

Indigenous Literature as a Window into Social Emotional Learning

Decolonizing Emotions and Understanding Through Literature, Poetry and Music

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Author's Note:

Tiffany L. Tracy, DINÉ Institute Fellow, is a 7th grade teacher at Ganado Middle School within the Ganado Unified School District which is located in Ganado, Arizona on the Diné Nation. Acknowledgements must be given to the teachers from all over the Diné Institute who supported one another with sharing of cultural and topical knowledge. To Angie Hansen for being a supportive seminar leader. You provided great resources and insight into Social-Emotional Learning through Indigenous authors. To Dr. Angelina Castagno for continuing the program and devoting your time to the institute. To Jolene Smith for including so many on her journey of growth as an educator and ensuring the continuation of the work of the late Marilyn Dempsey. Lastly to my students, the community, my family, and to our elders and ancestors who made our presence possible with the power of their prayers.

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Introduction

Ya'ateeh, my name is Tiffany Tracy, Tł'ízíllání nishłı́, Kinyaa'áanii báshíshchíín, Nát'oh Diné Táchii'nii dashicheii, Tábaahá dashinálı́. Bee'ak'id Baa'oogeedí t'áá íyisíí naashá, ndi Tséhootsooí shiyaa hoo'a', áádoo k'ad Lók'aa' Niteeldi shighan dóo áadi naashnish. My mother is Grace Gonnie-Tracy; my father is Thomas Tracy. My maternal grandparents were Hosteen and Gladys Gonnie. My paternal grandparents are Lena Wilson, Dorothy Denny and Louis Tracy, Samuel Denny. I am 35 years old, the eldest of three, I am a mother to a wonderful 5-year-old girl and partner to Francis Collins who is Tódich'ii'nii from Pine Springs, Arizona.

I received my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Diné College and my master's in Elementary Education from the University of New Mexico. I am not currently seeking any other graduate degrees and do not plan on doing so in the immediate future. This will be my fourth year with the Diné Institute for Navajo Nation Educators (DINÉ) and my first time working with Seminar Leader, Angie Hansen. I am thrilled to have embarked on this strenuous and exhausting journey once again and hope to apply and be a part of this organization again next year.

Context

Classroom Demographic

This school year I have transferred from teaching 2nd grade to 7th grade Social Studies. Our district provides service to about 97% Diné students within all schools in the district which are Ganado Primary, Ganado Intermediate, Ganado Middle, and Ganado High School. Something new to me in my transition to the 7th grade is that students from neighboring communities funnel into our middle school. This means that students from surrounding Navajo operated and BIE schools are directed to their nearest state funded public school since they only offer classes from Kindergarten to 6th grade. We receive students from Kindałichíí' Ółta', which was a boarding school that is now operated by the tribe, Greasewood Boarding School, Wide Ruins Day School and Jeddito School. The students that attend the surrounding schools have a choice to either attend Ganado Unified, Chinle, Window Rock, Sanders, Hopi or Holbrook. In recent years our enrollment has dropped with more people opting to attend one of the aforementioned surrounding schools. Student unenrollment at our school to one of the other districts has impacted Ganado High School so much that our athletics went from a 3A bracket to a 2A about two or three years ago. So far a lot of rumors and hearsay has occurred within the community as to why our school enrollment is down and some of those rumors point to one individual. Although I do not know the real reasons why our enrollment is down, I sincerely doubt that it is because of the actions of one particular person. For so many families to take their children out of the school and go to another seems to be based on multiple reasons and not just one, or at least that is my point of view. Again, I am new to the middle school and with being a new person, there are many things one has to learn and adapt to. The last full week of July is when our district starts to invite teachers back, and we don't begin until the Wednesday of the last full week but I wanted to get a head start on my new classroom. I bugged the principal for the keys until she finally gave in and assigned them to me. I went upstairs and down the hallway to the end of the southwest corner to find my place. I walked in and found a room that needed cleaning. The walls

had crusted boogers and splatters of pop or juice...or blood? I don't know what was on the wall, but it wasn't good. I found writings on the walls and on the desks, airplanes on cabinets, papers stuffed in all drawers and cabinets. The teacher's desk was full of the previous teacher's stuff, and that in itself is a peeve of mine. I've had to move classrooms three times before and each time there is always a bunch of stuff left behind like brushes, old pens, makeup, jewelry, ID tags, trash, confiscated items, and I wondered each time, why would someone just up and leave all of their things for the next person to clean? I digress, I spent two days washing the walls, getting rid of old dust, going through papers, trashing and reorganizing. It was time consuming but much needed.

Next, I needed to find out where the curriculum was. There were textbooks but I was confused as to why I didn't have what was written in the pacing guide. I went to the academic coach who directed me to the 8th grade Social Studies teacher who directed me to the 6th grade Social Studies teacher. Going to all three people I gathered little clues here and there, and I came to understand that there is not a grade level specific textbook/curriculum; with we all share and begin where the other left off. This lit a lightbulb in my head, I was so confused as to why I couldn't understand the pacing guide when it jumped from World History to American History and all I was given was one Teacher's Edition of World History in June when I asked to see what was used. In my classroom all I had were American History and World Geography books but no World History. Pieces started to fit when I had them all in front of me and I could cross reference them all.

Being new to this position and school with no immediate guidance, I had to figure things out myself when it came to what I needed to use, and also how to go about basic processes like duty, obtaining supplies, communication, deadlines, even where things were. I basically gave myself a tour of the school and was the annoying person asking all the questions and sending all the emails. Relearning where I stood in my existence in this new building was a challenge for me. I felt new, but not, which was weird, so I had to type out all new things like a syllabus, and dig out all my surveys and such from the primary. I had to rework and reconfigure the pacing guide to fit me because it seemed like previous teachers used a lot of worksheets but again, since I was new, I needed to use the textbook as a guideline to help me through my first year.

Cut to the actual first day of school when the students came in. I fell in love. I knew a majority of these kids from their time in 2nd grade, and they looked the same as they did when they were seven years old, they were just taller and with different personalities. My role as their 7th grade teacher and my classroom management was easy to slide into because most of them already knew I meant business, nayye!

Having already gone through my previous years of teacher self-reflection, and realizing the need to soften my tone, ease up on my authoritarian expectations, and pull back on the unnecessary BIA style shaming with my seven year olds at the 2nd grade level, I applied the same understanding to my 7th graders. I have had some points where I have had to show my teeth and one time on breakfast duty when I got into a back-and-forth with a kid that could have been prevented, but each time I followed up with thoughts of how I could do better and approach the problem again in the future. I am not a perfect teacher and not a perfect human, but I know I have to be better for them, and in this first quarter of teaching, I am so full of emotions for how

blessed I am to have changed to this position because I would not have remembered how much I love being a teacher.

The last two COVID years were hard for me, and this last school year was most difficult for me. I was the online teacher for Kindergarten and 2nd grade, a position that fell into my lap. I was planning and prepping for two grade levels, and four subject areas. I had parents in my ear all the time, and the pressure of needing to raise scores and grades when I wasn't receiving assistance from some parents because they had to work and be away from their kids too. It was so very stressful and I loved the children, but I hated being a teacher last year. I often cried at my desk throughout the day, I could not escape parent texts and emails after work and on weekends, I couldn't take leave without having several parents wondering what was happening when everything had been assigned and communicated on their Google Classroom and through Remind. I know they were just worried and wanted direction, but I couldn't escape and it was so hard on my mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health.

All the pain I felt with having to do things online, I wondered if the kids felt a similar struggle and now at the 7th grade level I do see the effects of the 2 years online in the kids' academics, and social skills, especially their communication and this is where my wondering is leading. I wonder: what I can include in my teaching that can promote better communication?

Rationale

The seminar topic that I have been learning about here at the DINÉ is about Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and how to use literature to teach lessons in regard to the many Westernized categories and competencies created for SEL integration and instruction. My teacher fellows and I have been assigned various chapter readings from textbooks and Indigenous literature to assist us in understanding the messages that can be leveraged to assist with areas of self-regulation, self-identity, building techniques of reflection and growth mindsets.

Personally, I think there is a need for all teachers to integrate and use more SEL focused teaching and learning because above all, our Native American children need it the most. We as Diné, as well as the many Indigenous people of the "Americas" as well as the world have experienced and hold in our DNA the trauma of colonization (Charbonneau- Dahlen, Lowe, Morris, 2016). We are walking around today with the trauma our ancestors have experienced in the 1700s, the 1800s, the 1900s, and all the continued cyclical trauma we are experiencing today. We are all carrying heavy trauma and many of us, kids, adults and elders have not acknowledged the destruction of that continuous trauma, and many of us haven't begun to know how to heal and break that cycle. Obviously this unit will not end colonialism, colonial traumas, and will not immediately decolonize our actions and ways of thinking. This unit is not going to all of a sudden fix everything and I doubt teaching this unit will go smoothly and will be delivered expertly after the first try but if I can reach at least one student and still teach much needed Social Studies and English Language Arts standards in my classroom then I will be satisfied with that.

Why SEL?

That is the question, eh? Why should I, or we include Social Emotional Learning into our teaching and curricula? I would say, why not? But I think I need to provide more to that response right? As I mentioned in earlier paragraphs, indigenous peoples are experiencing and/or have experienced traumas either current or historical. In this first quarter of teaching I have gotten to know my students, and the majority of them feel lonely. On the first day of school I handed out a survey for them to complete in class called, *Me as a Learner*. I ask the kids what their clans are, what their academic and social strengths and needs are, how they approach doing their homework, how they feel about school, if there are any family issues, and if they wanted to share any important information with me. I learned that 95% of my kids, that's 84 out of 88 students at the time, don't know their clans. I also learned that I have several students who have lost someone very close in their family, either a parent or a sibling/cousin. I have also learned that they all want to pass the 7th grade, and they all want to have other types of extracurricular activities available besides scholastic sports and that about 30% are feeling lonely, but all feel shy and want to be more social.

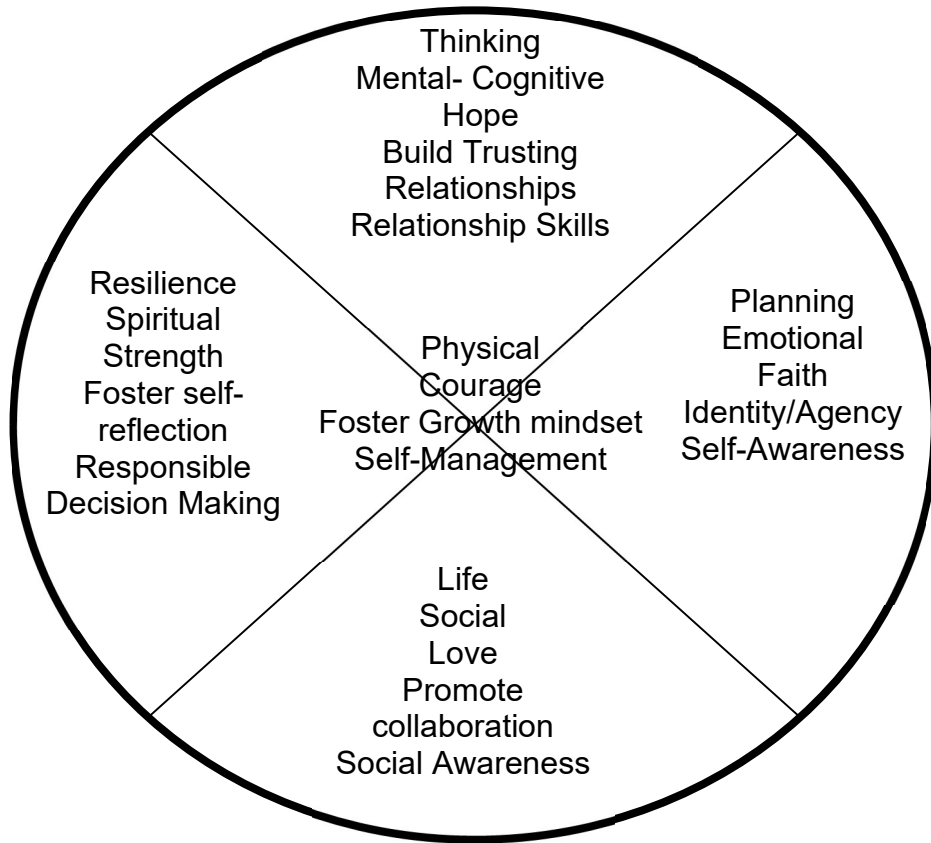
In my class I give daily bell work, I do it more now, but one day I posted the question, how do you feel today? I was surprised that most of them wrote they felt sad or lonely. In my short time as a 7th grade teacher, I have had four girls come to me and cry and tell me they were having a hard time. They felt unsafe due to racist remarks, or they felt overwhelmed by something they could not articulate, or they felt angry because of their parents' addictions. I have been to one meeting that included suicidal ideations and one past attempt. I have heard male students speak disrespectfully of the females in the hallway, I have heard of an incident where students were being racist and aggressive to another student in the cafeteria. This all happened in just my seven weeks as a 7th grade Social Studies teacher. I believe these to be BIG reasons why Social Emotional Learning is needed in the classroom, and in our curricula, but what exactly am I talking about when I say we need Social Emotional Learning, or SEL, what the heck is it?

What Is SEL?

In the article titled, *Why Trouble SEL? The Need for Cultural Relevance in SEL*, SEL is defined as “the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively and establish positive relationships with others” (Mafouz, Anthony-Stevens, 2020, p.4). The article also includes The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) definition of SEL which is, “acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions; developing caring and concern for others; making responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations capably” (Mafouz, Anthony-Stevens, 2020, p.4). In a textbook titled *Teaching with a Social, and Cultural Lens: A Framework for Educators and Teacher Educators*, the authors Markowitz and Bouffard (2020) share their methods of teaching social and emotional learning through seven anchor competencies. The seven competencies focus on building trusting relationships, foster self-reflection, foster growth mindset, cultivate perseverance, create community, promote collaborative learning, and respond constructively across differences (p.6).

In an effort to try to understand the concepts of SEL, I realized that creating positive relationships, caring for others, working through challenges, becoming self-reflective and cultivating perseverance were all concepts of Diné foundational knowledge. In Diné all these

ideas of fostering the self are embedded in the NNIS or Nitsáhákees (Thinking), Nahat'á (Planning), Iiná (Life) and Sih Hasin (Resilience/Hope) paradigm, as well as the cornstalk philosophies. In the NNIS paradigm, we follow the four directions, each corresponding with Thinking, Planning, Life and Resilience. The diagram below is a compilation of information obtained from *Foundation of Diné Culture*, by Wilson Aronilth (1991), but has been set together with information from the Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz, Bouffard, 2020) and the CASEL five core competencies (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, Williams, 2019). Such diagrams have been made through Diné College, formerly Navajo Community College, as well as other Diné scholars, however, this was not taken directly from any scholar in particular, but was created based on the information I have gained through my learning and from Aronilth's book used in Avery Denny's NIS101 class. In the book published for Navajo Community College, Aronilth shares Diné teachings that touch on self-identity, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-agency. Prior to our understanding of SEL, Diné had teachings to help children, adolescents, young adults and adults identify their place in this world.



Starting from conception there are rituals and words that go into the rearing of children. Ceremonies that celebrate the child from their time in the womb to their birth, to their first laugh and then their puberty ceremonies marking their journey to adulthood. Navajo children are sacred, and nurturing their mind, mental, emotional, spiritual and social awareness thus strengthens their bodies to endure and take on the rigors of life. However, western influence has changed the teaching of children being sacred. Western Protestant teachings have promoted the

idea of children being property as well as needing to be ‘broken’ with corporal punishment in order to “beat the devil” out of the. Punishment through beatings were “deemed necessary to ensure that children were not rude, stubborn or unruly” (Schrieber, J.C., 2011). Our understanding of nurturing the child through gentle teaching such as using words of kindness and with tones that show respect for the holy being within them were replaced with constant scolding and shame, which many Native people are still experiencing today. I say this through personal experience and through observation. I cannot say that colonization and boarding schools are the only reason for our change in education of children, but it has had a major influence as exhibited through comparing our Diné teachings and that of the culture that came to be the decision maker of our educational policies.

Why is this important to show the Diné concepts of SEL and the replacement of such teaching with western views of children? In my time as a student in the reservation school system, I have seen past teachers using shame tactics on children, and I see it today among parents to children in stores, at hospitals, and among some educators. As mentioned before, I was not a good teacher, I used these scolding and threatening tactics. As time marched on, I changed my ways of thinking and as of now, I feel that I have a good relationship with my students. I still scold them, but only when I need to, otherwise, I make sure I talk to my 12-year-old kids as I would a person who is my age. I try my best to show them that I care for them and want them to learn while still holding them to a high standard. I am understanding their need to feel included in their peer groups and how I can funnel their immense feelings into ways that are healthier than making fun of each other and choosing to bottle up their emotions.

In trying to determine how I am going to deliver SEL teachings of self-identity and agency, I have to also stick to the pacing guide set before me. In our pacing guide, in the seventh grade, we will move into the topic of European Exploration of the Americas, this means Columbus and colonization. The way our textbook introduces Columbus, it glorifies him as a heroic explorer who brought cattle and foods that native people were thankful for and still use today, and that although he did some bad things, America would not be what it is today without him. Obviously, that did happen, he did bring things over to the western hemisphere that are used today, but the current curriculum fails to tell what was endured by Indigenous people. As natives, we are expected to bottle up our emotions when it comes to the painful past, and accept things as they are. We are expected to be okay in the face of dehumanization and brush off systemic racism experienced from society and sometimes even family because we need to be strong and not soft. We are expected to shed all the Diné teachings of self-identity and agency for the comfort of others.

In our expectations to be okay with the narrative that European exploration was a good thing that benefits all, I want to show my students that we did have it tough. I want to decolonize the European Exploration part of our classroom learning. I want my students to read accounts from the indigenous perspective and know that it is okay to share our side. It is okay to be mad and to be sad and to be lonely and to be happy and to feel love and feel the longing of love. I want to show that an outlet to share these feelings can be through poetry and literature, because it is hard to use our voice to speak our truths, but we can write it out, to let them out and not let it fester within us.

Content Objectives

The following concepts are SEL competencies that will guide my teaching of European Exploration. In our school we use my World Interactive by SAVVAS Realize which is an affiliate of Prentice Hall and Scott Foresman publishing. We are supposed to be switching to a new Social Studies Curriculum next year, but materials have not been presented yet and I have little hope that much of the narrative about Columbus and the Columbian exchange and the explorers who followed will have a drastic change than what I have read in our current textbook.

The objectives I have for this lesson concerning the integration of standards and SEL are as follows:

- Nitsáhákees: Teacher will demonstrate/ role model how to build trusting relationships. Students will identify actions that build trusting relationships prior to collaborative work.
- Nahat'á: Teacher will reflect on what lessons worked, what didn't work, and how students responded to readings, activities.
- Students will memorize and introduce themselves in their Diné or Hopi/Tewa language.
- Iiná: Teacher will create rubric for the timeline and rubric/ground rules for group collaboration.
- Students will design a visual timeline that connects the lives and culture of Diné during the time of European arrival in the Western Hemisphere.
- Sih Hasin: Teacher will provide poems/literary excerpts that provide self-reflection for students to read.
- Students will illustrate how Columbus has negatively and positively affected the Western Hemisphere.
- Students will critique the events of European arrival and its effect on modern Native lives through poetry, song lyrics, or narrative.
- Ko'-Hajínéí': Teacher will demonstrate a growth mindset by giving positive, constructive critiques following a rubric.
- Students will grade their participation within their groups, and grade their work for each assignment.
- Students will write reflections regarding their group work and how they can do better next time after each group work.

Nitsáhákees

Build Trusting Relationships– Relationship Skills

The sun rises in the east, and so we place our mental, emotional, spiritual and physical goals in the morning with the sun rise. It is ideal that we wake up early in the morning and place our prayers to the east that lays out the plan of our day. Aronilth (1980), shares that this eastern direction and this frame in the NNIS paradigm is, “critical thinking which truly helps us analyze, and evaluate ourselves and synthesize and distinguish fact from fiction” (p.40). Nitsáhákees presents that we as Diné take time to analyze actions, thoughts, emotions we are using our mental capabilities of stepping forward into the day, or into whatever venture we take on, especially with building trusting relationships. Within the school setting, the kids are surrounded

by people who they will have to work with whether they like that person or not. Myself being the teacher, it is most important for me to build those personal relationships with my students. Since I am the teacher, I am the role model, I am the person the kids are going to be learning from, I need to be the one that starts the wheel of this paradigm which is why relationship building is first and not self-identity and agency. I need to make sure that I am creating a space that is safe to those who enter. My mental and cognitive state tell me that in order to get to the standards that I want to teach I have to be a trauma informed teacher as is described by Venet (2021), “Childrens’ emotional well-being and resilience are fostered through their healthy relationships with caring adults” (p.70). I am the one who is going to lay down the corn pollen path for the kids to travel on through my own work toward promoting identity, agency and empowerment in my children. In a question and answer interview with a veteran teacher, Barbara Outten (American Educator, 2019), she states that, “As a teacher, you are the social leader of the classroom, and your students will follow your lead when it comes to relating to other students in the classroom” (p.15). What I do first, sets the tone, which probably means I shouldn’t roast them hard. Regardless, I am showing interest in my students, and I am engaging with them on a level that is personable, and letting them know that I am not going to dismiss our connections, but I am attempting to communicate at their level, as cringey as it may make me look. Also, I may need to participate in pep rallies and assemblies where I have to do basketball shoot-out competitions though I’m not good at shooting a basketball.

Nahat’á

Identity and Agency– Self- Awareness

Nahat’á loosely means planning and is represented by the southern direction. This direction is represented by blue for the mid-day and we associate “our plans of learning knowledge and our goals of life” (p.40). It is here with Nahat’á, planning, that we build upon the actions, emotions and thoughts we carefully critiqued and analyzed and now figure how we move about within our spaces. As a teacher, after setting up the trusting relationships, we now are able to let the students follow our model and plan how they would integrate their beings into our classroom and community. In Frey, Fisher and Smith (2019), self-awareness is identified as having “the capacity to reflect on one’s own feelings, values, and behaviors.” We begin by asking how do I fit into this community that I am in? How do I present myself to those who see and know me? How do I feel about myself? How do others feel about themselves? These questions and reflective prompts help us determine the ways in which we move forward in our self-awareness and help support empathy within our community. In Diné teaching, we present ourselves through identifying our clans. Our clans identify our families and make-up who we are, so I believe it is important for our kids to know their clans to acknowledge their ancestry but also know that they fully represent themselves. Sharing clans with each other within the spaces we exist help us to know who is related to us, and how we can acknowledge each other within our framework of kinship. In previous classrooms, when kids know who is related to them, they tend to treat each other differently, friendlier. This group has very few who remember and can recite their clans, so getting the kids to memorize and know who is related to who would be ideal.

The self-identity we set up through acknowledgement of clans is mentioned by Aronilth (1980), “According to our great forefathers’ teaching, our clan system is the foundation of how we learn

about our self-image and self-identity” (p. 76). On the same page, Aronilth shares that the identity of an individual Diné should ask the question, who are we as Diné people? Then he follows with the story of how people of the first four original clans were created by Changing Woman. I enjoy this, because that question that Aronilth poses leads to so many avenues of literature we could explore as teachers. Today we are blessed with Indigenous scholars who have shared who we are as Native people in this society. Stories of our identities, resiliency, agency and self-awareness that can be shared with students to help them understand who they are, and maybe even get them thinking of who they might be and eventually author poetry or journal prompts that pose self-reflective responses to how they perceive themselves and their peers, and the same for different text’s delivery of information.

Iiná

Promote Collaboration–Social Awareness

The sun sets in the west, and illuminates the sky with warm yellows and orange hues. Iiná, life comes with understanding actions that can lead to old age. We reach for acceptance and health of the mind and body (Aronilth, 1991). In this direction there is social development, growth and cognitive development through love from K’é. Iiná means action, or life, and in this quadrant, we are putting into action what we have thought about, and what we have planned, and this is where we work and practice our relationship building with ourselves and with others. Frey, Fisher and Smith (2019) state that from the CASEL Five, Social Awareness is “the ability to view situations from another perspective, respect the social and cultural norms of others and celebrate diversity.” In their Integrated SEL Framework, the quadrant for social skills encompasses the Diné strife for social development and growth through K’é. Since K’é is the understanding that all things within our universe are interconnected, it is implied that communication, empathy sharing and teamwork are a part of our Iina umbrella. Frey, Fisher and Smith tell that students need to be taught how to communicate effectively, develop and express empathy and repair relationships when working collaboratively (p.16). For me as an educator, this is where I apply the student’s list of traits for trusting relationships into a rubric and guide to help students work together. Ground rules should also be laid out in regards to how students share ideas, talk to each other, disagree, and apologize to each other. The plan for students to work collaboratively to create a timeline that shows what Diné were theoretically doing during the time of Columbus’s arrival in the Caribbean. This collaborative effort will definitely need to include foundational behaviors for working with other students while maintaining positive relationship building and basic respect for each other so all individuals are included.

Sih Hasin

Foster Self-Reflection–Responsible Decision Making

Sih Hasin loosely translates to resilience, or hope and in this direction of north, we associate our spiritual being, our strength, and here we hope to foster self-reflection and harbor responsible decision making. Our Diné teachings tell us that with Sih Hasin we maintain reverence for all creation, develop good mental and emotional health and demonstrate competency and confidence. These disciplines require self-reflection and the ability to make responsible decisions

for oneself. In the Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020), Anchor Two is Fostering Self-Reflection. Markowitz and Bouffard explain that “Self-reflection is a simple way to dig deeper into your feelings and find out why you were doing something or feeling a certain way” (p.38). In the same paragraph it is shared that when students engage in self-reflection, their “learning and learning processes can assess what they have and have not mastered and self-direct their efforts.” Self-reflection is something I do every day, especially as a parent. When I behave or react to an event I find myself wondering, “Why did I do that, or why did I say that? Is there a better way I could have handled that situation?” When I begin to ask myself these questions, I feel like I am better equipped to handle a similar situation in the future without needing to reflect on the same action. In this way, perhaps our students, when given the opportunity to self-reflect, can better equip themselves to approach a similar instance in their future and may lead to better decision making. Frey, Fisher and Smith (2019) state that responsible decision making is, “the ability to make choices that consider the well-being of oneself and others.” I would love for my students to not only work in groups where they consider each other’s feelings and make responsible decisions, but also apply the same methods towards their 7th grade community and then out in the greater Navajo Nation community they reside in. In the classroom I would like for the students to reflect on their feelings of what they have learned in regards to Columbus’s arrival and its positive and negative impact on our people through visual art. Through written reflection, students will use poetry to critique effects of colonization on their life today, including the positive and the negative effects.

Ko’Hajíinéí– Fire/ Place of Emergence

Foster Growth Mindset–Self- Management

The fire in the center warms and illuminates the inside of a hogan, just as the sun warms and illuminates the earth. Each of the different quadrants of the NNIS wheel will include Fostering a Growth Mindset which will hopefully lead toward better self-management through the use of rubrics and self-assessment. I think that these specific SEL competencies will be the hardest to achieve based on what the 7th graders are like, which is why these need to be done with each assignment and each group collaboration. In Markowitz & Bouffard (2020), Anchor Three of the Seven Competencies is Fostering a Growth Mindset, “This anchor refers to the development of both the students’ and teachers’ beliefs that they can learn more and become smarter if they work hard, seeing mistakes as furthering their learning rather than showing their lack of competence” (p.39). Throughout this unit’s content objectives, I have used examples of the NNIS paradigm because the teachings of the directions and the thought processes that are presented with each direction lie heavily in the teachings of the four sacred mountains which lead to, and are a part of the traditional Navajo hogan’s teachings. Each of the four main posts of the hogan represent each cardinal position that was referenced in this unit, and just like the four sacred mountains and the graphic that was presented earlier, the fire or the place of emergence is in the center providing warmth for all. Within our mountains, or directions, we are nurtured to grow in a positive and supportive state, much like in the nurturing environment of our home or hogan. Our mountains and directions are dressed and represent soft and hard goods as well as elements of life, all items that are beautiful, useful and meant to support growth of living beings (Salabye & Manolescu, 2016). The way Diné interpret the growth of humans is not just through the NNIS paradigm, and the teachings of the four sacred mountains but also through the teachings of the cornstalk. We

compare the nurturing of a corn plant from seedling to harvest to the growth of a person from seed to adult, and in this way we can use our comparison to show that we as adults, as parents, as teachers must provide all the positive nourishment for our students to thrive. We know that corn can grow to fruition, but we as caretakers must provide the correct type of environment for it to succeed and provide for all people involved. In this understanding we as educators must provide the environment for all to thrive in any way that they need to. We must be providing the skills to help our students succeed by letting them know that mistakes will happen and that we all have the ability to be great, but we are all not the same and have our own needs that we must tend to. For the self-management portion, from my observations of the 7th grade, and I'm not sure if it's the same for other schools, but it seems that the kids need some instruction on making choices and the reasons for those decisions. I think this section is going to take the most patience because fostering growth mindsets and responsible decision making is not a lesson that is taught once and then it's obtained, it's something we all have to be careful at instilling. Am I up for this task?

Teaching Strategies

My teaching strategies focus on the whole group for a large part of instruction but will include small group assistance when students work in group collaboration.

Small Group

Students will receive various assignments from the teacher in regard to preparing themselves for the traumatic texts of Columbian contact in the Western Hemisphere. Readings from the McGraw-Hill *myWorld Interactive: American History* and Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese's adaptation of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People* will be given to students to read in small groups of two to three people. Students will also receive assignments in relation to Columbian contact after readings have been done.

Whole Group

Once students finish any reading tasks, they will go back to their seats to receive clarification of what was read, and to write notes using graphic organizers to help them answer questions and provide details to answer teacher-made questions that will not be found in the textbook. The use of graphic organizers and the breaking down of what was read is a common occurrence in the classroom. As each day passes, we review main ideas and details of what was read and discussed the day before to help memory retention. So far, the review of content has proven most successful as compared to having students read and be passive note takers not given any time to recall and answer questions.

Classroom Activities

Tiered Lesson- Identify trusting relationships- Students will read except from *Her Land, Her Love*, and *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse*, poems titled, *Dit'óódí* and *It Has Always Been This Way*, to identify what trusting relationships look like. Students will make a list of what is needed in order to build trusting relationships with adults, and with their peers who are in their immediate friend circle as well as not in their immediate friend circle. Students will get into

groups of two or three and select the Tier for their assignment. As the teacher you use discretion on who your students are and what tier you know they can accomplish. If you know you have a group that would need more challenges, then let them choose from tier 2 or 3.

Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Create a well-organized T-Chart identifying traits and characteristics of a trusting relationship and a relationship not built on trust.	Illustrate and author a 4 slide comic strip with a main character who shows traits and characteristics of a trusting relationship.	Reflect and write about a time when you witnessed or experienced a trusting and caring relationship. Tell in great detail the setting, the cause and effect and how what kind of impact it had on you.

Group by Clans- Students/guardians have already filled out a survey for me that provided students' clans. Those who did not provide a clan, I will ask for a filled out clan sheet once again. Either an Excel or Spreadsheet will be filled out with each student's four clans. Use the *Diné College Learning Center: A Guide to Clans* clan sheet to organize and categorize by color. Students can be grouped by relation, by specific clan, or color group. As often as you can, if you have free time, or a day that is shortened for any reason and you feel like no new lessons could fit in that day, I would suggest having students practice their clan introduction. With our current year, these days have come up quite a bit. In this lesson, prior and during I will use an excerpt from *Her Land, Her Love* by Evangeline Parsons Yazzie to show the importance of clans in a system of community assistance. For those students who have felt excluded we will read excerpts from *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* and *Only Approved Indians Can Play: Made in the USA*. These bits of literature may be able to help put into perspective that regardless of appearance, we are related and are Native to this land.

Dual Timeline- Students will read excerpts from *Navajo History to 1846: Dinétah Phase* and will create a timeline of events from what was covered in the Renaissance, Scientific Enlightenment and the Columbian Period alongside what was brought up in the Dinétah phase.

Illustration of the negatives and positives- Students will draw and color items or full realized pictures that show the negative and positive implications of Columbus' arrival to the Western Hemisphere. This is to aid in the assignment alongside this one which is to write a poem, song or narrative on student emotions concerning either of the implications that were drawn. The resources for this lesson will be in the form of song and poetry to help kids interpret how others see the actions, and perhaps help them visualize better what they will illustrate. I will use songs written by Lo Ca\$h Ninjas, Merciless Indian Savages (MIS), Buffy Saint Marie, XIT

Poem, Song or Narrative- Students will use the illustrations they provided on the negatives and positive impacts of Columbus in the Western Hemisphere and will write a poem, their own song lyrics, or a narrative expressing their OWN views or emotions felt from what they have learned. Poems of how people feel, just expressing feelings will be shared as an example. Poems by

Jimmy Santiago Baca from, *Martin & Meditations on the South Valley* will be shared as well as poems from Poetry Foundation, an online poetry archive.

Student Assessment Plan

Learning Goal	Assessment	Assessment Format
Explain how Columbus arrived and impacted life in the Western Hemisphere.	Pre-Assessment	Paragraph or lyrics that give information from non-textbook related information and textbook related information about the Columbian presences in the West.
Students will be able identify what it takes to build a trusting relationship	Formative Activity	Students are given a choice of assignment, but with the same goal, to identify what makes a trusting relationship.
Students will use their clans to build familial relationships within the classroom.	Formative Assessment Activity	Observation of student collaboration and communication toward each other in the classroom and how quick they are to state their own clans and recognize who is related.
Students will use visuals to understand and bring meaning to text information.	Formative Assessment Activity	Students create a timeline of two separate events within the same time period.
Students will compare and contrast information perceived from two sides of the historical lens and provide a summarization of effects of the past on modern life.	Formative Assessment Post- Assessment	Creation of original writing based on information gained throughout the unit.

Self-Assessment Rubric

Group Work– Self- assessment

	1	2	3	4	5
Collaboration	I did not make attempts to	I tried to help, but wasn't sure how to	I followed suggestions made by my	I made suggestions and	I was fully engaged and made

	help the group.	help.	group to help and get the task completed.	volunteered to do tasks that I could help with.	suggestions, provided conversations, and helped with what I could.
Effort	I gave little to no effort.	I tried to give some effort, but didn't know how to.	I gave some effort, but I could have done something different to help.	I put in the effort, and I know how I can do better next time.	I put in effort and helped my teammates do the best they could also.
Communication	I did not talk or help.	I talked with my group but I was off topic or I made fun of groupmates' input or comments.	I talked with the group and did not make fun of anyone's input.	I talked and asked questions that helped us get to the answers.	I talked and asked questions that helped us get to the answers and provided supporting and positive feedback to my group.

Guidelines for Working in a Group

1. We do not make fun of other people's efforts or knowledge of a topic.
2. We help each other with pronunciation and reading when we can.
3. We help each other write the best we can.
4. We ask each other questions that help us complete a task.
5. We use words that provide positive feedback.
6. We do not show our disapproval of a partnership that we did not choose. If there is an issue, please bring it up to the teacher discreetly.

Alignment with Standards

Arizona Department of Education- History Standards

- 7.H1.1 Analyze the rise and decline, interactions between, and blending of cultures and societies.
- 7.H1.2 Trace the development and impact of scientific, technological, and educational innovations within historical time periods. Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.
- 7.H2.1 Investigate how conflict can be both unifying and divisive throughout communities, societies, nations, and the world.

7.E2.1 Explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society

Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards– Reading Literacy in History Grade 6-8

7.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards– Writing Literacy in History Grade 6-8

7.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments or technical processes. A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education Culture Standards

7-8th Grade Diné Character Building Standards:

Standard: I will develop and apply critical thinking to establish relationships with the environment. Concept 1: I will apply critical thinking to establish relationships with the environment. PO1- I will apply my thinking to build strong life skills. PO3- I will model kindness and patience. Concept 3: I will have self-respect. PO2- I will show compassion. PO3- I will practice courtesy to others. PO4- I will demonstrate ways not to be temperamental.

Resources and References

Acrey, B. P. (1982). *Navajo History to 1846: The Land and the People*. Shiprock, New Mexico. Department of Curriculum Materials Development.

A very outdated text, to which I say that the Bering Land Theory today does not have as much traction as it did when this text was published. Regardless, it is what is available and it is something we can compare our Renaissance, Scientific Enlightenment and Columbian Exploration to.

American Educator (Summer, 2019). Responding to Students' Stress and Trauma. *A Union of Professionals*. Retrieved from <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2019/outten>

This interview with a veteran educator gives us younger teachers good insight on how to respond to students who have stress from traumas they have experienced.

Aronilth, W. (1980). *Navajo Oral History NIS 220*. Tsaile, Arizona. Navajo Community College Press.

Diné College Professor and knowledge holder, Aronilth shares wisdoms and teaching in a series of published work through the college. A good reference to have when doing any work in the field of Diné culture.

Aronilth, W. (1991). *Foundation of Diné Culture*. Tsaile, Arizona. Navajo Community College Press.

A great text to have as reference when it comes to Diné culture and teachings.

Baca, J.S. (1986). X. *Martín & Meditations on the South Valley* (pp.67-68). New York: New Directions.

A book of poems by Jimmy Santiago Baca that shares his feelings and time living in the South Valley of Albuquerque. It provides a familiar place to students, and also gives a point of view from someone who identifies as Chicano and also provides their own Native experiences.

Baca, J.S. (1986). XII. *Martín & Meditations on the South Valley* (pp.70). New York: New Directions.

Balter, A., & Grossman, F. D. (2009). The Effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on Language and Culture Education in Navajo Public Schools. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 48(3), 19–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24398753>

Information regarding the effects of Western education on Native American culture and language is always good to have and refer back to. This is very important especially today with the transition of our soon to be new Superintendent of Education in Arizona.

Charbonneau-Dahlen, B. K., Lowe, J., Morris, S. L. (2016). Giving Voice to Historical Trauma Through Storytelling: The Impact of Boarding School Experience on American Indians. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 25(6), 598–617. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2016.1157843>

To be well versed, or even just have some information in regard to experiences with the boarding school system is important to make comparisons and analysis to.

Dunbar-Ortiz R. Mendoza J. Reese D. & Beacon Press. (2019). *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*, (pp.vii-46). Boston: Beacon Press.

This text gives great information regarding the history of the United States from the perspective and experiences of Native people.

Frey, N., Fisher, D. & Smith, D. (2019). All learning is social and emotional: Helping students develop essential skills for the classroom and beyond. ASCD.

A very good resource provided from our seminar leader. This resource gives insight into the importance of SEL. This article is referenced to a lot, and for good reason. It helped me understand SEL competencies by giving detail on each.

Forbes, J. (1983). Only Approved Indians Can Play: Made in USA. In S. Ortiz (Ed.), *Earth Power Coming* (pp. 262-263). Tsale, Arizona: Navajo Community College Press. Great one-page short story in regard to identity politics amongst Native people.

Jagers, R.J., Rivas-Drake, D., Williams, B. (2019). Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Toward SEL in Service of Educational Equity and Excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032

Lo Cash Ninjas (2013). Sheephurting. *F*ck Yo Team*.

Song's lyrics are available on streaming site Bandcamp. Lyrics can be used to show the use of historical information and personal observation into a creative outlet.

Lo Cash Ninjas (2013). Wagon Burner. *F*ck Yo Team*.

Longsoldier, L. (2018). Obligations 2. *New Poets of Native Nations*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/149976/obligations-2>
Wonderful poem in regard to feelings of being Native in a way that is not the normal idea of what poetry should look like.

Mahfouz, J. & Anthony-Stevens, V. (2020). Why trouble SEL? The need for cultural relevance in SEL. *Occasional Paper Series*, 2020(43). <https://educate.bankstreet.edu/occasional-paper-series/vol2020/iss43/2>

Markowitz, N. L. & Bouffard, S. M. (2020). *Teaching with a social, emotional, and cultural lens: A framework for educators and teacher educators*. Harvard Educational Press.

Marshall, III., J. (2015). *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse*. New York, NY: Abrams Amulet Books.

A very cute young adult novel that includes themes on building trusting relationships and identity.

McDaniel, W. E. (1983). Maybe He Is A Born Storyteller. In S. Ortiz (Ed.), *Earth Power Coming* (pp.242). Tsaile, Arizona: Navajo Community College Press.

I feel that this short story touches on fostering a growth mindset. Although the child in the story can be seen as “lying”, the adults reframe this action in a positive light, showing that the kiddo may just be a good storyteller, to which storytellers are held in high regard among many Native Nations.

Merciless Indian Savages (2020). *Kill the Man, Save the Indian*. Merciless NDN Records.

This album’s songs and their lyrics tackle heavy issues of colonization, and many have explicit language, but since it’s a more metal-type album words are not very clear. I would okay this to show the many ways we can channel our anger, frustration, sadness or happiness.

Plato, A. (1992). The Natives of America. *African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52473/the-natives-of-america>

A poem that gives an outsider’s view of the negative effects of colonization. A good way to show information from history being blended with personal observation and analysis.

Salabye, J.E., Manolescu, K. (August, 2016). Why are the four directions so prominent in Diné stories and teaching? *Leading the Way: The Wisdom of the Navajo People*, 14(8), 3-10.

This periodical can be found in most grocery stores and gas stations on the reservation. It is a good resource to have when needing reason and explanation on Diné teachings.

Saint-Marie, B. (1964). Now That the Buffalo’s Gone. On *It’s My Way!* Vanguard Records.

This song is another song about personal views and the blending of historical information in the form of a creative outlet.

Schrieber, J.C. (2011). Parenting, Policies, and Practice: Christian Influence on Child Welfare in America. *Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work: Social Work & Christianity*, 38(2), 293–314.

This article was so I could show the impact that childrearing from Anglo- Christian methods had drastically changed through forced assimilation and how it remains the norm today.

Tapahonso, L. (1993). *It Has Always Been This Way. Sáanii Dahataal: The Women Are Singing*, (pp.17-18). Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press.

This poem uses Diné teaching to show ways of traditional childrearing. This is where I want to show more of the Diné relationship building and also include with the identity aspect. We are the beauty of the culture and the land and thus should treat ourselves and others this way.

Tapahonso, L. (1993). *Dit'óódi. Sáanii Dahataal: The Women Are Singing*, (pp.33-35). Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press.

Same as mentioned for the previous poem, the title means thin or fragile, and that is how we should be treating each other and ourselves. Not in the sense that we are always going to tear or break, but that we are to be handled gently and with care and respect.

Venet, A. S. (2021). *Equity-centered trauma-informed education: Transforming classrooms, shifting systems. Equity and Social Justice in Education Series*. W.W. Norton & Co.

I think that this read should be mandatory for all teachers, especially those working in marginalized communities. This helps us teachers to be aware of our implicit biases, and to take action to assist our students who need gentle and supportive teaching.

XIT (1973). *Silent Warrior*. Sounds of America Records.

This whole album is a good one. Although older, students may be turned off, it's good to show the classics and to bring awareness that music made by Native people about Native issues is not something new, but has been around for quite a while.

Yazzie, E.P. (2014). *Her Land, Her Love: Nináánibaa' Book One* (pp. 26-27).. Flagstaff, Arizona: Salina Bookshelf, Inc.

I will use this excerpt to aid the importance of clans. Although this is a romance novel, this particular section shares good insight into the need to know and use our clan system.

Videos to share

<https://eiteljorg.org/indigenous-peoples-day/>

This video is not in any particular place in this unit, but if the needs calls, I will use it. It's an interview of an art curator giving perspective on the influence Columbus has had on Native Art and how we as Native people are reclaiming our place by instituting Indigenous Peoples' Day rather than Columbus Day.