



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Microbiome within the Circle of Life

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The circle is a common diagram American Indian cultures use to identify their relationship with the natural path. The Diné culture and philosophy have a circle path or sun path. We use the Circle of Life path to stay in balance and not stray off the path which is known as *hozho*. Our children are not using the circle and prefer the Western society's linear way of living and thinking. In classrooms and schools, Diné educators who are administrators and teachers need to teach our children the Circle path because it is within our culture. The subject of microbiome with the Circle of Life is a way to connect to our children because it incorporates how to live with self-respect, reverence, balance, harmony, beauty, power, and wisdom. We need to teach our children so they learn and use the sun path to understand their past, to reflect on their present, and to guide their future.

The unit will cover the Circle of Life, the history of the 1918 influenza pandemic, and how it affected the Diné people, and the spread of the bacterial disease tuberculosis on the Navajo reservation. I will introduce my unit on a chart paper explaining the concept of the circle path in living a long life. The learning activities are interviewing a grandparent and creating a book about any of the topics the students learned. Other activities are using a microscope to view cells on ready-made slides and a nurse or community health worker presenting information about tuberculosis.

(Developed for Integrated Science and Diné Culture, grade 5; recommended for Science and Diné Culture, grades 4-5)

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