



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2011 Volume IV: The Big Easy: Literary New Orleans and Intangible Heritage

The Intangible Heritage of Diné

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.04.03, published September 2011

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The focus of this unit is developing self-identity through learning oral history of Diné. The origin of Diné is the foundation of Diné oral history. There are two traditional oral historical accounts in the unit. First is the origin of Diné. Second is the origin of traditional Diné clans. These historical events guide the cohesiveness of the people even today. Understanding the origin of where one comes from affects the outcome of one's life. Many of the Native American Diné youth today have an identity crisis because of not having the "correct" knowledge of their people's past. The western history textbooks tell a Western perspective of Diné history. Diné tell its own history past from generation to generation. This is a part of the Diné heritage that is intangible. The events in the history are used to convey traditional teachings for Diné youth to develop their self-identity. With a positive self-identity students are able to face challenges in a multicultural society beyond the borders of Diné Nation. Students use second language strategies, vocabulary development, and teacher modeling that will develop an understanding of the importance of oral history in relation to self-identity as they learn to tell their personal history. Students will also be key individuals to maintaining Diné language for future generations.

(Developed for Diné Language and History, grades 5-8; recommended for Middle School Native American Culture classes, History, and Social Studies, grades 6-8; and Elementary Social Studies, grades 4-5)

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