, but Navajo to be taught like ELA will be most difficult and challenging for the teachers and students simply because the teacher has to be fluent in reading, writing, speaking, etc.

The group of students that will be coming into the Navajo class, will be placed in one of the two classes. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders were in the Intro to Navajo class or Phase 1 Navajo (beginner and/or intermediate) while the 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be in Navajo 1(intermediate to advance). For some this will be new, to both the teacher and the students, both classes will be taught the same lessons or themes. There is a Navajo assessment that is given to students at the beginning of the school year and another during winter and at the end of the school year. This assessment is called DOPLA (Diné Oral Language Proficiency Assessment). This test indicates where students were at the beginning and their progression throughout the school year and lets the teacher focuses on which part to the assessment the students did not perform well. There are four parts of the assessment the student must complete without any help. The parts are reading a short story, personal identification, recognizing vocabulary words and using them into sentences, picture

story, and retelling a selected video. The story could be read to them aloud or they could read the story on their own.

I am Chiricahua Apache, born for the Tangle People, my maternal grandfather is Bitter water People, and my paternal grandfather is of the Salt People. My name is James Jones. I have my Associates of Arts degree in Social Science and Psychology from Navajo Community College (now known as Diné College), BS in Elementary Ed, and M Ed in Bi-Culture and Bi-literacy from Northern Arizona University. I am from Rock Point, AZ. I was born and raised there. I went to school there from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I was raised in a traditional setting and Navajo language was my primary language at home. I was not exposed to the English language until I went to school. Throughout my education in Rock Point, I was learning all subjects in Navajo and English.

At home and at school I was learning about the moral teachings of the Beauty Way and the Male Way. These were simple teachings of coping with life issues and life problem solving. Then we had the school handbook. At home, my parents and my grandparents were my teachers and at school, teachers were my teachers. Social life back then was not complicated and lived a simple life. Some times to handle certain life issues were to talk to your grandparents or a fist fight afterschool. Social and emotional learning was at its basic but with deep rooted teachings. And it was easy to maintain self-discipline and self-regulations. A good lecture from the elders was the only session needed to move on or to deal with things.

Now days, things are not simple, and we are living with technology and our social life is not with the immediate family anymore, and we have included people in our lives globally (since the introduction social media), and we don't know majority of these people only through personal or professional occupations or interest. Social and emotional now, is more complicated simply because people are addressing or go to therapy for every small issue and in return get help with the "best" help from birth to middle-aged people.

Also today, students are coping more with social and emotional issues than when I was growing up, but their solutions are much more-simple than back in the days. What I mean is that back in my time when you are dealing with issues, you had to seek out information by yourself and sometimes the answers you seek took time and patience. But in today's world, what you seek is in the palm of your hands or at your fingertips, electronic devices or you have someone get the information for you. But then you have to be more specific to get the right answer. We have social media that can be

## **Rationale**

*"You ain't gonna believe this, but you used to fit right here. (He gestured about how his son as an infant would fit in the palm of his hand) I'd hold you up to say to your mother, 'This kid's gonna be the best kid in the world. This kid's gonna be somebody better than anybody I ever knew.' And you grew up good and wonderful. It was great just watchin' you, every day was like a privilege. Then the time come for you to be your own man and take on the world, and you did. But somewhere along the line, you changed. You stopped being you. You let people stick a finger in your face and tell you you're no good. And*

*when things got hard, you started lookin' for something to blame, like a big shadow. Let me tell you something you already know.*

*The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place, and I don't care how tough you are, it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit, it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!*

*Now if you know what you're worth, then go out and get what you're worth. But ya gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him, or her, or anybody! Cowards do that and that ain't you! You're better than that! I'm always gonna love you no matter what. No matter what happens. You're my son and you're my blood. You're the best thing in my life. But until you start believing in yourself, ya ain't gonna have a life.” (Rocky Balboa, 2006)*

A scene from the movie from Rocky Balboa, where the father tells his son about dealing with life’s challenges and consequences and acceptances. Telling him in a way he could for him to understand his point of view.

Be as Water My Friend:

*"Be Water, My Friend.  
Empty your mind.  
Be formless, shapeless, like water.  
You put water into a cup, it becomes the cup.  
You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle.  
You put it into a teapot, it becomes the teapot.  
Now water can flow or it can crash.  
Be water, my friend." -- Bruce Lee*

Bruce Lee

From an interview Bruce did about his philosophy of martial arts. When a student is starting to learn about the forms of martial arts.

*“We have taken so much from your culture, I wish you had taken something from ours...For there were some beautiful and good things within it. Perhaps now that the time has come, We are fearful that what you take will be lost.... I shall grab the instruments of the white man's success: His education, his skills, and society.”  
-- Chief Dan George*

Chief Dan George was an actor and a tribal leader.

In this unit I will be teaching Navajo language and culture. The first part of school year I usually teach about “self”. Meaning that students will learn and discover about their identity, their simple but complex culture. They will learn about the Navajo morals about character building. I

have noticed and have been reading about student behavior and what triggers the action, and often the student is sent to a detention or counseling office and stay there until the end of school or until something is resolved. Sometimes their problems may get resolved with having the student talk about their actions, but then the tension is still there with that one class or that one teacher. Students come from home or go home with social and or emotional problems that may have started with a simple tease or a simple action that turned into problems, and they hold on to it not knowing what to do until it's no longer controlled, then it's taken out on someone or something. By then what do they face? Many consequences or more problems. So, they show emotions of fear, anger, frustrations, confusion. And most often they would isolate themselves from friends, family, class, etc.

I have a poster of a cornstalk with 28 of the many Navajo philosophy of learning on it. These teachings are a combination between the Beauty Way Teachings of being a caring person and the Male Way Teachings of ways to discipline yourself. These are still some of the teachings that have been taught with the Navajo families for generations. My students will be taught the meanings of the important Navajo moral phrases, with combined lessons from handbook, NNS on Character Building and NNS on Culture and lessons on SEL. This is a Navajo language and culture class, the lessons will be translated back to English for this purpose. Students will do some story readings and analyze their ways of incorporating SEL with theatre and the Navajo philosophy of learning. I will do a reintroduction of this unit lesson during the winter time, because we will review the stories of the coyote stories and other winter stories and research how SEL can be included to the lesson. In addition the students will do a video recording or do an oral presentation about the their chosen quote research project. This unit may be taught at the beginning of the school year but this will be year-long activity.

*“When children play, they learn. They solve problems, think strategically, relate to others, and manage life’s ups and downs. Play helps children learn how to learn – and love learning. We’ve gathered some of our favorite games. You can play them anywhere – using things you find at home.”* (A World of Learning through Play, 2022)

In this unit my students will be doing an SEL / Navajo philosophy of learning theatre lesson. Students will be choosing a Navajo philosophy of learning phrase and pick a movie scene that best represents the phrase they chose. They will do a research paper to why the scene is a good example. With their research paper they will include the following skills:

The five super skills

#### Physical skills:

Running, jumping, learning a new sport: games make children physically and mentally strong. And, because physical play releases endorphins, research says these games are great mood-boosters, whatever your age. Physical play is more than just rough and tumble, though. Balancing blocks, planting flowers or making models from putty are all physical games that build fine motor skills, too.

#### Social skills:

There's a reason so many games are better with friends. When children work together to solve problems, they learn to thrash out ideas, listen to others and even negotiate. Playing together builds empathy by helping children think about their teammates. And it's an essential skill for grown-up life, too. Being able to collaborate will help them do better at school and work, build friends for life and get on with their families. It improves their own mental health and wellbeing, too.

#### Emotional skills:

When children get lost in a game or project, it stretches their hearts as well as their minds. They learn to get on with others and spot when their playmates are feeling happy, sad or frustrated. And, together, they learn to stick it out to solve trickier puzzles, remember lines for a play or realize they can't be the star of every make-believe game. Play is also practice for dealing with the unpredictable or uncertain. Children enjoy fun and cheers when they win, but also face their frustration when things don't go to plan. It's exactly the practice they need to be level-headed in a crisis. Or to experiment their way to designing the next great innovation.

#### Cognitive skills:

When learning is playful, children get so immersed in creating strategies and solving problems, they'll want to stretch their brain cells. The joy of play gives them the incentive to develop complex reasoning skills, memory, and concentration – much more effectively than being told to sit still and reel off facts. Of course, since we don't know what the future holds, all that flexible thinking will help them adapt to whatever new careers and life challenges the grown-up world has to offer them.

#### Creative skills:

Creativity is how we tell the world about ourselves: we write, tell, perform, compose, and craft our stories. But it's also how we draw connections, make sense of abstract ideas, and test things out. Getting creative can be as simple as imagining a broom as a horse, or as complex as designing and decorating a parachute that lets you drop an egg from the roof without breaking it. Creative play puts children in charge of exploring ideas, relationships, spaces and problems. It sparks confidence, as they learn to trust their natural curiosity. And if all that isn't enough, creativity is also one of the most highly prized skills at work – one that business leaders keep saying is only getting more important. (A World of Learning through Play, 2022)

3. Content Objectives – This is the “what” for your unit. A clear statement of the subject matter the unit covers, including essential background ideas and/or concepts. This is the section where you should cite most of the readings and materials from your seminar and your personal reading list.

*“Through the many years of survival, time has change the early forms of teaching, learning and disciplinary process of Diné, as they adapt to the western ways of life through education. The conveniences of a simplified way of life, where people changed through attitude and behavior through and by means of forced acceptance in acculturation and assimilation of a foreign culture, a reason why there is two sides to the cornstalk in traditional and western way of life, yet the teaching is still intact for many, as they accustom and adapt themselves to the trends. The Cornstalk form of teaching is a good teaching by all means, because of hers friutions and produces humility, discipline and positive determination in Diné People of contemporary times.” (Begaye & James, 2007)*

My content objectives will be based on critical thinking and learning to express emotions using theatric character and comparing it with the Navajo philosophy of learning or the cornstalk teachings. The Navajo philosophy of learning; the beauty and protection way, have teachings about ways to discipline one’s life, using the four elements of learning process: Thinking, Planning, Life, and Harmony. This way of teaching has been part of the Navajo teachings for many generations and through these teachings the child grows up how to deal with social issues, emotional issues, mental issues, and other social related issues. Through these teachings a child can grow through life without having some sort of social breakdown.

I can remember when I was growing up, my teachers use to say, “Quit being a character! Don’t act like that! You should study to be a movie star!” etc. But I did not put the two together until my first year at NAU as a theater major. My instructor was strict with things and she drove the students in class crazy. She used to say, “I got to hear you! That’s not the voice I’m listening to, that’s not crying, I sense that you are mad, Good! Now use that.” Then one day she told me to stay behind after class and that she needed to talk to me. So, she puts me on stage and has a spotlight beam on me. First thing she told me was that no one will hire me, unless I change my image, I change my voice, I change my identity. She said that no-one will hire you if they don’t see the “Hollywood Indian”, the “John Wayne Savage”, etc. I was about to leave her until she said, “You, my dear, have a gift. I suggest that you don’t change but to have fun with what you have. But I want you to take lessons to help you. I have students who owe me favors, so they will help you, become better.” For two semesters, I had voice lessons (singing and accents training. My classmates were getting jealous because of my improvements, but they didn’t know about the extra help I was getting. However, I did still struggle with my acting lessons. My final grade for the class was a D but close enough to a C. That is because I missed my class during finals due to an audition for a movie and that the casting was only for one day in Flagstaff and it was during my finals for theater. I should have told her and things could have been arranged but I did until I was done with my audition and that it took another week until I finally got a hold of her. By then grades were already submitted and posted. I told her what happened and she first said that things could have been arranged and that she was disappointed for me missing finals, but she was also happy to see that I was using my skills to get a movie part. I did get the part but

had to decline the offer because they wanted (what my instructor called “The Hollywood Indian”) and that wasn’t me. They gave the lead part to Lou Diamond Phillips, as Officer Jim Chee for the movie “The Dark Wind”. Years later I met the Native American Casting agent (that was part of the Dark Wind movie project) downtown Flagstaff and we talked for a while about what we were up to and other “movie” plans. He said that people were impressed and surprised when I turned the offer down because of Hollywood standards. He said that it just happened that Mr. Phillips was a rising star and a “Hollywood name” and the role was offered to him. But he also said that I could have played other roles for the movie or other movie projects. I told him that I was a teacher and that I enjoyed playing different roles for my elementary students when I read stories to them. He like the idea.

*“When children play, they learn. They solve problems, think strategically, relate to others, and manage life’s ups and downs. Play helps children learn how to learn – and love learning. We’ve gathered some of our favorite games. You can play them anywhere – using things you find at home.”* (A World of Learning through Play, 2022)

I have noticed that middle school students have been acting out because of frustration or seeking the attending they need for comfort. Sometimes this type of action leads to detention or suspension. Sometimes the school counselors intervene with or without parent involvement and problem solve or seek guidance for their emotional, mental, and social issues. But for some, it leads to getting outside help for severe issues.

## **Teaching Strategies**

This will be a two-part lesson:

The first step of this lesson and assignment will be on thinking; students will be thinking about what an emotional expression looks and feels like through acting and in real life. Through media students watch various teaching skills on acting / the strategies actors use to stay focus and remain in character and while performing. While the students are learning about getting into character, we will be moving into our next focus area. We will begin planning our assignment by watching some examples of video clips of interviews and movies of famous scenes, and reading quotes that were made by athletes, writers, or actors / actresses. The students will also start reviewing the cornstalk philosophy and choose a phrase that will be their main theme for their assignment. Once our plans are in place, then will start our research. The third step will be finding the quote that will best fit the chosen phrase. The students will use their checklist (checklist and rubric will be attached) to see if the quote matches their chosen phrase. Once completed and confirmed, the students will then start reciting their quote and inform their class why they chose their quote and their phrase. The end result of the lesson will be that the students will have a quote and a comparison with one of the Navajo life teachings. During this lesson we will learn how to give feedback, how to support each other, and how to have fun. By doing this also, my students will learn to appreciate social skills, appreciate self-control, and learn about the art and history about the meanings of emotional expression.



I am reading and watching videos about how to get into character and techniques to memorizing lines to say. I am experimenting and trying to get comfortable so that I am able to teach my students how to do acting.

Part two of the lesson, the teacher will introduce the lesson with clips from various movies and have students pay attention to the delivery of the acting presented by the actor / actress. (Teacher will have screened the clips before so that there are no inappropriate language or scenes.). Students will be given instructions to listen to the actor / actress, for voice, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and who they are talking to and about why. There will be questions that the students will need to answer. (The questions will be attached with the unit). Some clip examples will be from Rocky Balboa.

Here's the examples of the Navajo philosophy of learning (there will be another copy that will be full page) and the worksheet to be completed:

#### Navajo Philosophy of Learning:

Nitsahakees - Thinking    Nahat'a -Planning    Iina - Life    Sihasin - Happiness

#### Diné Áyisíí Bi Bee Na'nitin

Ha'íinání – Be strong minded

K'é nínídzin – Value kinship

Honíyá – Act your age

Hodínísin – Have reverence, be respectful

Doo bíighahí jiníida – Be careful with your words

Hazh0'0 baa nitsíníkees – Carefully think about what you are doing

Doo adááh yájíłti'da – You do not talk back

Níł íłí – Have value

T'áá ni ánit'éego – It's up to you

Náásgóó ádá nitsíníkees – Think about your future

Biniyé ánit'íinii ádá ánílééh – Doing things to help you, your purpose

Na'ádínítaah – Challenge yourself

T'áá ni ádá ánit'í – You have to do it

Ádił nídłí – Value yourself, self-respect

Ádééhoníłzin – Know yourself

Ákonínízin – Be positive

Nizhónígo 'í'í'í – Doing things nice

Ná'áhwiinít'í – Be nice

Áká anáníłwo' – Be helpful

Atah Hodíłzééh – Prepare yourself, practice

Níł chohoo'í – Have faith

T'áadoo ádił honídlání – Don't overwhelm yourself

T'áá Ádaa Nánít'í – Have manners

T'áadoo Ádaa Nánít'íní – Don't be shy

Ayóó'ó'óóni' nee hólq – Have compassion  
T'áadoo nihóyé'é – Don't be lazy  
Doo hayooch'íid da – Don't lie  
Bee na'nítin – Make the lessons encourage you to teach

Navajo Philosophy of learning	Movie Quote / Inspirational Quote
Why did you choose?	
How are you doing the presentation?	

## Classroom Activities

### Lesson 1:

Teacher will re-introduce the lesson on the Navajo cornstalk philosophy of learning. We will go through the list again. Teacher will explain again the meanings behind each phrase and which teaching it belongs to, the Beauty Way teachings or the Male Discipline Way. Students will be given a reading packet that was made by the Navajo Nation Peace Court on the Cornstalk Teachings. However, the teacher will be selecting pages for the reading.

*See Attached document on the list of the Navajo Philosophy of learning in the resources.*

### Lesson 2:

Teacher will introduce the lesson on social and emotional role play using the Five Super Skills from Learning through Play Organization. The class will read each of the five and teacher will use examples and indicate where and how the skills can be incorporated in their assignment and will choose the ones that apply to their assignment.

The students will also read the article on holistic view of the super skills and teacher will paraphrase the main idea of the article.

*See Attached document on the list of the Super Skill and the holistic skills in the resources.*

### Lesson 3:

Teacher will combine the two previous lessons the cornstalk teachings and the 5 super skills.

Teacher will show some media clips to show what the two combined lessons. The movie clip from Rocky Balboa the scene where he says “The world ain’t all sunshine and rainbows...” will be used as an example. Teacher will use this quote as an example.

*See Attached document on the worksheet in the resources.*

### Lesson 4:

The final lesson:

The oral presentation.

*See Attached document of the presentation rubric in the resources.*

## Student Assessment Plan

Why they chose the Navajo phrase and why they chose the quote?

What is / are the significance(s) of the two sayings? What is the main message?

How are the two sayings the same in meaning and how are they different?

1. Written assignment:

Student will be completing a worksheet. The writing assignment will be short but detailed. Students will also be using a 6+1 rubric (from Education Northwest Organization), as a guide to help them improve their writing skills.

2. An oral presentation:

Student will give a 3–5 minute presentation / performance. During this time the student will be reciting the Navajo phrase and the chosen quote. The student will be performing and then explain their assignment. The audience will be using the provided rubric for feedback.

### Alignment with Standards

A clear statement of the particular state curriculum standards and Diné standards your unit addresses. You must align your curriculum unit to both state standards and Diné standards.

AZ State standards:

#### Comparisons (COMP)

Use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language and the concept of culture through comparisons of the target language and cultures studied to one’s own.

The student can:

NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
1. Recognize and compare words, true and false cognates, sound patterns, and basic grammatical structures of the target language with his/her own language (as applicable).	1. Explain and compare features of target language (e.g., language patterns, expressions, sentence structures) with his/her own language (as applicable).	1. Analyze and compare features of different registers of language, cultural perspectives as reflected in a variety of genres (e.g., literature, blogs, podcasts, newspaper articles), and regional varieties (e.g., differences in pronunciation, intonation, stress, dialects, vocabulary, grammar).
2. Identify and compare products and practices (e.g., celebrations, dances, oral stories, food) typical of the target culture with his/her own culture (as applicable).	2. Compare and contrast familiar topics (e.g., geography, history, the arts) and discuss the impact on the target culture and one’s own culture (as applicable).	2. Research cultural traditions and authentic works in order to analyze the viewpoints and their impact on cultures (e.g., recognize stereotypes).

#### Presentational Writing (PW)

Present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of readers or viewers. The student can:

NOVICE			INTERMEDIATE			ADVANCED		
Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
1. Copy some familiar words, characters, or phrases.	1. Write lists and practiced phrases on familiar topics.	1. Write short messages and notes using phrases and simple sentences on topics related to everyday life.	1. Write and share short messages about familiar topics using a series of simple sentences.	1. Write and share material about a variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.	1. Write and share simple paragraphs about events, experiences, and academic topics with some control of various time frames.	1. Write and present organized paragraphs appropriate to an audience on a variety of topics, events, and experiences in various time frames.	1. Write and present papers/essays on events, experiences, and academic and professional topics in various time frames using well-organized, detailed paragraphs.	1. Write and present in-depth, well-organized reports with clarity and precision on a variety of topics, issues, and interests in various time frames.

Navajo Nation Educational Standards:

Character Building:  
7-8 Diné Culture Standards

Standard: I will develop an understanding of Diné way of life.

Concept 1: Nitslhakees- I will recognize and value my thoughts and personality.  
PO 1: I will engage in activities that will increase my sense of self worth.

Concept 2: Nahat'1- I will apply and practice the Diné way of life through planning.  
PO 2: I will compare the usage of kinship terms with today's society.

Concept 3: Iin1- I will implement and recognize the Diné Lifestyle  
PO 1: L will differentiate the teachings of the hogan.

Concept 4: Siihasin- I will apply and practice the Diné way of life with confidence  
PO 1: I will live by the fundamental standards of living in harmony.  
PO 4: I will identify the stories related to duality.

## Resources

“A World of Learning through Play.” *A World of Learning Through Play*,  
<https://learningthroughplay.com/>.

Aqlwaterfitness. “Bruce Lee Be as Water My Friend.” YouTube, YouTube, 14 Aug. 2013,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJMwBwFj5nQ>.

Begaye, R. & James, I. K. (2007). *The cornstalk philosophy of learning*. Judicial Branch of the Navajo Peacemaking Program. <https://courts.navajo-nsn.gov/Peacemaking/cornstext.pdf>

George, Chief Dan. “From the Archives: Chief Dan George Teaches Understanding.” North Shore News, <https://www.nsnews.com/nsn-50th/from-the-archives-chief-dan-george-teaches-understanding-3105824>.

Hassinger-Des, Brenna, Margaret Laurie, Jennifer M. Zosh (2022). *Learning Through Play and the Development of Holistic Skills Across Childhood*, The Lego Foundation,  
<https://learningthroughplay.com/why-play/play-unlocks-essential-skills>

“Rocky Balboa.” *IMDb*, IMDb.com,  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0479143/characters/nm0000230>.

**Attachments:** (to download the file Navajo Philosophy of learning attachment, you need to download the Navajo Fonts, <https://courts.navajo-nsn.gov/navfonts.htm> , on your laptop or computer)

File: Navajo Philosophy of Learning

Navajo Philosophy of Learning:  
Nitsahakees - Thinking    Nahat'a -Planning    Iina - Life    Sihasin - Happiness

Diné Áyisíí Bi Bee Na'nitin

Ha'íinln7 – Be strong minded

K'é níinídzin – Value kinship

Honíyá – Act your age

Hodínísin – Have reverence, be respectful

Doo b7ighah7 jin7ida – Be careful with your words

Hazh0'0 baa nits7n7kees – Carefully think about what you are doing

Doo ad1lh y1j7[ti'da – You do not talk back

Nił ílį – Have value

T'áa ni ánit'éego – It's up to you

Náásgóó ádá nits7n7kees – Think about your future

Biniyé ánit'íinii ádá ánilééh – Doing things to help you, your purpose

Na'ádinítaah – Challenge yourself

T'áa ni ádá ánit'į – You have to do it

Ádił nídlį – Value yourself, self-respect

Ádééhonílzín – Know yourself

Ákonínízin – Be positive

Nizhónigo 'i'į'į – Doing things nice

Ná'áhwiinít'į – Be nice

Áká anánilwo' – Be helpful

Atah Hodílzééh – Prepare yourself, practice

Nił chohoo'į – Have faith

T'áadoo ádił honídlání – Don't overwhelm yourself

T'áa Ádaa Nánít'į – Have manners

T'áadoo Ádaa Nánít'íni – Don't be shy

Ayóó'ó'óóni' nee hólq – Have compassion

T'áadoo niłhóyé'é – Don't be lazy

Doo hayooch'7id da – Don't lie

Bee na'n7tin – Make the lessons encourage you to teach

File: SEL Role Play Example

<p>Navajo Philosophy of learning Ha'íinlni Doo b7ighah7 jin7ida Hah0'0 baa nits7n7kees Nił ilí Biniyé ánit'íinii ádá ánílééh Na'ádínítaah Ádił nídlí Nił chohoo'í Atah Hodílzééh</p>	<p>Movie Quote / Inspirational Quote <b><u>Rocky Balboa</u></b> : I'd hold you up to say to your mother, "this kid's gonna be the best kid in the world. This kid's gonna be somebody better than anybody I ever knew." And you grew up good and wonderful. It was great just watching you, every day was like a privilege. Then the time come for you to be your own man and take on the world, and you did. But somewhere along the line, you changed. You stopped being you. You let people stick a finger in your face and tell you you're no good. And when things got hard, you started looking for something to blame, like a big shadow. Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place and I don't care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done! Now if you know what you're worth then go out and get what you're worth. But ya gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him, or her, or anybody! Cowards do that and that ain't you! You're better than that! I'm always gonna love you no matter what. No matter what happens. You're my son and you're my blood. You're the best thing in my life. But until you start believing in yourself, ya ain't gonna have a life.</p>
<p>Why did you choose? Explain the significance of the learning philosophy and quote chosen.</p>	

How are you going to do the presentation? (Act out the scene, use one or more of the super skills, use of props, etc)

File: Blank Copy of SEL Role Plsy

Navajo Philosophy of learning	Movie Quote / Inspirational Quote
Why did you choose?	
How are you doing the presentation?	





## File: Super Skills and Holistic Skills

### The five super skills

#### Physical skills:

Running, jumping, learning a new sport: games make children physically and mentally strong. And, because physical play releases endorphins, research says these games are great mood-boosters, whatever your age. Physical play is more than just rough and tumble, though. Balancing blocks, planting flowers or making models from putty are all physical games that build fine motor skills, too.

#### Social skills:

There's a reason so many games are better with friends. When children work together to solve problems, they learn to thrash out ideas, listen to others and even negotiate. Playing together builds empathy by helping children think about their teammates. And it's an essential skill for grown-up life, too. Being able to collaborate will help them do better at school and work, build friends for life and get on with their families. It improves their own mental health and wellbeing, too.

#### Emotional skills:

When children get lost in a game or project, it stretches their hearts as well as their minds. They learn to get on with others and spot when their playmates are feeling happy, sad or frustrated. And, together, they learn to stick it out to solve trickier puzzles, remember lines for a play or realize they can't be the star of every make-believe game. Play is also practice for dealing with the unpredictable or uncertain. Children enjoy fun and cheers when they win, but also face their frustration when things don't go to plan. It's exactly the practice they need to be level-headed in a crisis. Or to experiment their way to designing the next great innovation.

#### Cognitive skills:

When learning is playful, children get so immersed in creating strategies and solving problems, they'll want to stretch their brain cells. The joy of play gives them the incentive to develop complex reasoning skills, memory, and concentration – much more effectively than being told to sit still and reel off facts. Of course, since we don't know what the future holds, all that flexible thinking will help them adapt to whatever new careers and life challenges the grown-up world has to offer them.

#### Creative skills:

Creativity is how we tell the world about ourselves: we write, tell, perform, compose, and craft our stories. But it's also how we draw connections, make sense of abstract ideas, and test things out. Getting creative can be as simple as imagining a broom as a horse, or as complex as designing and decorating a parachute that lets you drop an egg from the roof without breaking it. Creative play puts children in charge of exploring ideas, relationships, spaces and problems. It sparks confidence, as they learn to trust their natural curiosity. And if all that isn't enough, creativity is also one of the most highly prized skills at work – one that business leaders keep saying is only getting more important. (A World of Learning through Play, 2022)

## Holistic Skills:

Cognitive skills: the cognitive domain goes beyond traditional academic content and skills, such as numeracy and literacy. It also includes children's ability to sustain attention, think critically,

What do we mean by holistic skills?

Previous LEGO Foundation research has established five main holistic skills that children practice when they learn through play:

Cognitive skills: the cognitive domain goes beyond traditional academic content and skills, such as numeracy and literacy. It also includes children's ability to sustain attention, think critically, solve problems, make decisions, reason using evidence, and evaluate what they know and do not know (metacognition).

Social skills: these include collaborating, communicating and understanding other people's perspectives through sharing ideas, negotiating rules and building empathy.

Emotional skills: these include understanding, managing and expressing emotions by building self-awareness and handling impulses, as well as staying motivated and confident in the face of difficulties.

Physical skills: these are about more than being physically active; they include understanding movement and space through practicing sensory- motor skills, developing spatial understanding, becoming physically confident with their whole body and with more focused (fine motor) movements, and nurturing an active and healthy body.

Creative skills: these can include coming up with new ideas (including 'divergent thinking', in which more than one possible solution to a problem is put forward), prioritizing the most meaningful or relevant ideas to transform into reality, expressing ideas and creating associations, and symbolizing and representing ideas.