



Overcoming the Absence of Native Americans in the History Curriculum

Curriculum Unit 15.01.06
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Topic

The History Department in New Haven has provided teachers with ample time in the 1st marking period to teach Pre-Columbian America in all High Schools classes. The allotted time in the 1st marking period allows me to teach the material in my curriculum in a timely fashion. The 90 minute block scheduling provided by my school also allows students with enough class time to learn all of the material that has been designed within my curriculum. The school library also provides students with an immense collection of reference books on various Native American tribes, which students will be able to use in order to complete various assignments throughout the unit. Even if a school does not provide block scheduling or Pre-Columbian era America in their district curriculum, teachers will still be able to use the information provided in this unit in order to teach various aspects of my designed curriculum in their classes as background knowledge to other units of study in their history classes.

Rationale

Many times in American History classes across the nation, Native American histories are overlooked or under taught for an assortment of reasons. As a result, students are left with the burning question... "What about Native Americans?" The purpose of my unit will be to explore and hopefully fill in the blanks to this question by providing teachers, as well as students, with an in depth look into the various Native cultures that dominated the American landscape during the Pre-Columbian era, and then analyze current Native Tribes across the country in order to allow students to better understand Native Americans cultures and their advancements throughout history. More importantly, my overall hope for this unit will be to have it be a tool for teachers to utilize so they within their very own classrooms in order to fill in the gaps left by many textbooks in America. The overall goal of this curriculum will be accomplished by developing lessons that examine key Native American groups in the various regions across America by examining the cultures they developed in areas such as Urban, Social, and Political. Then analyze the various ways they adapted to the

ever-changing landscapes around them. The curriculum will then conclude with students investigating how tribes in the 21st Century have adapted to their ever changing lives in order to create a project where they compare the changes they have studied among a Native American tribe of their choice. The curriculum will be developed for a 10th Grade United States History class, with the ability to be modified to fit the needs of other grade levels as well as students within a 10th Grade United States history class.

Objectives

As previously stated, the goal of this unit will be to have students examine the Native peoples of America in order to gain a better understanding of who they were and how far they have come as a people. I plan on having the curriculum unit meet various objectives in order for students to get a better understanding of how Native American people have made great strides over time, and fill in those integral gaps left by textbooks.

The starting point of my curriculum unit and first objective will be to have students look at America and its native inhabitants prior to European colonization (Pre-Columbian). The focus of the unit will be to have students learn about the various areas of America that were inhabited by Native Americans and learn about the cultures developed within each region. Another area of focus for this unit will be to have students examine how these inhabited Native lands and cultures have changed over time. Once the students have gained a solid foundation of Pre-Columbian natives, the unit will then shift to having the students in my class examine the histories of major tribes within each region. The purpose of this objective will allow students to gain a better understanding of various tribe's languages, traditions, societies, etc. Rather than looking at each region as a whole, I will pinpoint key tribes in each geographical region in more depth. Students will be given the opportunity to examine major tribes in each of these geographical regions (i.e. Eastern Woodlands-Iroquois Nation).

Another key objective that I feel needs to be met within this unit in order for students to understand how far Native peoples have come and fill in what has been left out of textbooks, will be to have students understand the goals of some of the major European countries who were exploring the continent in search of new colonies and other financial motives to enrich their kingdoms. This aspect of the curriculum will be a vital one for students, since it will provide them with a significant look at the first interactions between explorers and native peoples, and set the stage for future interactions between settlers and native peoples throughout history. The final objective will allow the unit to come full circle and hopefully fill in those gaps left by many textbooks and curriculums. The purpose of this objective will permit students to study various present day tribes in America and gain a better understanding of how past historical events may have impacted their tribes, and what they have done overtime to overcome any adversities they may have faced as a people.

I plan on using various strategies and methods to meet the needs of the students in my class. With that said, this curriculum unit will vary to reflect the learning styles of all students. Included will be:

Experiential Learning: The overall goal of this unit will be to have students learn how to be critical thinkers. I want the students to be able to learn about the topics addressed within the unit and be able to think critically about what they have just learned. My ambition is to have students ask thought provoking questions on the tribes they have learned about and walk away with the understanding that these tribes had their own cultures and were not just "conquered" by European explorers.

Differentiated Learning: The students within my class have a wide array of knowledge skills when it comes to learning. I plan on using various techniques to address the needs of all students within my class. Some of the ways I will address the needs of the students will be to give modified readings to certain students, have students pair up with other students for help, or have them work in small groups that are facilitated by myself. The goal will be to provide a learning environment not focused on academic pressure, but one that will foster learning and appreciation for Native Cultures.

Cooperative Learning: The students within my class will be allotted time throughout the unit to work with each other in small groups in order to complete various assignments or activities. The purpose of these assignments will be to allow students to work with one another and rely on each other in order to complete the learning activity assigned to them. The end assignment for the unit will require students to work as a group in order to make an informational catalog that highlights the achievements of one of the tribes learned about in the unit.

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1

The first lesson has been designed to meet the first objective of the unit. The curriculum will begin with students having a discussion on what they already know about Native American history, and what they know about Native Americans in the 21st Century. The teacher will simply ask the students:

Q1 "What have you already learned about Native Americans?"

Q2 "What do you know about present day Native Americans?"

The questions posed by the teacher may be simple in nature, but they will allow students a basic starting point for their discussion on what they know about Native Americans. The teacher may adjust the individual questions to better fit the needs of students within their very own classrooms. However, in order for the class to have a better understanding of where Natives lived, and a starting point of their histories, the questions should be ones that allow students a basic starting point for students to gain a general understanding and start the thinking process for the overall unit. Once the discussion on the initial questions has been completed by the class, students will commence the curriculum by examining the various regions natives occupied across the country and create a map of these areas.

The teacher may find maps for this lesson by using the internet. The teacher may also use Colin G. Calloway *First People* Map 1.1. Another source that can be utilized by the teacher to find a various maps on Native Tribes in America is in Alan Taylor *American Colonies* book.

An example of a map that can be used for this lesson can be found at <http://www.michellehenry.fr/amertribes.jpg>.

Examples of said regions that are suggested to be included in this unit, but not limited to are: Eastern Woodlands, Great Plains, Great Basin, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Middle America, and California. Once the teacher has obtained the maps they plan to use for this portion of the less, classes will then analyze the

map(s) so they may create a series of student generated questions focused on why certain areas may have flourished over other areas. Below is an example of what a student generated question handout may look like.

Student Map Questions about Native American

Work with a partner and come up with 2-3 questions you have about Native Americans based on the map(s) you have examined

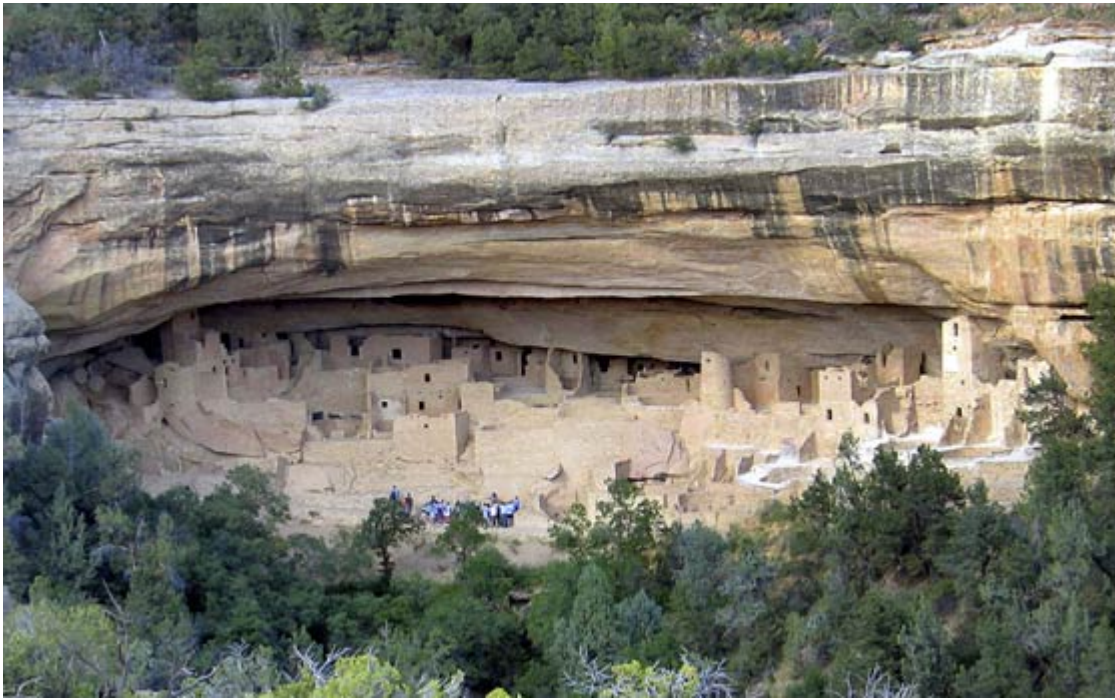
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The teacher may want to monitor the students during this portion of the lesson in order to help those students who may have difficulties understanding the map and as a result not generate their own questions. Once the class has completed this portion of the lesson, the teacher should review the questions generated by the students and have a discussion with them on the questions they have created. Following the discussion, the students will then be provided with a map that looks at the major tribes within each region. Tribes included in the curriculum map will include: Iroquois, Pequot, Aztec, Nez Perce, Pomo, Pueblo, Mayan, Chinook, and various others. Once the map has been analyzed, students will analyze the tribes and predict why certain tribes are still around today, while others may have gone “extinct.”

Lesson 2

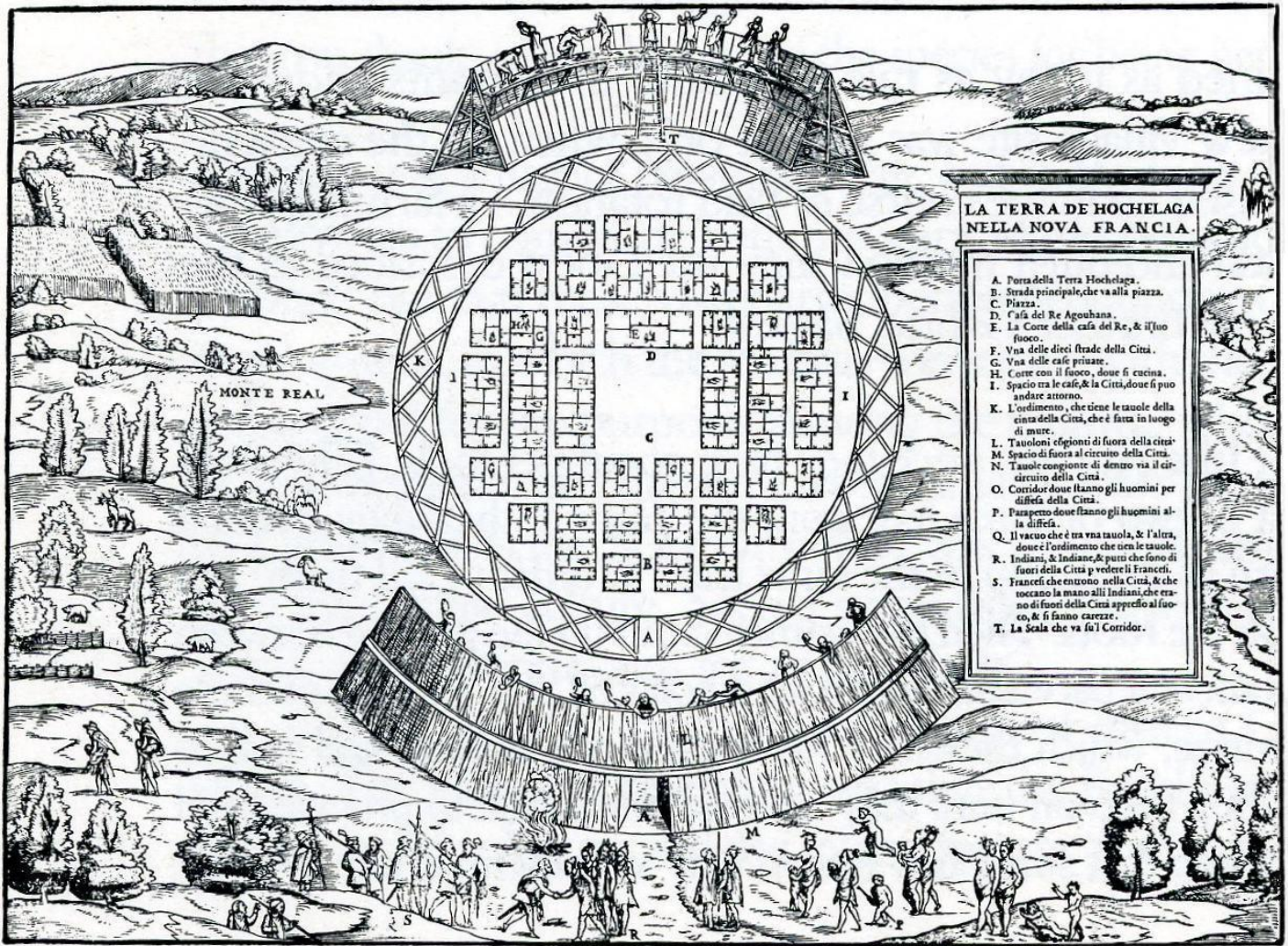
In order for students to truly understand the histories of Native American tribes the purpose of the second lesson will be to have students examine various primary and secondary source documents that cover the social, political, and cultural aspects of each of these tribes. Prior to the analysis of documents, the teacher should provide each of their classes with a brief lecture on the histories of tribes. The major points of the teacher lecture where they will include: the migration histories of Native peoples, West Coast tribes, Great Basin Foragers, Farmers of the Southwest, Eastern Woodlands Peoples, and various creation stories of individual tribes. The teacher will also provide students with primary source materials that include pictures and stories from the various tribes covered in the lecture. Documents that can be used for the analysis section of lesson 2 can be found in Colin G Calloway’s book *First People* in the documents section of Chapter 1. The teacher can also use various passages from Joseph Bruchac’s book *Native American Stories*. The teacher is not limited to the following books for material and may find further resources on their own.

Cliff Palace Mesa Verde



Source www.nps.gov

Hochelaga



Source: Newberry Library

The purpose of this portion of the lesson is for students to gain that crucial background knowledge on the various tribes who dominated the American landscape prior to European colonization. In conjunction with the lecture and analysis of the various documents, students will be provided with the vital background knowledge on various tribal histories. Once the teachers has provided a history on all of the regions and local histories of tribes and they have been examined by students, the class will then use the knowledge gained in order to compare the various regions against one another in a comparison paper. This portion of the lesson will allow the students to look at the social, political, and cultural aspects of the tribes studied and write a comparison paper stacking each of the regions and tribes within it against one another. The teacher will have the freedom to create the requirements for the comparison paper on their own, in order for them to allow students of various learning abilities the opportunity to succeed in completing the assignment. Once all of the classes have completed the assignment, students will present the major findings in their papers to the class. Each student will choose one of their major findings and that one major their discovery will be placed on the board and left there for the remainder of the unit. Upon completion of this part of the unit, the "major findings" board will be reviewed with the class and the teacher will provide a brief discussion question to the class. The question that is suggested be asked of the students by the teacher is one where they will have students predict how the lives of Native Americans will change with the introduction of European explorers into their lives. The overall purpose of this discussion will have the function of having the students think about how the ways of Native Americans can be possibly lost forever with explorers entering their lives.

Lecture will be completed by teacher based on the needs of the students

Sources to use in lecture and discussion

“First Peoples: A documentary Survey of American Indian History,” Colin G.

Calloway; pgs. 14-35.

“1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus,” Charles C. Mann;

pgs 277-318

“American Colonies: The Settling of North America,” Alan Taylor; pgs 3-22

Lesson 3

Following the completion of the previous two lessons, the focal point of the third lesson will now provide students with the opportunity to examine the beginnings of how the lives of many tribes began to change with the introduction of European Explorers into their lives. The lecture provided by the teacher to the students will be based on Alan Taylor’s book *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*. The teacher can use other books to help deliver their lecture, however Taylor’s book paints a very detailed picture on the interactions between explorers and natives in the early encounters between the two groups. Regardless of the source decided upon by the teacher, the focal point of the lecture will center on major explorers, motives, and the make-up of the kingdoms they sailed for. The lecture by the teacher will examine the said aspects of the following countries: Spain, England and France. The goal of this lecture will not mean to be lengthy, but rather provide students with a brief insight into the major explorers of their home countries and the motives of these countries. The intention of the lesson lecture will not be content heavy on Native Americans, but it will provide students the opportunity to gain an understanding of the future colonists in America, and provide students with the crucial framework and look into the minds of the explorers and their future actions against Native American tribes. Prior to students examining the interaction between explorers and natives, classes will have a group discussion question where they answer the following question:

“Imagine that you are the head of government, major political figure, or head of the military, and one day a group of alien ships landed at your Nation capital. You are not aware of the motives of the aliens, but they do poses far superior technology than your country. Do you befriend them, or fight them?”

The discussion question will give the students within the class an opportunity to think about colonization from the Native American perspective, and try to connect them to their very own lives. In order to successfully answer the discussion question, students will be required to explain the positive and negatives consequences of each of their actions. The teacher will need to provide students with ample time to construct their responses. Once all of the students have completed their responses they will be required to present their answers to the rest of the class. Following the lecture on the countries and the motives of their exploration, as well as the class discussion; the focus of the unit will then shift to having students examine primary and secondary source materials in order for them to determine the relationship between explorers and the Native American tribes the encountered.

Sources for this portion of the assignment can be found in the following book:

“First People: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History,” Colin G.

Calloway; Chapter 2 Documents

The teacher will have the students work in small groups with pre determined group roles created by the teacher with the purpose of making sure that all of the students strengths are met within each of the groups. The point of this assignment will have the students within each group use the sources provided to them by the teacher to look at how Native American tribes in various regions on the continent reacted to the explorers once contact was made. Other documents that can be used by the teacher to show the interaction between Native Americans and European explorers can come from Charles C. Mann's book *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. Regardless of where the teacher chooses to obtain their source material, all of the documents provided to students should offer them vital information on the interactions between Native Americans and their explorer counterparts. The documents provided by the teacher to the students should also allow students the opportunity to explore how encounters between Native American groups in the regions studied and the European explorers impacted the lives of these native groups both positively and negatively. Once students have completed the assignment on the interactions between these two groups, the students will be required to write a reflection paper that examines the following question:

"Describe how the encounters between European Explorers and Native American tribes impacted the social, political, and cultural aspects of native groups."

In order to complete this portion of the assignment, students will be responsible to summarize the main points of their paper in order to share with the class. The students will then take the main points of their reflection papers and the responses of their choice will be placed next to the comparison points made in the previous day's class. Once all of the answers by the students have been compiled and placed on the wall, the students will be provided with time to analyze the major points they have compiled as a class and write down any significant differences they notice between the two charts. After the students have completed writing down the differences they have noticed between what they have learned between the two lessons, the class will have a discussion on the differences between the two charts.

The teacher should also analyze the student's findings between the two lessons, and create their own discussions questions to ask of the class.

Lesson 4

The next lesson in my unit will begin with having the teacher give a summary on the histories of the Native American tribes studied and the encounters made with European explorers thus far. The purpose of reviewing the previous lessons with the class will provide the teacher with two outcomes. First it will allow the teacher to check for learning amongst the students within their class, and answer any prevalent questions they may have on Native Americans and help those students who may have trouble with understanding the material. Next, by reviewing what the class has learned so far about Native Americans, the teacher will be able to highlight any major points that may have been missed, and add any further information they may have previously left out in those earlier lectures. Following the summary on the previous lessons, the class will then be provided with a lecture on major events throughout the country's history that had both positive and negative effects on various tribes. The teacher may use Colin G. Calloway's book *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* for information on Native American peoples. Another book that may be a valuable resource for the teacher to use in examining modern Native American histories is Charles Wilkinson's book *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*. Not so much a historical text, but another novel that may serve useful in providing the teacher with significant information on modern Native Americans is Sherman Alexie's book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. The teacher should not

feel pressured to use the sources listed above, and may reference various other sources of their choice based on the needs of their students. Regardless of the sources used by the teacher, the topics covered in the lecture should cover the major events in America's history from post Civil War era to the present day. The teacher will not be required to cover every singular event that occurred, due to the nature of how lengthy the history between America and Native Americans are. However, the teacher will provide the students with a presentation that covers major events in our history. It is suggested that the teacher at least cover a few of the significant events listed here, but are not obligated to, and may want to include local history into their own lecture. Examples of some key topics the teacher may want to cover in their class include: Indian Rights Association, Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock Supreme Court Case, Native Assimilation Schools, Native Participation in Wars, Reservation Life, and present day Native American groups. Overall, the teacher will be free to choose the major events they would like to cover in their lecture. Once the lecture has been provided to the students, the teacher will ask the students a discussion question based on the material covered in their lecture. The discussion question may vary based on the material covered in the lecture, but should be one that focuses on how the relationship between America and Native Americans developed post Civil War. Following the discussion on the lecture, the teacher will also distribute primary source materials on American/Indian relations post Civil War to the students and allow them time to analyze them as a group. Documents for this portion of the lesson may be found in Chapters five, six, seven, and eight of Colin G. Calloway's book *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*. Calloway's book will provide the teacher with insightful material on the subject matter for this particular lesson. The teacher should monitor student progress during this portion of the lesson and assist students where needed. The purpose of this lesson is academic in nature, but the focus should more or less be on having students really reflect on the relationship America had with Native Americans following the Civil War into modern America. Once the entire class has completed analyzing the documents and answering the questions associated with them, they will then come back together as a class to discuss the findings from the readings. The teacher will have the groups of students within their class share one or two of their major findings they found in their document analysis. The teacher will write down the classes major findings in a third row on the major findings board the class established in the previous days lesson. Utilizing all of the information the students have covered within the class up to this point, the final part of this lesson will be to have the students work in groups and examine the major facts studied in class as well as the major findings board in order to determine if the actions by the United States government actually hindered or helped tribes in this country. In order to help students think about this topic, the teacher will provide the following focus question to the students. Based on the needs of the students, the teacher may decide to modify the question of requirements of the question, but essentially the class will be expected to answer the following question in one form or another:

"Have the actions by the United States Government since the American Revolution helped or hurt the Native American tribes in this country?"

Working within their groups and with the assistance of the teacher, the students will be required to create a detailed response list that describes the negative and positive actions by the government regarding native tribes in this country. Due to the length of this assignment the teacher may need to give additional time to the students in order for them to complete the requirements of the assignment. Once the students have completed the assignment, the class will come together with the intention of discussing the actions by our government regarding natives in our country. During the discussion on the relationship between American and Native Americans, the teacher will take the points by the students and use the information to compile a list of the main points in the arguments made by students, and place them next to the other three boards already created in the units previous lessons. Now that the class has fulfilled the task of completing their major findings board, the teacher will have the students then analyze the charts they have previously made in the

other lessons, and write down any major changes they have noticed throughout the lessons already completed in the unit. The teacher will give the students the option of answering one of the two questions listed here. However, the teacher may alter the questions asked to the students to better fit the needs of their class, but the questions created should be used as a guide for the students to complete this portion of the lesson. The suggested questions for the teacher to ask of the students are:

“What changes in American/Native relations have you noticed over the course of the unit?”

“What are some significant changes you have noticed over the course of the unit?”

Lesson 5

Prior to the start of the final assignment of the lesson, the teacher will review the major points of the lessons covered in class, and summarize the point of the assignment in their own words. The teacher can choose to create their own summary on the unit, or they may use the information provided in my rationale section of the unit description. Regardless of how the teacher chooses to summarize the unit, the focus should be on the history of Native Americans and how they have overcome adversities throughout history, and still manage to thrive as a people. After the summarization of the unit has been delivered by the teacher, the class will then begin to shift into the final assignment to wrap up the entire unit. The teacher will explain to the students that the unit will conclude with the students examining all of the information they have learned thus far regarding Native Americans in America. The teacher will explain to the students that they will be required to use the information from the class discussions, information from the major findings boards created in class, notes taken from lectures, and handouts completed in class to answer the following question:

“How have the histories of Native American Tribes changed over time?”

After all of the students have answered the question, the class will discuss the various responses given by students. The teacher will then explain to the class that they will now take everything they have learned about Native Americans and create their own textbook on a particular tribe or geographical region of the country. Students will be required to work with a partner on this assignment. The teacher will provide students with various options they can choose from in order to create their finished product. In order to assist the students within the class, the teacher will also provide the class with a detailed explanation of what their finished projects should look like. Based on diversity of every classroom, the teacher may choose to alter the requirements of this assignment to fit their own needs within the classroom. Due to the length of the assignment, the teacher should provide ample time for the students complete their assignments. The students should also be allotted library time so they can utilize various resources and technology to further research the topic and assist them in completing the assignment. Once all of the students have completed their projects, the unit will conclude with the students presenting their projects in a formal presentation to the entire class. During the presentation by the students, the class will be allowed to ask each presenter questions about their projects. The final part of this unit may be optional, but the teacher should wrap up the entire unit by simply asking the students what new things have they learned about Native Americans?

Reading List

Alexie, Sherman, and Ellen Forney. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* . New York: Little, Brown, 2007.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Native American Stories* . Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Pub., 1991.

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Hakim, Joy. *From Colonies to Country* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* . New York: Knopf, 1998.

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Taylor, Alan. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* . New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

Wallace, Anthony F. C., and Eric Foner. *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* . New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Wilkinson, Charles F. *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* . New York: Norton, 2005.

Zimmerman, Larry J., and Brian Molyneaux. *Native North America* . Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000.

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