

The American Indian Culture, History, and Government: A Lesson Plan Analysis

The misrepresentation of American Indians in elementary school textbooks and children's literature has perpetuated inaccurate and harmful stereotypes for many generations. Take about 20 minutes to read the links below:

<https://splinternews.com/publisher-to-recall-whitewashed-textbook-claiming-first-1819121949>

http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/articles/g_lincoln.htm

https://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/10/why_is_columbus_credited_with_discovering_america.html

https://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=honors_theses

It is because so many of us, as children, may have been taught misinformation, that we must be especially mindful that our knowledge and the presentation of that knowledge, is accurate and devoid of stereotypes.

Our students feel the impact of these misrepresentations. Read this short paper: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2000/educating-america-the-historians-responsibility-to-native-americans-and-the-public> As teachers, our responsibility is to teach in a way that is culturally sensitive and accurate. How can we best do this?

The Prompt:

I have chosen what I consider an excellent lesson plan, which provides information and activities about one American Indian Nations, the Anishinaabe.

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/anishinaabe-ojibwe-chippewa-culture-indian-nation#sect-introduction>

Every underlined word in the online lesson is a hyperlink that connects with even more information. Do not hesitate to follow the links.

Write a 2-3 page essay analyzing the merits of this lesson plan.

- What aspects of these three lesson plans stick out to you? Why do you think that is?
- What do students learn with regard to the culture, history, and government of the Anishinaabe?
- What specific 3rd - 5th grade social studies benchmarks connect to this lesson? (https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Academic%20Support/Final%20Social_Studies_Content%20Standards_Rev5_6.3.2020.pdf). Also, check this out for more information about ND Essential Understandings: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Indian%20Education/NDEssentialUnderstandingslg.pdf>
- Why is this information important to all North Dakotans?

Dr. Abigail Bremer provided this teacher candidate work sample

Understanding Cultural Diversity in Education

14 October, 2019

Lesson Plan Analysis

Through the United States public school system, students are exposed to an abundance of white, European-American, post-colonization history. Many of the available textbooks and lesson plans diminish the importance of Native Americans in United States history, despite Native Americans being the first people to live here. The information that is included on Native Americans commonly focuses on their interactions with European settlers, instead of on their unique history, their traditions, and their contributions to American society. This lesson plan was created for elementary schoolers to study the historical and current practices and traditions of the Anishinabe tribe. It focuses on the history and way of life of this tribe without solely focusing on their interactions with white colonizers.

One of the aspects of these lesson plans that stood out to me was that the lesson plans encourage the students to explore the history of the Anishinaabe tribe, not only in relation to European colonizers, but also in relation to other tribes, and their independent traditions. I believe that this reinforces the idea that Native American tribes have an impactful culture worth learning about, independent from their interactions with Europeans. Another aspect that stood out to me was that the lesson plans focus on one tribe rather than grouping all Native American tribes into one generalized group. This emphasizes that all tribes have their own traditions and histories independent from each other. By deeply examining a single tribe, students are exposed to the intricacies of their historical lifestyles, which can open their minds to exploring similar aspects of other tribes.

These lesson plans include self-lead and teacher-lead explorations into the culture, history, and government of the Anishinaabe tribe. Students learn about where they originally lived, the migration patterns of the tribe, and how these movement were influenced by interactions with Europeans and other Native American tribes. The lesson plans also explore the tribe's traditional dress, foods, hunting and gathering styles, the types of homes they lived in, their internal government, the history and origins of the main three names for this tribe, what types of tools they used, what kind of artwork they created, and their legends and stories. Through their research, elementary schoolers will receive a thorough understanding of Anishinaabe culture and history and how it was affected by European colonization.

The fifth grade standard that these lesson plans fit is 5.4.4.15.1 which states: North America was populated by indigenous nations that had developed a wide range of social structures, political systems and economic activities, and whose expansive trade networks extended across the continent. (Before European Contact). These lesson plans fit this standard because they explore the cultural and political history of the Anishinaabe tribe before, during, and after European colonization.

I believe that the information learned through these lesson plans is important to all North Dakotans because the cultural and political history of the Anishinaabe tribe is an important part of the overarching history of North Dakota. Since Native American tribes were the first people to live in North Dakota, they were the first to create a human history here. Native Americans are also a highly marginalized and misunderstood group. They are oftentimes stereotyped, and currently many North Dakotans do not have a thorough understanding of their culture and traditions. By understanding Anishinaabe history, North Dakotans will be more culturally

intelligent and tolerant, and will be able to help fight negative stereotypes about of Native Americans instead of spreading them.

Lesson plans like these, highlighting historical diversity, are crucial to the academic development of young students. They provide well rounded understandings of multiple perspectives of American history, and they teach students important lessons about diverse cultural backgrounds, so they will be prepared to be productive, supportive members of a diverse society.