

Writing a Research-based Personal Essay

Harmony in Motion: Exploring Apache Culture, Water, and Land through Braided Essays

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Dedication:

To the resilient spirit of the Apache people, whose profound connection to the land and water has enriched our understanding of culture, heritage, and the harmonious dance of life. This curriculum unit, "Harmony in Motion: Exploring Apache Culture, Water, and Land through Braided Essays," is dedicated to the preservation and celebration of the Apache wisdom that flows through the pages of their stories, reminding us of the enduring power of culture and nature intertwined. May this curriculum serve as a testament to the enduring legacy of Apache traditions and the vital importance of nurturing our bond with the land and water that sustains us all.

Context

My Journey:

From an early age, I possessed a deep yearning to become a teacher, a guide who would illuminate young minds with knowledge and inspiration. I loved the concept of school and imagined having a desk filled with papers, reading to enthusiastic students, and stamping smiley faces on their work.

As a child, I spent countless hours playing "teacher" with my sister's stuffed animals and dolls, arranging them in a make-believe "wickiup" classroom (built from coconut and banana leaves) and delivering lessons with unmatched enthusiasm. I would carefully prepare lesson plans, scribbling on imaginary blackboards, and eagerly explaining complex concepts to their silent yet attentive students.

As I reflect on my own schooling and the make-believe teaching, I can remember having fun in both spaces. Looking back, I enjoyed both real and imaginary school experiences. However, as I transitioned to high school, my experiences shifted, school changed, and I departed from my childhood dream of becoming a teacher.

My high school experiences were mediocre, to say the least. From the teachers to the lessons, nothing stands out to me as being particularly meaningful or memorable. For most of my secondary education, I sat quietly at my desk, completed assignments on worksheets or from textbooks, and was passed along without really being let in on the joke that was supposed to be my education.

After that rather uninspiring high school experience, I attended Philippine Normal University, where my desire to teach was reignited. My first year, I remember reading and discussing Jim Harrison's "Farmer," and listening to my English 101 professor talk about the novel. I was captivated. We discussed the life of Joseph, a dairy farmer residing in rural Michigan. While the novel primarily focuses on Joseph's experiences as a farmer, it also delves into various other aspects of his life, exploring themes of relationships, personal struggles, and the quest for purpose and fulfillment. I remember asking myself, "Why didn't we read stuff like this in high school?" That is, books with a farmer character who struggled with some of the same things I struggled with, or those that were set in places where I had been. Perhaps, if the teacher had provided literature that I connected with, maybe I would have finished a novel and participated more. I was inspired in my college English and literature classes and promised myself, when I become a science teacher, that I will do my best to culturally connect my subject to my students and help them achieve a more meaningful and rich learning experience—one that would be the opposite of my own.

With excitement and determination, I finished my BS Physics degree and embarked on my graduate studies at the De La Salle University. The program challenged me intellectually, pushing the boundaries of my knowledge and understanding. I engaged in rigorous coursework,

conducting experiments, and exploring complex theories that expanded my perspective on the world.

But my journey went beyond the confines of the laboratory and lecture halls. I embraced the principles of culturally responsive teaching, recognizing the importance of inclusivity and diversity in scientific endeavors. I actively sought out opportunities to collaborate with fellow students from diverse cultural backgrounds, realizing that their unique perspectives enriched our discussions and research. I was passionate about exploring the intersection between physics and cultural contexts. I sought to understand how different cultures influenced scientific development and how physics could address the unique challenges faced by various communities around the world. This focus allowed me to develop a more holistic understanding of the subject and its impact on society.

With my degree and a commitment to culturally responsive teaching, I aimed to create an impact. Through research, teaching, and community outreach, my goal was to inspire inclusivity and empower students of diverse backgrounds to explore the universe's wonders. This led me to move to the USA to work as a teacher, driven by the desire to contribute to future generations and make a meaningful difference. Working in the USA allows me to experience a different educational system, teaching methods, and cultural environment, enriching my personal and professional life. I also want to bring my unique skills, perspectives, and cultural understanding to the American education system, enriching the classroom experience and promoting global awareness.

My first teaching job in the United States was in Zuni Public Schools as a physical science teacher at a time when there was an influx of scripted reading and math programs and classroom management initiatives. There was limited acknowledgment of culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching. Instead, I was bombarded with professional development workshops, meetings, and seminars that centered on increasing student achievement through standardized testing. At the time, there was an increase in accountability discourse at every turn. While this accountability discourse played like a song on repeat in the corners of my mind, I was a new teacher with a desire to offer my students something I had not experienced as a student. I wanted students in this small rural Zuni pueblo to have a fun, meaningful education. I wanted my students to relate to the Science I taught and the writing assignments I assigned. Little did I know that I would in many ways look back to my childhood to tap two of the most important skills that I practiced for hours as children in “wickiup” classroom—planning and preparation—in order to create and present relevant, meaningful, and fun lessons to middle students fifteen years later.

Perhaps one of the most memorable curricular units that I created as a public-school teacher was a unit on Watershed for middle school students at Canyon Day Jr High School. Incorporating the watershed curriculum into the Apache culture involved recognizing the deep connection that indigenous communities, like the Apache, have with their land, water, and natural resources. The curriculum was adapted to resonate with Apache cultural values, traditions, and ways of understanding the environment. The curriculum acknowledged Apache people's traditional ecological knowledge, which includes a profound understanding of local ecosystems, watersheds in Whiteriver, and the interconnectedness of all living things. A great deal of planning went into

this particular unit because I wanted my students to be able to connect with the content as well as find value in the activities related to learning ecological elements. I incorporated hands-on and experiential learning opportunities that allow students to interact directly with local watersheds. I also involved field trips, community visits, or engaging with local environmental organizations to understand the specific watershed challenges and conservation efforts within their own community. I established a partnership and collaborated with members of the Apache community, including tribal leaders, elders, educators, and cultural experts and sought their guidance, insights, and input in developing the curriculum to ensure its cultural relevance and accuracy.

While brainstorming for this year's curriculum unit, I thought about how I could get the students in this school—interested in land and water through cultural and personal narratives. Teaching a culturally responsive watershed curriculum in the Apache community requires an understanding and incorporation of Apache culture, values, and traditional ecological knowledge (Wassell, et al., 2016). So, I am planning to include Apache voices, stories, and experiences in the curriculum materials and incorporate culturally relevant examples, student's personal and local stories related to watersheds and water resources within the Apache community. I will provide opportunities for experiential and place-based learning and take students on field trips to local watersheds, rivers, or other water bodies that hold cultural significance to the Apache community. I will invite students to engage directly with the land and waters, learning through observation, participation, and reflection through writing.

My School:

Canyon Day Junior High School (CDJHS) is within the Whiteriver Unified School District which is located in the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation in Whiteriver, Arizona. Canyon Day Junior High School is a public school located in Whiteriver, AZ, which is in a fringe rural setting. The student population of Canyon Day Junior High School is 442 (216 boys, 226 girls) and the school serves 6th to 8th grades. The student-teacher ratio is 16:1 and the student population is made up of 51.1% female students and 48.9% male students. The school's minority student enrollment is 100%. There are 28 equivalent full-time teachers and one full-time school counselor. CDJHS students' population consists of a high percentage of students from low-income families. One hundred percent of our students are eligible for a free breakfast and lunch (NCES, 2022).

My students:

I teach a diverse group with unique learning needs and abilities at Canyon Day Jr High School. Each student requires specialized support and accommodations to help them succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Each receives individualized instruction tailored to their specific needs. Teachers and special education professionals create personalized learning plans that address their strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. Instruction has been modified, such

as using alternative teaching methods, adaptive materials, or assistive technology, to ensure meaningful access to the curriculum.

Despite disabilities, my CDJHS students are seen as individuals of boundless potential and inherent strengths. They're believed to excel in academics, personal growth, and future pursuits. I value each student's unique talents and dreams, nurturing and empowering them. I see all students as assets, focusing on strengths rather than limitations, fostering positivity and belief in every child's abilities, irrespective of background. I inspire them to explore, set goals, and persevere. Success varies for each student; personalized education and support are vital. I encourage ownership of learning, positive choices, and resilience.

Rationale

The Apache community has a profound and intrinsic bond with the land and water that encompasses their ancestral territories (Garrouette, 2003). Land, water, and cultural narratives play a pivotal role in shaping Apache identity and form the foundation of their traditional knowledge systems (Opler, 1994). This connection stems from a long history of living in harmony with the natural environment and a deep respect for the interconnectedness of all living beings.

For the Apache people, the land is more than just physical space; it is infused with spiritual significance and ancestral ties (Watson, 2002). It is a sacred place that holds the stories, wisdom, and memories of generations past. The land serves as a source of sustenance, providing food, shelter, and resources necessary for survival. Moreover, it serves as a spiritual refuge where Apache ceremonies, rituals, and traditional practices are carried out (Basso, 1996).

Similarly, water holds immense importance within Apache culture (Post, 2017). Rivers, lakes, and other water bodies are regarded as life-giving entities, crucial for the sustenance of both people and the surrounding ecosystem. Water is deeply respected and revered, as it symbolizes purity, renewal, and a vital connection to the natural world (Hultkrantz, 1971). Apache cultural narratives often contain stories and teachings that emphasize the sacred nature of water and its integral role in Apache life (Venne, 2013).

Recognizing the profound significance of land, water, and cultural narratives, the curriculum seeks to honor and celebrate the Apache community's unique relationship with the environment. It acknowledges that Apache identity is deeply intertwined with the land they inhabit and the waters that flow through their territories (Elliott et al., 2017). By incorporating this understanding into the curriculum, educators can help students develop a profound appreciation for Apache culture, history, and traditional knowledge systems.

The curriculum aims to highlight the Apache community's intimate knowledge of the land and water, fostering an understanding of sustainable practices, resource conservation, and ecological balance. It strives to nurture a sense of pride and respect for Apache traditions, ensuring that future generations appreciate the wisdom and values embedded within their cultural narratives

(Bruner, 1990). It nurtures a desire to protect nature, fostering a sustainable bond between the Apache community and their heritage.

By integrating cultural narratives into the curriculum, students gain a deeper appreciation for the resilience and adaptability of different cultures in the face of environmental challenges (Cronon, 1996). They can learn how communities have developed sustainable practices and knowledge systems that enable them to live in harmony with their natural surroundings (Berkes, 2012). This promotes cultural pride and the preservation of traditional ecological knowledge for future generations (Cajete, 2000).

Content Objective:

Weaving Apache Culture to Land and Water

The connection of Apache culture to the land and water is a fundamental aspect of their way of life. It shapes their spiritual beliefs, traditional practices, resource utilization, and cultural identity. It involves deeply integrating the rich cultural heritage of the Apache people with their profound connection to the natural environment. This concept recognizes the intricate interplay between Apache culture, traditional knowledge, and the ecosystems encompassing land and water within their ancestral territories. The Apache people's ongoing efforts to preserve and protect the land and water reflect their commitment to sustaining their cultural heritage and ensuring the well-being of future generations. The Apache people have a profound respect for the natural environment and recognize the interdependence between themselves and the land and water.

The Apache people have a long history of inhabiting and nurturing their lands, emphasizing a holistic relationship with the environment. This connection is rooted in their cultural narratives, which transmit wisdom, values, and a sense of belonging. By weaving these cultural narratives with the significance of land and water, Apache communities can perpetuate their heritage while instilling a strong sense of stewardship for their surroundings.

Cultural narratives are powerful conduits for transmitting core values and beliefs (Bruner, 1990). They serve as a means to pass down ancestral wisdom, preserving traditional knowledge about the land and water. These narratives are essential for fostering a cultural identity deeply intertwined with the environment. As Apache stories and oral traditions are shared, they reinforce reverence for the land and water, cultivating a sense of responsibility and care.

Narratives that emphasize the intricate relationship between land, water, and culture provide a window into the Apache worldview (Smith, 2012). This connection underscores the importance of preserving not only the physical landscape but also the cultural fabric that sustains the community. Cultural narratives that highlight the fundamental role of land and water underscore the Apache people's historic role as stewards of their territories. This stewardship extends beyond resource management to encompass the broader concept of sustainability (Orr, 1992; Leopold, 1949). Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life forms within their ecosystems,

Apache communities are inspired to prioritize conservation and maintain the delicate balance between human activities and the natural world.

Weaving Apache cultural narratives with land and water considerations encourages critical thinking and empathy among community members, particularly the younger generation (Nussbaum, 2010; Orr, 2004). As these narratives are explored in the context of contemporary challenges such as environmental degradation and climate change, individuals are prompted to analyze the impacts of human actions on their surroundings. This critical awareness promotes a forward-looking perspective, motivating Apache youth to make informed decisions that will shape the future of both their culture and the environment.

Spiritual Significance:

The Apache people hold the land and water as sacred entities, viewing them not only as physical elements but also as inhabited by ancestral spirits and deities. These spiritual connections are central to Apache culture, and ceremonies and rituals play a vital role in honoring and establishing a bond with these sacred elements. Through practices such as offerings, dances, and prayers, the Apache seek guidance and blessings from their ancestors, recognizing their presence and wisdom within the land and water.

This spiritual worldview is deeply rooted in the belief in the interconnectedness of all living beings and the environment. The Apache's ceremonies and rituals serve as expressions of gratitude and a means to establish a profound communion with nature, emphasizing respect, harmony, and balance. This sacred relationship underscores their commitment to stewardship and a profound appreciation for the land and water that are integral to their cultural heritage.

Cultural Practices:

The Apache people deeply integrate the land and water into their cultural traditions, including ceremonies and seasonal rituals. Ceremonies like the Sunrise Dance, Rain Dance, and puberty rites play essential roles in expressing gratitude, seeking blessings, and maintaining harmony with nature. These ceremonies frequently incorporate offerings and rituals conducted on or near bodies of water and natural landscapes.

The Sunrise Dance, also known as the Mountain Spirit Dance, is a significant early-morning ceremony symbolizing the cycle of life. It takes place outdoors, embracing the spiritual connection with the land. Similarly, the Rain Dance invokes water-related spirits and powers to pray for rainfall, ensuring crop prosperity and livelihoods. Puberty ceremonies, which vary among Apache groups, mark the transition to adulthood and often include rituals near sacred sites or water sources, emphasizing the individual's ties to their culture, land, and water.

Alongside ceremonies, Apache culture encompasses seasonal practices aligned with the natural rhythms of the land and water. Harvest celebrations honor the land and water's abundance through feasts, dances, and communal gatherings. Gathering and hunting activities, synchronized

with specific seasons, reflect the Apache's sustainable use of natural resources, respecting the land and water's cycles while nourishing their deep connection with these vital elements.

Subsistence and Resource Utilization:

Historically, the Apache people's sustenance primarily relied on hunting and gathering. They possessed extensive knowledge of local wildlife and plant life, employing various hunting methods and gathering techniques to obtain food resources. Hunting supplied meat from game animals, while gathering involved collecting edible plants, fruits, seeds, and nuts found in the natural surroundings.

In addition to hunting and gathering, Apache communities practiced agriculture, cultivating crops like maize (corn), beans, squash, and others suitable for their local ecosystems. Successful agriculture required expertise in planting methods, irrigation, and the use of fertile soil near water sources. Farming significantly contributed to a stable food supply, complementing their hunting and gathering practices.

The Apache people made versatile use of natural resources provided by the land and water. They harvested timber for construction, collected rocks and minerals for crafting tools and weapons, and gathered materials for creating items like baskets, pottery, and clothing. The land and water also yielded medicinal plants and herbs, employed in traditional healing practices and remedies. These communities adapted their subsistence strategies to the diverse environments across Apache territories, including mountains, deserts, grasslands, and river valleys. Their deep understanding of local ecosystems enabled them to adjust their practices, ensuring their survival and well-being in various settings.

Traditional Knowledge and Land Stewardship:

Apache communities have amassed a wealth of knowledge concerning the ecosystems in their ancestral lands. This knowledge encompasses a profound comprehension of the indigenous plants, wildlife, water systems, and the intricate ecological relationships existing within their surroundings. Through methods such as direct observation, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and cultural traditions, the Apache people have acquired profound insights into the interconnectedness and dynamics that govern their ecosystems.

Furthermore, the Apache community has honed a sharp awareness of the recurring patterns and cyclic rhythms inherent in their environment. This traditional ecological wisdom serves as a guiding compass for their activities, including hunting, gathering, and agricultural endeavors. They have acquired the ability to discern the optimal moments for actions like planting, harvesting, or seasonal migrations, relying on environmental cues and natural indicators to ensure the responsible and sustainable utilization of their natural resources.

Cultural Identity and Heritage:

The Apache people possess a profound sense of attachment to their ancestral lands. Over generations, they have inhabited specific regions, forging deep emotional, spiritual, and historical bonds with the land and water found within these territories. These bonds give rise to a strong sense of belonging and identity, as Apache individuals and communities perceive themselves as an inseparable part of the natural environment.

Landscapes, landmarks, and water sources hold immense historical importance for Apache communities. These natural features often serve as markers denoting cultural events, migrations, battles, or pivotal moments in Apache history. They transcend mere physical entities, encapsulating the collective memory and heritage of the Apache people, serving as poignant reminders of their ancestors' experiences and the ongoing evolution of their culture.

Oral Tradition and Storytelling:

In Apache oral tradition, the land and water hold a profound significance. Numerous narratives and legends within this tradition illuminate the origins of geographical features, natural phenomena, and the dynamic interactions between humans and their environment. These stories carry invaluable lessons, teachings, and cultural values related to the natural world, emphasizing the deep interconnectedness and reverence that Apache culture holds for the land and water.

Apache tales frequently contain moral and ethical insights that reflect their profound respect for and understanding of the environment. Through the art of storytelling, Apache elders impart wisdom concerning sustainable practices, conservation, and the responsible utilization of natural resources. These narratives serve as guiding principles for living in harmony with the land and water, instilling a profound sense of duty and stewardship among members of the Apache community.

The practice of sharing stories within Apache communities fosters intergenerational learning and strengthens communal bonds. Elders assume a crucial role as custodians of traditional knowledge, transmitting their wisdom to younger generations through storytelling. This process not only reinforces familial and communal ties but also reinforces the profound sense of belonging and identity rooted in their connection to the land and water.

Conservation and Environmental Activism:

Apache communities frequently encounter difficulties related to land and water rights, stemming from historical and contemporary issues. In response, they engage in environmental activism and advocacy endeavors aimed at safeguarding their entitlements to access and manage these resources. This commitment is demonstrated through legal actions, grassroots movements, and collaborations with fellow indigenous and environmental organizations, all with the overarching goal of securing land and water rights and promoting sustainable resource management.

Moreover, Apache communities underscore the significance of environmental education and raising awareness regarding the importance of land and water. They actively champion educational initiatives, workshops, and community gatherings dedicated to traditional ecological wisdom, conservation principles, and the intrinsic connection between culture and the environment. These endeavors are designed to empower community members, particularly the younger generation, to assume roles as caretakers of the land and water.

Furthermore, Apache communities engage in active partnerships with governmental agencies, nonprofit entities, universities, and other stakeholders to address environmental challenges and achieve shared conservation objectives. These collaborative efforts encompass activities related to habitat restoration, water preservation, wildlife protection, and the promotion of sustainable practices in alignment with Apache cultural values. By uniting forces with diverse partners, Apache communities can amplify their endeavors and wield greater influence in the protection and preservation of their precious land and water resources.

Exploration of Cultural Narratives:

The curriculum will encompass an array of culturally rich narratives, including folktales, myths, legends, and personal accounts, all of which underscore the intrinsic connection between land, water, and culture. These narratives will be thoughtfully curated to represent a diverse spectrum of cultural viewpoints and lived experiences.

The incorporation of cultural narratives within the curriculum presents a valuable opportunity to expose students to an array of culturally varied perspectives, experiences, and storytelling traditions. By integrating a selection of narratives such as folktales, myths, legends, and personal stories, the curriculum aims to underscore the profound interrelationship between land, water, and culture.

Careful consideration will be given to the narratives chosen, ensuring they reflect a wide array of cultural backgrounds, thus promoting inclusivity and celebrating cultural diversity. These narratives may originate from various indigenous communities, ethnic groups, or geographical regions, offering students a window into the diverse tapestry of human experiences and connections with the natural world.

Furthermore, the inclusion of personal stories alongside folktales, myths, and legends introduces a human dimension to the curriculum. This allows students to relate to the real-life experiences of individuals within these narratives, fostering a sense of empathy, identification, and a deeper appreciation for the significance of cultural heritage and storytelling traditions.

Study of Environmental Concepts:

The curriculum will encompass essential environmental concepts related to land, water, and ecosystems, offering students an understanding of the significance of biodiversity, sustainability, conservation, and the environmental repercussions of human activities.

Biodiversity, a fundamental concept within the curriculum, will be a focal point. Students will investigate the critical role of biodiversity in sustaining the health and functionality of ecosystems. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines biodiversity as the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, along with the ecological complexes they form. Recognizing biodiversity's importance is essential, as it underpins ecosystem services, contributes to human well-being, and plays a pivotal role in supporting life on Earth (CBD, 1992).

Sustainability is another core concept that students will explore. They will delve into the principles of sustainable development and study strategies for harmonizing human needs with the long-term well-being of the environment. The Brundtland Report, issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development, characterizes sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). This concept underscores the significance of responsible resource management, equitable development, and the preservation of environmental integrity.

Furthermore, the curriculum will highlight the concept of conservation. Students will gain insights into the value of conserving natural resources, safeguarding endangered species and habitats, and implementing sustainable practices. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines conservation as "the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations" (IUCN, 1991). This concept emphasizes the necessity of balancing human activities with the preservation of ecosystems and species for the well-being of both current and future generations.

Additionally, the curriculum will address the consequences of human activities on the environment. Students will examine the impacts of pollution, deforestation, climate change, and other environmental challenges. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) offers comprehensive assessments of climate change and its consequences, enabling students to grasp the scientific basis and projected outcomes of human-induced global warming (IPCC, 2021). They will critically analyze the causes and effects of these issues while exploring potential solutions and mitigation strategies.

Examination of Historical and Contemporary Contexts:

The curriculum will delve into both the historical and contemporary contexts from which cultural narratives emerge. Students will investigate the manners in which land and water have influenced the evolution of diverse cultures and how cultural traditions have adapted over time in response to environmental shifts.

Students will embark on an exploration of how land and water have played pivotal roles in shaping the development of various cultures across history. They will scrutinize the impact of geographical features, such as rivers, mountains, and coastlines, on settlement patterns, economic activities, and cultural customs. For instance, the Nile River's significance in ancient Egyptian

civilization will be examined, highlighting its role in providing fertile soil for agriculture, serving as transportation routes, and bearing spiritual importance (Shaw, 2003).

Additionally, students will scrutinize the transformation of cultural practices in reaction to environmental transformations. They will study how indigenous communities, for example, have adjusted their traditional customs to ensure the sustainable management of resources and the preservation of a harmonious coexistence with their surroundings. This will involve an exploration of the traditional ecological knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples, which have been instrumental in safeguarding biodiversity and maintaining equilibrium within ecosystems (Berkes, Colding, & Folke, 2000).

Engagement with Local and Indigenous Knowledge:

The curriculum will actively involve students with local and Indigenous knowledge systems associated with land and water. This engagement may encompass inviting guest speakers, forming community partnerships, arranging field trips, or facilitating virtual experiences that offer students direct insights from individuals deeply rooted in the cultural significance of land and water.

Guest speakers, which can include Indigenous elders, community leaders, environmental advocates, or experts in cultural heritage, may be invited to share their wisdom and experiences concerning land and water. Their contributions offer invaluable context, personal narratives, and cultural viewpoints that enrich students' educational journeys.

Community partnerships may be established with local Indigenous communities or organizations dedicated to land and water stewardship. These collaborations may entail joint projects, workshops, or shared learning opportunities, enabling students to actively engage and contribute to ongoing initiatives. By collaborating with community members, students can nurture a stronger sense of connection and responsibility toward the land and water.

Field trips to sites of cultural significance, such as sacred lands, traditional fishing areas, or historical landmarks, can provide students with tangible and immersive encounters illustrating the interconnectedness of land, water, and culture. These field trips may be guided by knowledgeable individuals capable of offering insights into the cultural, historical, and ecological dimensions of these locations.

Virtual experiences, including virtual tours or video conferences, can also be employed to connect students with Indigenous knowledge bearers and community members who might not be physically accessible. These virtual encounters present opportunities for students to interact, pose questions, and learn from individuals possessing profound understandings of the relationships between land, water, and culture.

Reflection and Critical Thinking:

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on fostering reflection and critical thinking concerning the interrelationships among land, water, and culture. Students will be prompted to engage in in-depth analysis and interpretation of narratives, considering a range of viewpoints, and engaging in profound reflection regarding their personal connection with the environment and their cultural heritage.

Within the curriculum, the prioritization of reflection and critical thinking is considered fundamental to the learning process. Students will be actively encouraged to undertake thorough analysis and interpretation of the narratives, while also examining multiple perspectives and critically contemplating the intricate connections linking land, water, and culture. Through guided prompts and meaningful discussions, students will delve into the multifaceted relationships between human societies and their natural surroundings, evaluate the influence of cultural practices on natural resources, and engage in introspection regarding their own individual bonds with the land and water. This deliberate focus on reflection and critical thinking serves to enhance higher-order cognitive abilities, stimulate self-awareness, and cultivate a deeper comprehension of the dynamic interplay between culture and the environment.

Teaching Strategies

When connecting with Apache folktales, myths, legends, and stories that emphasize the connection between land, water, and cultures, there are several classroom strategies that can be used to engage students and deepen their understanding

Nature Journaling

Nature journaling is an instructional approach that integrates firsthand observation, contemplation, and artistic expression within an outdoor or natural environment (Krasny, et al, 2013). It entails engaging students in direct interactions with the natural world, urging them to record their observations and musings through written descriptions, illustrations, and other creative forms.

As an instructional approach, nature journaling offers several advantages. It enhances students' capacity for keen observation, as they develop the ability to meticulously scrutinize and document intricate details within their natural surroundings. Furthermore, it cultivates a stronger connection with the natural world, nurturing feelings of admiration, inquisitiveness, and environmental stewardship.

Nature journaling also reinforces scientific inquiry and critical thinking skills. Students are afforded the opportunity to pose inquiries, formulate hypotheses, and seek answers grounded in their observations. They can analyze recurring patterns, establish correlations, and derive conclusions based on their discoveries.

Moreover, nature journaling kindles creativity and self-expression. Students can employ diverse artistic techniques, such as sketching, painting, or collage, to convey their observations and emotions regarding the natural environment. This permits individual expression and personal interpretation of their encounters.

By incorporating nature journaling into their pedagogical approaches, educators can craft meaningful learning encounters that merge science, art, and environmental awareness. It fosters a holistic approach to education and cultivates a profound comprehension of the natural world and our position within it.

Reflective Journals

Reflective journals are written records that afford students a platform to articulate their thoughts, contemplations, and revelations stemming from their educational encounters. They serve as a personal canvas for students to partake in self-reflection and deepen their comprehension of the subjects and ideas explored within the curriculum.

Within the framework of a lesson plan, the use of reflective journals enables students to engage with the themes, messages, and teachings conveyed through Apache stories, with a particular emphasis on the interrelation between land, water, and cultures. Through journaling, students are provided the opportunity to establish personal connections, delve into their inner musings and sentiments, and ponder the pertinence of land and water in their own cultural context.

Reflective journals can be employed as ongoing tasks throughout a unit or a designated timeframe. Students are encouraged to write consistently, chronicling their responses, inquiries, and realizations concerning the Apache stories and the significance of land and water. While the prompts or guidelines provided may vary, they typically urge students to engage in critical reflection about the narratives and their personal connections to them.

To effectively implement reflective journals, educators can furnish lucid instructions, proffer prompts or guiding inquiries to ignite contemplation, and offer feedback or engage in dialogues founded on students' journal entries. Teachers should cultivate a supportive and non-judgmental environment wherein students feel at ease sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Story Retelling

Story retelling is a captivating and interactive exercise that invites students to delve deeper into Apache folktales and legends. Within this activity, students are encouraged to select an Apache story and recount it in their own words. By retelling the narrative, students are actively immersed in the storyline, scrutinizing its components, and honing crucial skills such as summarization and storytelling.

The process of recounting a story necessitates students to meticulously read and grasp the original text, recognizing pivotal events, characters, and themes. Subsequently, they translate

their understanding into practice by summarizing the story in their own words, encapsulating the core of the narrative while infusing it with their unique perspective.

Through the art of story retelling, students cultivate critical thinking abilities, dissecting the plot structure, character evolution, and underlying messages inherent in the Apache story. This process affords them a profound insight into the cultural context and values interwoven within the narrative, enabling a heightened appreciation of the richness and significance of Apache folklore.

Moreover, this activity nurtures creativity and encourages students to exercise their imaginative faculties. As they recount the story in their own words, students enjoy the liberty to inject their distinctive viewpoints, interpretations, and creative elements into the narrative. They may choose to adapt certain elements of the story or introduce novel facets, thereby enhancing their storytelling prowess and stimulating their creative thinking.

Furthermore, story retelling provides a platform for students to enhance their communication competencies. While retelling the story, they practice the organization of their thoughts, the utilization of suitable language and vocabulary, and the adept transmission of the principal ideas and themes to their audience.

Creative Writing

Creative writing emerges as a potent instrument empowering student to unleash their imagination and craft their narratives. Within this exercise, students are encouraged to conceive their Apache-inspired folktales, myths, or legends, accentuating the interconnection of land, water, and cultures. This endeavor not only cultivates their creative prowess but also facilitates a deeper exploration of Apache storytelling traditions.

By authoring their narratives, students can actively immerse themselves in the themes and components found in Apache folklore. They enjoy the liberty to forge characters, storylines, and settings in alignment with Apache storytelling customs, all while infusing their distinctive notions and viewpoints. This process motivates students to engage in critical thinking, make imaginative choices, and probe the significance of the nexus between land, water, and cultures within the Apache milieu.

Creative writing serves as a means for students to further enhance their comprehension of the cultural heritage and values intrinsic to the Apache community. They may embark on research and seek inspiration from established Apache narratives, ensuring that their own tales pay homage to and uphold the traditions and cultural subtleties. By incorporating facets like traditional symbols, rituals, or oral storytelling techniques, students deepen their reverence for the depth and richness of Apache storytelling.

Furthermore, the process of creative writing cultivates crucial aptitudes encompassing character development, plot structure, and narrative cohesion. Students become adept at crafting enthralling narratives that captivate readers and effectively convey their intended messages. They

explore the intricacies of storytelling, including the establishment of a coherent beginning, middle, and end, the creation of tension and resolution, and the integration of descriptive language to breathe life into their stories.

Symbolic Artifacts

Symbolic artifacts serve as tangible and visual manifestations of abstract notions and concepts. In this exercise, students are extended an invitation to investigate the linkage between land, water, and culture within Apache narratives. They are tasked with selecting a particular element or symbol of significance from these narratives and subsequently crafting an artifact, such as a mask, painting, or sculpture, that embodies the chosen symbol and its profound connotations.

As students immerse themselves in Apache stories and pinpoint symbols emblematic of the connection between land, water, and culture, they embark on a journey of analysis and interpretation. This process leads to a heightened understanding of the narratives' concealed messages and themes, in addition to the cultural values interwoven within them. This activity propels students toward critical contemplation of the symbolic components and their relationship to the broader narrative and Apache culture.

The creation of symbolic artifacts empowers students to convey their comprehension and interpretation of the selected symbol through visual and artistic means. They are given the opportunity to explore diverse artistic media and techniques, allowing their creativity and self-expression to flourish. Whether manifested through mask crafting, painting, or sculpting, students breathe life into the chosen symbol and infuse it with personal significance.

Throughout the process of crafting these artifacts, students ruminate on the importance of the chosen symbol within Apache culture. They contemplate the roles played by land, water, and culture, and how these elements interweave to shape the Apache way of life. By conveying their interpretation through art, students strengthen their bond with the narratives and the cultural heritage they encapsulate.

Symbolic artifacts also furnish a platform for students to showcase their creations and engage in substantive dialogues with their peers. They can elucidate the symbolism underpinning their artwork, elucidate the creative choices they have made, and draw connections between the chosen symbol and the broader themes of land, water, and culture. This sharing and discourse cultivate a collaborative and all-encompassing learning milieu wherein students can respect and glean insights from each other's perspectives.

Moreover, this activity beckons students to explore the intersection of art and culture, recognizing the potency of visual representation in conveying intricate ideas and narratives. It facilitates an appreciation of the cultural significance of symbolic artifacts within Apache traditions and underscores the role of art in safeguarding and disseminating cultural heritage.

Comparative Analysis

The activity of comparative analysis invites students to delve into the shared themes and connections between Apache stories and folktales, myths, or legends from other cultures that underscore the interplay between land, water, and cultures. By participating in this activity, students foster their critical thinking abilities, enrich their cultural awareness, and attain a more profound comprehension of the universal human experiences and values mirrored in storytelling traditions.

To commence, students will select both an Apache narrative and a story from another culture that exhibit parallel themes or convey similar messages concerning land, water, and cultures. They will then immerse themselves in these narratives, scrutinizing their components, characters, settings, and plot developments. Through meticulous reading or attentive listening, students will pinpoint the manners in which these stories address the connection between land, water, and cultures, along with the cultural values interwoven within them.

Following individual analyses of both stories, students will embark on a comparative exploration. They will scrutinize the commonalities and disparities between the narratives, seeking shared motifs, archetypes, or storytelling techniques. They will investigate how these stories communicate the significance of land and water within their respective cultural contexts and how cultural values and beliefs are conveyed through the narratives.

Students will convey their comparative analysis through either a written essay or a visual presentation. In the essay format, they will articulate their discoveries, deliberate on the likenesses and distinctions between the stories, and present textual evidence to substantiate their assertions. They will delve into the cultural milieus from which the stories originated, highlighting the unique viewpoints and insights each story offers concerning the nexus between land, water, and cultures.

Alternatively, for the visual presentation option, students can generate a multimedia exhibition, poster, or slideshow that visually showcases their comparative analysis. This medium may incorporate images, excerpts from the stories, and salient points of comparison, effectively spotlighting the parallels and disparities in a visually captivating format. The presentation's objective is to aptly convey their comprehension of the stories and their analysis of the connection between land, water, and cultures.

Through engagement in this comparative analysis activity, students hone their critical thinking and analytical aptitudes as they explore myriad cultural perspectives and storytelling traditions. They cultivate a deeper admiration for the universality of specific themes and the breadth of cultural expressions. Furthermore, students heighten their cultural competence by grasping and revering the values and beliefs ingrained within diverse storytelling traditions.

Letter Writing
Students can imagine themselves as characters from Apache stories and write letters to other characters, expressing their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the significance of land and water in their lives. This activity encourages empathy and deepens their understanding of the narratives.

The letter writing activity provides an opportunity for students to engage with Apache stories on a personal and empathetic level. By assuming the roles of characters from the stories, students can delve deeper into their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives regarding the significance of land and water in their lives. This activity promotes empathy, encourages creative expression, and enhances students' understanding of the narratives and their underlying themes.

To begin, students will select a character from an Apache story and immerse themselves in that character's experiences and worldview. They will consider how the character's connection to land and water shapes their identity, values, and beliefs. Students will then imagine themselves as that character and write a letter to another character from the story, expressing their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the significance of land and water.

In their letters, students will have the opportunity to explore the emotional depth of the characters and reflect on the ways in which land and water influence their lives. They may discuss the spiritual or sacred aspects of the natural environment, the importance of preserving and respecting the land and water, or the role of these elements in shaping cultural practices and traditions. The letters should demonstrate a deep understanding of the characters' perspectives and provide insights into their relationship with the natural world.

Through this activity, students develop empathy by putting themselves in the shoes of the characters and considering their unique experiences and perspectives. They gain a deeper understanding of the narratives and the cultural significance of land and water within Apache stories. By reflecting on and expressing their thoughts and feelings in the form of a letter, students engage in meaningful self-reflection and connect the themes of the stories to their own lives.

The letter writing activity also enhances students' writing skills, as they practice expressing themselves creatively and effectively. They have the opportunity to develop their voice as they embody the characters and convey their perspectives on the significance of land and water. Students can experiment with different writing styles, tones, and language choices to authentically capture the character's voice and emotions.

In a classroom setting, students can share and discuss their letters, allowing for a deeper exploration of the themes and insights derived from the stories. This encourages dialogue, critical thinking, and a richer understanding of the cultural significance of land and water within Apache narratives.

Overall, the letter writing activity fosters empathy, encourages self-reflection, and deepens students' understanding of Apache stories and their connection to the significance of land and water. It allows students to engage with the narratives on a personal level, developing a sense of appreciation for the cultural values and perspectives portrayed in the stories.

Research and Expository Writing

The research and expository writing task offers students a chance to explore and enhance their comprehension of specific facets of Apache culture pertaining to land, water, and their significance. By assigning research projects that delve into topics such as traditional agricultural practices, methods of water conservation, or the role of land and water in Apache ceremonies, students embark on a journey of inquiry, investigation, and knowledge synthesis.

To commence, students will receive distinct research topics concerning Apache culture and its interconnectedness with land and water. They will compile information from diverse sources, including books, articles, websites, and interviews with members of the Apache community. Students will critically assess the reliability and pertinence of these sources while extracting pivotal information and insights.

Utilizing the amassed information, students will then structure their findings and craft a well-organized and coherent expository essay. The essay should present the researched information in a lucid and rational manner, featuring a well-defined introduction, body paragraphs that expound on key points, and a conclusion that encapsulates the primary discoveries and insights.

Within their essays, students will delve into the specific subject they have researched, furnishing background details, elucidating pertinent cultural practices or traditions, and delineating the importance of land and water within the framework of Apache culture. They may delve into the historical and cultural contexts that molded these practices, the ecological and sustainability dimensions, and the cultural values and beliefs intertwined with them. Students should aspire to offer a comprehensive and holistic grasp of their chosen topic, substantiated by evidence from their research.

In a classroom setting, students can avail themselves of the opportunity to share their essays, facilitating further discourse and learning. This can be accomplished through presentations, peer evaluations, or class dialogues, enabling students to exchange viewpoints, provide constructive feedback, and partake in discussions concerning the researched subjects. This collaborative approach cultivates a deeper appreciation of Apache culture and fosters a climate of respect and inclusivity in the learning environment.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plan #1

Title: Exploring Apache Culture: The Connection of Land and Water - Pre-assessment

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 45 minutes

Objectives:

- Assess students' prior knowledge and understanding of Apache culture, specifically regarding the connection between land and water.
- Identify students' interests and areas of curiosity related to Apache culture, land, and water.

Materials:

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers or colored pencils
- KWL chart template (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned)
- Writing materials (paper and pencils)

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Greet the students and explain the purpose of the lesson: to explore Apache culture, specifically focusing on the connection between land and water.
- Discuss the significance of land and water in various cultures and how they shape people's way of life.

Pre-assessment Activity - KWL Chart (20 minutes)

- Distribute the KWL chart template to each student.
- Explain the purpose of the KWL chart: to assess their prior knowledge and interests related to Apache culture, land, and water.
- Model the completion of the "K" (What I Know) section on the chart by brainstorming ideas as a class. Ask students to share their existing knowledge about Apache culture, land, and water.
- Move on to the "W" (What I Want to Know) section. Encourage students to think about questions they have or areas they are curious about regarding Apache culture, land, and water. Write their questions on the chart paper or whiteboard.
- Allow students to complete the "L" (What I Learned) section after the lesson or unit. Explain that they will revisit the chart to document their new learning.

Discussion and Reflection (15 minutes)

- Facilitate a brief discussion based on the responses from the "K" and "W" sections of the KWL chart.
- Ask students to reflect on their own level of knowledge and curiosity about Apache culture, land, and water. Encourage them to share any personal connections or experiences they may have.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Summarize the main points discussed during the pre-assessment activity.
- Emphasize the importance of exploring and learning about different cultures and their relationship with the environment.
- Inform students that their questions and interests will guide future lessons and activities on Apache culture, land, and water.

Assessment:

- The pre-assessment activity will be used to gauge students' prior knowledge and interests. The completed KWL charts will serve as a formative assessment and will be revisited throughout the unit to track students' learning progress.

Extension:

- Encourage students to conduct further research or exploration of Apache culture, land, and water outside of the classroom. They can use books, websites, or other resources to deepen their understanding and satisfy their curiosity.

Lesson Plan#2

Title: Introduction to Apache Culture: Emphasizing the Connection to Land and Water

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Introduce students to the culture of the Apache people, emphasizing the significance of land and water in their traditions, beliefs, and daily life.
- Increase students' understanding and appreciation of the connection between Apache culture and the environment.
- Engage students with learning disabilities through accessible and engaging multimedia resources, guest speakers, or cultural artifacts.

Materials:

- Multimedia resources (videos, images, or interactive presentations) showcasing Apache culture and its connection to land and water.
- Cultural artifacts (if available) such as pottery, crafts, or photographs depicting Apache traditions and practices.
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for reflection activities.

Procedure:

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by briefly explaining the topic: an introduction to Apache culture, with a focus on the importance of land and water in their traditions, beliefs, and daily life.
- Capture students' attention by sharing a captivating image or short video related to Apache culture and the environment.

Multimedia Presentation (20 minutes)

- Use multimedia resources to provide an engaging and accessible introduction to Apache culture and its connection to land and water.

- Include visuals, videos, and simplified explanations to cater to the diverse learning styles and needs of students with disabilities.
- Highlight specific cultural practices, ceremonies, and beliefs that demonstrate the Apache people's deep reverence for the environment.

Guest Speaker or Cultural Artifacts (20 minutes)

- If available, invite a guest speaker from the Apache community or a local cultural center to share their experiences and insights about Apache culture, particularly regarding the connection to land and water.
- Alternatively, display cultural artifacts related to Apache traditions, crafts, or photographs that depict their relationship with the environment.
- Facilitate a discussion between the guest speaker (if applicable) and the students, allowing them to ask questions and gain firsthand knowledge.

Reflection Activity (10 minutes)

- Provide students with writing materials and ask them to reflect on the information and experiences shared during the lesson.
- Encourage students to express their thoughts, feelings, and any connections they may have made between Apache culture and their own lives.
- Support students with learning disabilities by offering sentence starters or visual prompts to aid their reflection.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Summarize the main points discussed during the lesson, highlighting the significance of land and water in Apache culture.
- Reinforce the importance of understanding and respecting diverse cultural practices and their connections to the environment.
- Express appreciation for the guest speaker's contribution or cultural artifacts shared.

Assessment:

- Assess students' understanding and engagement through their participation in class discussions, written reflections, and their ability to make connections between Apache culture and the environment. Monitor their level of active participation and offer support to students with learning disabilities as needed.

Extension:

- Encourage further exploration of Apache culture and its connection to land and water through additional research or creative activities. Students can create artwork, write short stories, or engage in group projects that showcase their understanding and appreciation of Apache traditions and their relationship with the environment.

Lesson Plan#3

Title: Nature Journaling and the Apache Connection to Land and Water

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Explore the connection between Apache culture, land, water, and nature journaling.
- Foster a sense of connection, appreciation, and stewardship towards the environment among Apache students.
- Develop observation and descriptive writing skills through nature journaling.
- Encourage cultural expression and self-reflection through journaling.

Materials:

- Nature journals or notebooks for each student.
- Writing utensils (pencils, pens, colored pencils).
- Field guides or resources about local flora and fauna.
- Cultural resources about Apache culture, traditions, and their relationship with land and water.

Procedure:

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by discussing the importance of land and water in Apache culture and their deep connection to the environment.
- Explain how nature journaling can help Apache students develop a stronger bond with the land and water and enhance their understanding of their cultural heritage.

Connection to Apache Culture (10 minutes)

- Share information and visuals about Apache culture, traditions, and their reverence for the natural world.
- Discuss the significance of land and water in Apache ceremonies, rituals, and everyday life.
- Emphasize the importance of preserving and respecting the environment as part of Apache identity and values.

Nature Journaling Techniques (15 minutes)

- Introduce different nature journaling techniques, such as descriptive writing, sketching, and labeling.
- Model these techniques by sharing examples from nature journals that highlight the connection to land and water.
- Provide guidance on how to observe and document natural elements with a focus on Apache cultural significance.

Outdoor Exploration (15 minutes)

- Take students to an outdoor area, such as a nearby park, river, or natural reserve.

- Encourage students to explore and observe their surroundings, paying attention to elements related to Apache culture, land, and water.
- Remind them to use their senses to notice the sights, sounds, smells, and textures.

Journaling Activity (15 minutes)

- Distribute nature journals and writing utensils to each student.
- Instruct students to find a quiet spot in the outdoor area that resonates with them culturally or spiritually.
- Encourage students to document their observations, focusing on elements of nature that connect to Apache culture, land, and water.
- Support students in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and reflections in writing or through illustrations.

Sharing and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Provide an opportunity for students to share their journal entries within small groups or as a whole class.
- Encourage students to discuss the cultural significance they noticed in their surroundings and how it relates to Apache traditions.
- Facilitate a reflective discussion on the personal connections they felt with the land and water during the nature journaling activity.

Assessment:

- Assessment in this lesson can be based on students' participation, engagement, and the quality of their nature journal entries. Focus on their ability to make cultural connections, observe details, and use descriptive language. Assess their reflection on the Apache culture's connection to land and water and their ability to express this connection through their journaling.

Extension:

- Encourage students to continue nature journaling and explore more aspects of Apache culture and its relationship with land and water. Provide opportunities for students to share their journal entries in a class gallery, create a digital presentation showcasing their observations and reflections, or collaborate on a group project that highlights the Apache connection to land and water. Invite a local Apache cultural expert or elder to share their insights and experiences, further deepening the students' understanding and appreciation.

Lesson Plan #4

Title: Brainstorming and Outlining: Exploring the Connection of Apache Culture, Land, and Water

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Encourage students to brainstorm ideas related to the connection between Apache culture, land, and water.
- Assist students in organizing their thoughts and creating an outline or graphic organizer for their braided essay.
- Foster creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression through the brainstorming and outlining process.
- Support students with learning disabilities by providing visual aids and scaffolding techniques to aid in organization and idea generation.

Materials:

- Chart paper or whiteboard for recording brainstormed ideas.
- Markers or colored pens for visual aids.
- Graphic organizers or templates for outlining (e.g., Venn diagrams, flowcharts, or bullet-point outlines).
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for individual work.

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by explaining the purpose: to brainstorm ideas and create an outline or graphic organizer for a braided essay on the connection between Apache culture, land, and water.
- Remind students of the importance of organization and planning when writing an essay.

Brainstorming (20 minutes)

- Facilitate a class discussion and encourage students to share their ideas on the connection between Apache culture, land, and water.
- Write down their responses on chart paper or the whiteboard to create a visual representation of the brainstormed ideas.
- Prompt students with questions such as:
 - How does Apache culture reflect a deep connection to the land and water?
 - What are some cultural practices or beliefs that emphasize the importance of the environment?
 - How does the Apache community's relationship with the land and water affect their daily lives?

Group Collaboration (10 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups to further discuss and refine their ideas.
- Provide each group with a graphic organizer or template for outlining, such as a Venn diagram or flowchart.
- Instruct students to collaboratively organize their thoughts and connections on the graphic organizer, identifying main points and supporting details.

Individual Outlining (20 minutes)

- Transition to individual work and distribute writing materials.

- Instruct students to use the ideas generated during the brainstorming and group collaboration to create their own outline or graphic organizer.
- Encourage students to focus on the main points they want to include in their braided essay and arrange them in a logical order.

Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- Provide an opportunity for students to share their outlines or graphic organizers with a partner or the whole class.
- Reflect on the brainstorming and outlining process by discussing the challenges encountered and strategies used to organize their ideas effectively.

Assessment:

- Assess students' participation in the brainstorming and group collaboration activities. Evaluate their ability to generate relevant ideas, contribute to discussions, and organize their thoughts in the individual outlining task. Provide feedback and support to students with learning disabilities, ensuring they have visual aids and scaffolding techniques to aid their organization and idea generation.

Extension:

- Encourage students to conduct further research on Apache culture, land, and water to enhance their understanding and enrich their braided essay. Provide additional resources, such as books, articles, or online materials, for students to explore and gather more information. Students can also incorporate personal anecdotes, interviews, or multimedia elements to strengthen their essay.

Lesson Plan #5

Title: Scaffolded Writing: Exploring the Connection of Apache Culture, Land, and Water

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Break down the writing process into manageable steps to support students with learning disabilities.
- Provide visual aids, sentence starters, and graphic organizers to assist students in structuring their paragraphs and organizing their ideas.
- Utilize assistive technology tools, such as speech-to-text software or word prediction software, to enhance the writing process for students with learning disabilities.
- Foster confidence, independence, and self-expression in writing through scaffolded support.

Materials:

- Chart paper or whiteboard for displaying visual aids.
- Graphic organizers or templates for paragraph structure (e.g., topic sentence, supporting details, concluding sentence).
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for individual work.
- Assistive technology tools (optional) - speech-to-text software, word prediction software, or devices with built-in accessibility features.

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by explaining the purpose: to scaffold the writing process for students with learning disabilities.
- Emphasize the importance of breaking down writing tasks into manageable steps.

Paragraph Structure (10 minutes)

- Review the basic structure of a paragraph, including the topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentence.
- Display a visual aid or anchor chart illustrating the components of a well-structured paragraph.
- Discuss how each part contributes to the overall organization and coherence of the writing.

Graphic Organizer (15 minutes)

- Introduce a graphic organizer specifically designed to support paragraph writing.
- Provide students with a template or guide that includes spaces for the topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentence.
- Model the use of the graphic organizer by thinking aloud and filling in an example together as a class.
- Distribute blank graphic organizers to students and guide them in filling out their own based on their chosen topic.

Sentence Starters (15 minutes)

- Share a list of sentence starters or prompts that students can use to begin each part of their paragraph.
- Model examples of sentence starters and discuss how they can be adapted to suit different ideas and perspectives.
- Encourage students to select sentence starters that best align with their thoughts and ideas.

Writing Time with Assistive Technology (15 minutes)

- Provide writing materials for students to transfer their ideas from the graphic organizer onto paper.
- For students who may benefit from assistive technology, offer the option to use speech-to-text software, word prediction software, or devices with built-in accessibility features.

- Circulate around the classroom to provide individual support, guidance, and feedback as students work on their writing.

Reflection and Sharing (5 minutes)

- Allow students to share excerpts from their paragraphs, if they feel comfortable, to celebrate their progress.
- Facilitate a brief class discussion on the challenges they encountered and the effectiveness of the scaffolding techniques employed.

Assessment:

- Assess students' engagement and participation throughout the lesson. Evaluate their use of the graphic organizer, sentence starters, and writing skills demonstrated in their paragraphs. Provide feedback and support to students with learning disabilities, ensuring they have access to visual aids, sentence starters, and assistive technology tools as needed.

Extension:

- Encourage students to revise and edit their paragraphs based on teacher feedback and peer collaboration. Explore opportunities for publishing and sharing their writing, such as creating a class anthology or presenting their work to the school community. Offer additional writing prompts or topics related to Apache culture, land, and water to further develop their writing skills and deepen their understanding.

Lesson Plan #6

Title: Braided Essay Structure: Exploring the Connection of Apache Culture, Land, and Water

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Introduce the concept of a braided essay and its unique structure.
- Help students understand how to intertwine multiple strands of thought or perspectives in their writing.
- Teach students how to transition between different strands while maintaining coherence and clarity.
- Provide examples of braided essays to illustrate the structure and inspire student writing.

Materials:

- Chart paper or whiteboard for displaying visual aids.
- Examples of braided essays (either printed copies or digital resources).
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for individual work.

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by explaining the purpose: to introduce the concept of a braided essay and its structure.
- Define a braided essay as a type of writing that weaves together multiple strands of thought or perspectives on a central theme.
- Explain that the braided structure allows writers to explore different ideas or viewpoints while maintaining coherence and flow.

Understanding the Braided Structure (10 minutes)

- Display a visual aid or anchor chart illustrating the braided structure of an essay.
- Explain that each strand represents a distinct idea, perspective, or topic related to Apache culture, land, and water.
- Emphasize the importance of transitioning between strands smoothly to create a cohesive and engaging essay.

Examples of Braided Essays (15 minutes)

- Share examples of braided essays that explore themes related to Apache culture, land, and water.
- Read aloud excerpts from the examples, highlighting how different strands are woven together and the transitions between them.
- Discuss the impact of the braided structure on the reader's understanding and engagement with the topic.

Guided Practice (15 minutes)

- Provide a prompt related to Apache culture, land, and water that allows for multiple strands of thought.
- Guide students through the process of brainstorming different ideas or perspectives they can include in their braided essay.
- Assist students in organizing their thoughts by creating a simple outline or graphic organizer that represents the braided structure.

Writing Time (15 minutes)

- Distribute writing materials and allow students to begin writing their braided essays.
- Encourage them to use the examples and the guided practice as references to help them transition between strands effectively.
- Circulate around the classroom to provide individual support, feedback, and guidance as students work on their essays.

Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- Invite volunteers to share excerpts from their braided essays, if they feel comfortable.
- Facilitate a class discussion on the challenges and successes encountered while incorporating the braided structure.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the braided structure in exploring the connection of Apache culture, land, and water.

Assessment:

- Assess students' understanding of the braided essay structure through their participation in class discussions, the quality of their written work, and their ability to transition between different strands. Provide constructive feedback to guide their writing and encourage further development of their braided essays.

Extension:

- Encourage students to revise and edit their braided essays based on teacher feedback and peer collaboration. Discuss opportunities for sharing their work with the class or school community, such as a writing showcase or publication. Provide additional writing prompts or topics related to Apache culture, land, and water to further explore the braided essay structure and expand their writing skills.

Lesson Plan #7

Title: Peer Collaboration and Feedback: Enhancing Writing Skills in Braided Essays

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Encourage students to collaborate and provide constructive feedback on each other's writing.
- Help students develop skills in giving and receiving feedback effectively.
- Foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students with learning disabilities.
- Enhance students' understanding of the braided essay structure and its application to the connection of Apache culture, land, and water.

Materials:

- Student's written braided essays (one copy per student).
- Peer feedback guidelines or sentence stems.
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for individual work.

Procedure:

Review of Braided Essay Structure (5 minutes)

- Begin the lesson by briefly reviewing the concept of a braided essay and its structure.
- Remind students of the importance of transitioning between different strands while maintaining coherence and clarity.

Introduction to Peer Collaboration and Feedback (10 minutes)

- Explain the purpose of peer collaboration and feedback: to help students improve their writing by receiving input from their peers.
- Emphasize the importance of providing constructive and specific feedback to support each other's growth as writers.
- Introduce peer feedback guidelines or sentence stems to guide students with learning disabilities in providing feedback effectively.

Pairing and Guidelines (10 minutes)

- Pair students up or divide them into small groups.
- Distribute copies of each student's braided essay to their partner/group members.
- Provide the peer feedback guidelines or sentence stems as a reference for giving constructive feedback.
- Remind students to focus on specific aspects such as transitions, clarity, and organization.

Peer Feedback Session (20 minutes)

- Instruct students to read their partner's/group member's essay carefully and make notes or comments directly on the paper.
- Encourage students to use the feedback guidelines or sentence stems to structure their feedback.
- Monitor the groups and provide support and guidance as needed.
- Encourage students to engage in constructive discussions about the strengths and areas for improvement in each other's writing.

Revision Time (10 minutes)

- After the peer feedback session, students should take some time to revise their essays based on the feedback received.
- Encourage them to consider the suggestions provided and make necessary changes to improve their writing.

Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- Provide an opportunity for volunteers to share their revised essays or excerpts with the class.
- Facilitate a brief discussion on the benefits and challenges of receiving peer feedback.
- Ask students to reflect on how the feedback they received has helped them improve their writing.

Assessment:

- Assess students' ability to provide constructive feedback by monitoring their participation and the quality of their comments during the peer feedback session. Additionally, review the revisions made by students in their braided essays to assess their application of the feedback received. Provide individualized feedback and support to students with learning disabilities to ensure their active participation and growth.

Extension:

- Encourage students to continue revising their braided essays based on the feedback received from their peers and the teacher. Consider providing opportunities for students to present their revised essays in a mini-writing showcase or create a class anthology of braided essays exploring the connection of Apache culture, land, and water. Foster a culture of ongoing peer collaboration and feedback by incorporating regular writing workshops and opportunities for students to support each other's writing development.

Lesson Plan #8

Title: Revision and Editing: Improving Braided Essays

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Teach students strategies for revising and editing their braided essays.
- Focus on improving organization, clarity, and coherence in their writing.
- Provide checklists or rubrics as tools to guide students in self-editing and peer editing activities.
- Enhance students' ability to assess their own work and provide constructive feedback to their peers.

Materials:

- Student's written braided essays (one copy per student).
- Revision and editing checklists or rubrics.
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) for individual and peer editing.

Procedure:

Review the Elements of a Successful Braided Essay (5 minutes)

- Recap the key components of a braided essay, emphasizing organization, clarity, and coherence.
- Remind students of the importance of revising and editing to improve their writing.

Introduction to Revision and Editing Strategies (10 minutes)

- Introduce various revision and editing strategies, such as reorganizing paragraphs, adding transitions, and improving sentence structure.
- Discuss the importance of clarity, coherence, and supporting evidence in a braided essay.
- Provide examples and visual aids to illustrate the concepts.

Self-Editing Activity (15 minutes)

- Distribute revision and editing checklists or rubrics to each student.
- Instruct students to read their own braided essays and use the checklists or rubrics to evaluate their work.

- Encourage them to make notes and revisions directly on their essays.
- Circulate the classroom to provide guidance and support as needed.

Peer Editing Activity (20 minutes)

- Pair students up or divide them into small groups.
- Instruct students to exchange their essays with their partner/group members.
- Guide students in providing constructive feedback to their peers using the same checklists or rubrics.
- Encourage students to focus on organization, clarity, coherence, and supporting evidence.
- Remind students to be respectful and supportive during the peer editing process.

Revision and Editing Time (10 minutes)

- Instruct students to revise and edit their essays based on the feedback received from their peers and their self-assessment.
- Encourage them to make necessary changes to improve the organization, clarity, coherence, and overall quality of their writing.

Reflection and Discussion (5 minutes)

- Facilitate a class discussion on the challenges and successes students encountered during the revision and editing process.
- Discuss the strategies and techniques they found helpful in improving their braided essays.
- Emphasize the importance of revising and editing as an ongoing process to enhance writing skills.

Assessment:

- Assess students' ability to revise and edit their braided essays by reviewing their self-edited and peer-edited essays. Use the revision and editing checklists or rubrics to evaluate their work. Provide feedback that highlights their strengths and areas for improvement. Monitor students' participation and engagement during the self-editing and peer editing activities.

Extension:

- Encourage students to continue revising and editing their braided essays based on the feedback and suggestions provided. Consider showcasing their revised essays in a writing portfolio or creating a class publication. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their growth as writers and set goals for future writing assignments. Incorporate regular revision and editing activities in future writing lessons to reinforce these skills.

Lesson Plan #9

Title: Final Presentation: Celebrating Braided Essays

Grade Level: Middle School

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Provide students with an opportunity to showcase their completed braided essays.
- Allow students to present their work in a format that aligns with their learning style and abilities.
- Foster a sense of pride and accomplishment in students' writing skills and creativity.
- Promote peer learning and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Materials:

- Completed braided essays by each student.
- Presentation materials (e.g., projector, computer, speakers) for multimedia presentations.
- Art supplies for visual displays (e.g., poster boards, markers, colored pencils).
- Evaluation rubrics for assessing the presentations.

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will have the opportunity to present their braided essays to their peers and the wider school community.
- Emphasize that this is a celebration of their hard work and creativity.

Presentation Format Exploration (10 minutes)

- Discuss different presentation formats, such as oral presentations, multimedia presentations, or visual displays.
- Explain the purpose and benefits of each format.
- Encourage students to choose a format that aligns with their learning style and abilities.

Planning and Preparation (15 minutes)

- Give students time to brainstorm and plan their presentations based on their chosen format.
- Provide guidance and support to students as they develop their presentation ideas.
- Help students organize their thoughts and consider appropriate visuals, props, or speaking notes.

Presentation Practice (20 minutes)

- Allow students time to rehearse their presentations individually or in pairs.
- Encourage them to focus on clarity, organization, and engaging delivery.

- Provide constructive feedback and suggestions to help students improve their presentation skills.

Final Presentations (15 minutes)

- Create a designated presentation area in the classroom or school where each student can showcase their work.
- Allocate time for each student to present their braided essay using their chosen format.
- Encourage the audience to actively listen, ask questions, and provide positive feedback.

Reflection and Discussion (5 minutes)

- Lead a reflection discussion on the presentation experience.
- Ask students to share their thoughts, challenges, and successes during the presentation process.
- Encourage students to appreciate and celebrate their classmates' efforts and achievements.

Assessment:

- Assess students' presentations using the provided evaluation rubric, considering factors such as organization, content, delivery, and creativity. Encourage peer feedback and self-reflection to further enhance presentation skills. Provide constructive feedback to support students' ongoing growth as effective communicators.

Extension:

- Consider creating a class anthology or digital portfolio of the braided essays and their presentations. Share the work with parents, other teachers, or the wider community to celebrate students' achievements. Encourage students to reflect on their growth as writers and presenters. Provide opportunities for students to discuss the impact of sharing their braided essays on others and the importance of diverse perspectives in storytelling.

Student Assessment Plan

The assessment in the curriculum aims to evaluate students' understanding, knowledge, and skills related to the connection between land, water, and cultures in Apache traditions. It encompasses various assessment strategies that provide a comprehensive view of students' learning progress and achievements. The assessments are designed to align with the curriculum's objectives and promote meaningful and authentic learning experiences.

Writing Assignments

Writing assignments allow students to express their thoughts, reflections, and insights in a structured and coherent manner. They can be used to assess students' ability to analyze and

interpret Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices, as well as their understanding of the connection between land, water, and cultures. The assessment criteria can include organization, clarity of expression, use of evidence and examples, and critical thinking skills.

Writing assignments are an effective tool for students to express their thoughts, reflections, and insights in a structured and coherent manner. They offer an opportunity for students to delve deeper into Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices and explore the connection between land, water, and cultures. These assignments can serve as a means of assessing students' comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking skills.

Project-Based Assessments

Project-based assessments provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts (Pellegrino, et al., 2012). For example, students may be asked to create a visual presentation, such as a poster or a digital media project, that showcases their understanding of the connection between land, water, and cultures. The assessment criteria can include content accuracy, creativity, presentation skills, and the ability to make meaningful connections between different cultural perspectives.

By engaging in hands-on projects, students actively participate in tasks that simulate real-life situations, promoting deeper understanding and skill development. For instance, in a project-based assessment focused on the connection between land, water, and cultures, students might be tasked with creating a visual presentation, such as a poster or a digital media project.

The assessment criteria for such a project can encompass various elements that evaluate students' performance and understanding. These criteria often include: (1) Content accuracy: Students' work should demonstrate a solid understanding of the subject matter, including the relationships between land, water, and cultures. Accuracy in presenting factual information and concepts is crucial. (2) Creativity: Assessing creativity encourages students to think innovatively and express their ideas in unique and engaging ways. It can involve incorporating artistic elements, using multimedia tools, or presenting information from fresh perspectives. (3) Presentation skills: Effective communication is a vital skill in the real world. Students' ability to present their work coherently, organize information, and engage their audience should be evaluated. This includes elements like clarity, logical structure, and effective use of visuals or multimedia. (4) Meaningful connections: Students should demonstrate an understanding of the cultural aspects related to land and water. This criterion evaluates their ability to explore and articulate connections between different cultural perspectives, highlighting the significance of these connections in diverse contexts.

Reflective Journals

The use of reflective journals allows students to document their thoughts, reflections, and personal insights about their learning experiences. These journals can be assessed based on

students' ability to make connections between Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices and their own lives. Assessing the journals may involve reviewing the depth of reflection, the ability to articulate connections, and the growth in understanding over time.

Reflective journals are powerful tools that encourage students to engage in introspection, self-expression, and critical thinking (Moon, 1999). They provide a platform for students to document their thoughts, reflections, and personal insights about their learning experiences, including their exploration of Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices and their connection to their own lives. Assessing reflective journals involves evaluating the depth of reflection, the ability to make meaningful connections, and the growth in understanding demonstrated over time (Moon, 2006).

Assessing reflective journals involves considering the depth of students' reflections and the extent to which they engage with the subject matter (Ryan, 2019). Educators can evaluate the quality of students' insights, observations, and analysis in relation to Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices. Strong reflective journals demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the content, showcasing a deep level of critical thinking and self-awareness (Moon, 1999).

Teachers can evaluate students' ability to make meaningful connections between Apache traditions and their own lives. This involves examining the clarity and coherence of students' written reflections. Students should be able to draw connections between the cultural practices or themes explored and their own experiences, values, beliefs, or perspectives. Teachers can look for evidence of insightful connections and the ability to express these connections in a coherent and articulate manner.

Reflective journals can provide a longitudinal view of students' learning and growth over time (Farrell, 2015). Teachers can review the progression of students' reflections throughout the journal entries to assess their increasing understanding of Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices. Students' ability to demonstrate personal growth, expanded perspectives, and a deepened appreciation for Apache culture can be assessed through their journal entries.

Assessing reflective journals requires considering the authenticity and personal voice of students' reflections (Moon, 2006). Authenticity refers to the genuine expression of students' thoughts, emotions, and personal connections (Schön, 1983). Teachers should look for evidence of genuine engagement and personal investment in the subject matter. A strong reflective journal reflects the unique voice and perspective of the student, showcasing their personal understanding and interpretation of Apache traditions.

Assessing reflective journals should not be limited to assigning grades but should also include providing constructive feedback and support for students' continued growth (Kearney, et al., 2019). Teachers can provide comments, guidance, and encouragement to help students deepen their reflections, make stronger connections, and refine their understanding of Apache traditions. This feedback can further foster students' critical thinking skills, self-awareness, and cultural sensitivity.

When assessing reflective journals that explore Apache culture, it is crucial to approach the subject matter with cultural sensitivity, respect, and an awareness of potential biases (Walter, 2016). Teachers should be mindful of the confidentiality of students' reflections and handle their personal thoughts and experiences with care (Zeichner, et al., 2001). It is important to create a safe and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable sharing their reflections while respecting Apache cultural traditions and intellectual property.

Reflective journals provide a valuable avenue for students to engage deeply with Apache stories, legends, or cultural practices, and to make personal connections. By assessing these journals based on the depth of reflection, articulation of connections, growth in understanding, authenticity, and providing constructive feedback, educators can encourage self-reflection, foster cultural understanding, and promote the integration of Apache culture into students' lives.

Peer Assessment

Peer assessments provide students with the opportunity to provide constructive feedback to their classmates (Topping, 1998). This can be done through activities such as peer reviews of writing assignments, presentations, or projects. The assessment criteria can include the clarity of feedback, the ability to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and the constructive nature of the feedback provided.

Peer assessments are valuable tools that promote active learning and foster a collaborative learning environment (Falchikov, 2005). They involve students providing constructive feedback to their peers, allowing them to gain insights into their own work while also helping others improve.

When engaging in peer assessments, students should provide clear and specific feedback to their classmates (Elwood, et al., 2002). This involves offering comments that are easy to understand and relate to the specific aspects of the assignment or presentation being assessed. Clear feedback helps the recipient better understand the strengths and areas for improvement in their work (Hattie, et al., 2007).

Peer assessments require students to identify both the strengths and areas for improvement in their classmates' work (Sadler, 2010). This involves recognizing the positive aspects of the assignment or presentation, such as strong arguments, effective organization, or creative ideas. Additionally, students should identify areas where their peers can enhance their work, such as providing suggestions for improving clarity, offering additional evidence, or refining the structure of their presentation (Gielen, 2010).

Peer assessments should focus on providing constructive feedback that helps the recipient improve their work (Nicol, et al., 2006). Constructive feedback is supportive, specific, and offers suggestions for enhancement rather than solely pointing out flaws. Students should aim to provide feedback in a respectful and tactful manner, emphasizing areas for growth and offering suggestions for improvement (Boud, et al., 2013).

Peer assessments can be guided by specific assessment criteria or rubrics. These criteria outline the expectations and standards for the assignment or presentation being assessed. They provide a framework for students to evaluate their peers' work objectively and ensure consistency in the assessment process. Criteria can include factors such as content knowledge, organization, clarity of communication, use of evidence, creativity, and adherence to guidelines (Sadler, 2009)

Peer assessments offer numerous benefits to students. By engaging in the assessment process, students develop critical thinking skills as they evaluate and analyze their peers' work (Falchikov, 2001). They also enhance their communication and interpersonal skills by providing feedback and engaging in constructive dialogue. Peer assessments promote self-reflection as students compare their own work to that of their peers and identify areas for improvement (Topping, 2017). Furthermore, peer assessments encourage collaboration, as students work together to support each other's learning and growth (Panadero, 2014).

It is important for educators to provide clear guidelines and expectations for peer assessments, facilitate the process effectively, and encourage a positive and respectful learning environment. Peer assessments, when implemented well, can be a valuable tool for students to actively participate in their own learning and provide valuable feedback to their classmates (Falchikov, 2005).

Alignment with State Standards

Arizona's English Language Arts Standards -6 th Grade	
Writing Standards	
Text Types and Purposes	
6.W.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. d. Establish and maintain a formal style. e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
6.W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

	<p>b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</p> <p>c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p> <p>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>e. Establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.</p>
6.W.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</p> <p>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</p>
Production and Distribution of Writing	
6.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
6.W.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 6.)
6.W.6	Use technology, including the internet, to type and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to complete a writing task in a single sitting.
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	
6.W.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
6.W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
6.W.9	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>a. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature.</p> <p>b. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to informational text and nonfiction.</p>
Range of Writing	
6.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time

	frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
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Arizona’s English Language Arts Standards – 7 th Grade	
Writing Standards	
Text Types and Purposes	
7.W.1	<p>Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p>a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</p> <p>b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</p> <p>c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.</p> <p>d. Establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</p>
7.W.2	<p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p>a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</p> <p>b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</p> <p>c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p> <p>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>e. Establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</p>
7.W.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</p>

	e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
Production and Distribution of Writing	
7.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above).
7.W.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 7.)
7.W.6	Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	
7.W.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
7.W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
7.W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply grade 7 Reading standards to literature. b. Apply grade 7 Reading standards to informational text and nonfiction.
Range of Writing	
7.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Arizona’s English Language Arts Standards – 8 th Grade	
Writing Standards	
Text Types and Purposes	
8.W.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. d. Establish and maintain a formal style.

	e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
8.W.2	<p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p>a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</p> <p>b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</p> <p>c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p> <p>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>e. Establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</p>
8.W.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.</p> <p>d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</p> <p>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</p>
Production and Distribution of Writing	
8.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
8.W.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 8.)

8.W.6	Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	
8.W.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
8.W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
8.W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature. b. Apply grade 8 Reading standards to informational text and nonfiction.
Range of Writing	
8.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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Appendices

Rubric for Assessing Braided Essays

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Content and Depth	The essay demonstrates a deep understanding of Apache culture, land, and water. It effectively weaves together multiple strands of thought and provides insightful connections between the themes.	The essay demonstrates a good understanding of Apache culture, land, and water. It weaves together multiple strands of thought and provides connections between the themes.	The essay demonstrates some understanding of Apache culture, land, and water. It attempts to weave together multiple strands of thought, but the connections between the themes may be weak or unclear.	The essay demonstrates a limited understanding of Apache culture, land, and water. The weaving of multiple strands of thought and connections between the themes is minimal or absent.
Organization and Structure	The essay has a clear and coherent structure. The strands of thought are skillfully braided together, creating a cohesive and engaging narrative. Transitions between the strands are smooth and seamless.	The essay has a clear structure. The strands of thought are braided together, creating a coherent narrative. Transitions between the strands are generally smooth.	The essay has an adequate structure. The strands of thought are somewhat braided together, but the narrative may lack cohesiveness in some areas. Transitions between the strands may be awkward or unclear.	The essay lacks a clear structure. The weaving of strands of thought is minimal or absent, resulting in a disjointed or confusing narrative. Transitions between the strands are abrupt or missing.
Critical Thinking and Insight	The essay demonstrates exceptional critical thinking skills. It offers profound insights into the connections between	The essay demonstrates good critical thinking skills. It offers insights into the connections between Apache	The essay demonstrates some critical thinking skills. It offers basic insights into the connections between Apache culture,	The essay demonstrates limited critical thinking skills. The insights into the connections between Apache

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
	Apache culture, land, and water. The reflections are thought-provoking and demonstrate a deep understanding of the topic.	culture, land, and water. The reflections are insightful and demonstrate a solid understanding of the topic.	land, and water. The reflections may lack depth or originality.	culture, land, and water are superficial or absent.
Creativity and Expression	The essay showcases exceptional creativity and expressive use of language. The writing engages the reader and demonstrates a unique and personal voice. Artistic elements, such as imagery, metaphors, or descriptive language, enhance the overall impact of the essay.	The essay showcases good creativity and expressive use of language. The writing is engaging and demonstrates a clear voice. Some artistic elements enhance the overall impact of the essay.	The essay demonstrates some creativity and expressive use of language. The writing may be somewhat engaging, but the voice may be inconsistent. Artistic elements may be present but not consistently used or effectively incorporated.	The essay lacks creativity and expressive use of language. The writing is dull or uninspiring. The voice is unclear or absent. Artistic elements are minimal or absent.
Grammar and Mechanics	The essay has impeccable grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Errors are non-existent or negligible.	The essay has minor grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure errors that do not hinder understanding.	The essay has noticeable grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure errors that occasionally hinder understanding.	The essay has significant grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure errors that consistently hinder understanding.

Rubric for Assessing Reflective Journals

Criteria	1 (Needs Improvement)	2 (Satisfactory)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Content Knowledge	Limited understanding of Apache culture, land, and water connection	Basic understanding of Apache culture, land, and water connection	Adequate understanding of Apache culture, land, and water connection	Thorough understanding of Apache culture, land, and water connection
Reflection and Insight	Superficial reflections with minimal depth or personal insights	Some reflections with moderate depth and personal insights	Meaningful reflections with substantial depth and personal insights	Profound reflections with exceptional depth and personal insights
Connection to Personal Experience	Fails to make connections to personal experiences	Limited connections to personal experiences	Some connections to personal experiences	Strong connections to personal experiences
Critical Thinking and Analysis	Lacks critical analysis and fails to explore different perspectives	Some critical thinking and analysis, but lacks depth	Demonstrates critical thinking and analysis with sound reasoning	Shows exceptional critical thinking and analysis with insightful perspectives
Organization and Structure	Disorganized and lacks coherence	Partially organized with inconsistent structure	Well-organized with logical structure	Highly organized with clear and coherent structure
Grammar and Mechanics	Numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation	Some errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation	Few or no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation	Consistently correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

These Apache folktales, myths, legends, and stories embody the rich cultural heritage of the Apache people and the profound connection they have with the land, water, and their cultural identity.

The Story of Changing Woman

The Story of Changing Woman is a sacred narrative from the Apache culture that recounts the creation and transformation of a powerful female deity known as Changing Woman. In this story, Changing Woman emerges from the primordial darkness and brings forth the sun, moon, and stars. She embodies the cyclical nature of life, representing the changing seasons, growth, and renewal.

Changing Woman is associated with the land, water, and fertility. She is depicted as a nurturing figure who provides sustenance and brings forth abundant harvests. Her connection to the natural world is emphasized through her ability to transform and adapt, mirroring the changing landscapes and cycles of nature.

This narrative holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the Apache people. It symbolizes the interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the divine. It emphasizes the importance of respecting and preserving the land, water, and natural resources as essential elements of Apache identity and sustenance.

Reference:

Apache Tribe. (n.d.). Apache creation stories and legends. Retrieved from <https://www.apache.org/culture/creation.html>

The Legend of the Talking Rocks

The Legend of the Talking Rocks is a traditional Apache story that recounts the origins of the magnificent rock formations found in the Apache lands. According to the legend, long ago, when the world was young, the rocks possessed the ability to talk and communicate with humans.

In the story, the rocks were wise and knowledgeable beings who shared their wisdom with the Apache people. They provided guidance, advice, and teachings on various aspects of life, including spirituality, hunting, and survival in the harsh desert environment. The rocks were respected and revered as ancient guardians and sources of wisdom.

As time passed, however, the rocks grew weary of human greed and disrespect for the land. They decided to withdraw their ability to speak and communicate, leaving the Apache people without their valuable guidance. The legend serves as a reminder of the importance of respecting and living in harmony with the natural world.

Reference:

Lomatuway'ma, M., & Davis, E. D. (1999). Talking Rocks. In N. A. Silko (Ed.), *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* (pp. 68-71). Simon & Schuster.

"The Story of the Rainmaker"

"The Story of the Rainmaker" is a captivating Apache legend that recounts the power and significance of a special individual known as the Rainmaker. According to the story, during times of drought and hardship, the Apache people would call upon the Rainmaker to bring forth rain and ensure the fertility of their lands.

In the legend, the Rainmaker possessed a deep connection with the natural elements, particularly water and the spirits of the sky. Through rituals, prayers, and sacred ceremonies, the Rainmaker would communicate with the spirits, appealing for their intervention to bring much-needed rainfall to the parched earth.

The story emphasizes the vital role of the Rainmaker in Apache culture, as their ability to influence the weather was believed to be essential for the survival and prosperity of the community. The Rainmaker was respected and revered as a conduit between the human and spirit realms, possessing specialized knowledge and skills passed down through generations.

Reference:

Opler, M. (1994). Apache rainmaking. In *Myths and Tales of the Jicarilla Apache Indians* (pp. 29-34). University of Nebraska Press.

"The Legend of the Sacred Springs"

"The Legend of the Sacred Springs" is a captivating Apache legend that tells the story of the sacred springs and their significance in Apache culture. According to the legend, the sacred springs were believed to be sources of healing and spiritual rejuvenation. They were revered as sacred places where the Apache people could connect with the divine and receive blessings from the water spirits.

In the legend, it is said that the sacred springs were created by the Creator to provide the Apache people with a place of refuge and renewal. The springs were believed to possess mystical powers that could cleanse the body, mind, and spirit. It was common for individuals to visit the sacred springs for purification rituals, prayers, and offerings, seeking physical and spiritual healing.

The legend emphasizes the deep reverence and respect that the Apache people had for the natural elements, particularly water. The sacred springs were seen as manifestations of the life-giving

and purifying properties of water, symbolizing the interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the divine.

Reference:

Opler, M. (1994). Apache legends and cultural beliefs. In *Myths and Tales of the White Mountain Apache* (pp. 147-151). University of Nebraska Press.

The Story of the Mountain Spirits

"The Story of the Mountain Spirits" is a captivating Apache legend that recounts the origins and significance of the mountain spirits in Apache culture. According to the legend, the mountain spirits were powerful and benevolent beings who inhabited the majestic peaks of the Apache lands.

In the legend, it is said that the mountain spirits were created by the Great Spirit to serve as protectors and guides for the Apache people. They were believed to possess extraordinary knowledge and wisdom, and they would often appear to the Apache in times of need or during sacred ceremonies.

The story describes the mountain spirits as majestic and awe-inspiring beings with the ability to control natural elements such as wind, rain, and lightning. They were considered the guardians of the land, ensuring its fertility and prosperity. The Apache people held great respect and reverence for the mountain spirits, seeking their guidance and blessings for important endeavors and celebrations.

Reference:

Basso, K. H. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico Press.

"The Legend of the Apache Tear"

The Legend of the Apache Tear is a poignant Apache folktale that tells the story of grief, loss, and resilience. According to the legend, during a time of great conflict between Apache warriors and the U.S. Cavalry, a group of Apache families found themselves trapped on a mountaintop.

Realizing they would not be able to escape, they made a collective decision to jump off the cliff, preferring death over capture.

As their loved ones fell, their tears mixed with the blood of their fallen comrades, creating small black stones known as Apache Tears. These tears, which are actually obsidian, are said to embody the sorrow and resilience of the Apache people. The legend holds that those who possess an Apache Tear will be protected from harm and find solace in times of grief.

The Legend of the Apache Tear serves as a powerful reminder of the hardships endured by the Apache people and their unwavering spirit. It carries a message of strength, unity, and the ability to find beauty and meaning even in the face of tragedy.

Reference:

Cruz, D. B. (1992). *American Indian Myths and Legends*. Random House.

The Story of the River People

The Story of the River People is a captivating Apache legend that highlights the deep connection between the Apache people and the rivers that flow through their ancestral lands. According to the legend, long ago, the Apache people lived in harmony with the rivers, which provided them with sustenance, transportation, and a sense of spiritual connection.

The story recounts how the River People, with their deep knowledge of the rivers and their surroundings, thrived in their communities. They honored the rivers, treating them as sacred entities and acknowledging their vital role in their way of life. The River People had a profound understanding of the ebb and flow of the rivers, the patterns of wildlife, and the changing seasons.

However, as time passed, outsiders arrived and sought to exploit the rivers for their own gain. They dammed the rivers, diverted their flow, and disrupted the delicate balance of the ecosystem. The River People witnessed the devastating effects of these actions on their communities and the natural world they held dear.

Reference:

Powers, M. (2004). *Stories That Make the World: Oral Literature of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*. University of Oklahoma Press.

