



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2017 Volume II: Literature, Life-Writing, and Identity

Identity of Past and Present Diné

Guide for Curriculum Unit 17.02.02, published September 2017
by Priscilla Black

Every generation has their own conception of identity. In 2017, five generations of Diné understand, interpret, and express their identity differently. For my students, the Diné creation story is a familiar concept but it doesn't resonate to a level of deep understanding. The history of our leaders, our language, and our values are not integral to the daily lives of our youngest members. My unit strives to offer coping mechanisms and develop a sense of pride in our culture via the explicit teaching of our creation story. It is astounding to see all these five generation at once. However, in my interviews I was able to only interview two generation. It is through these interviews, each generation had their own definition of identity. It is in these perceptions that will allow my topic of identity and its interpretation to be explained and parallel to modern literature written by Native American Indians. Teacher and students will read a scenario that relates to identity through religion and identity through cultural teaching. Once the two types are presented, students can interview and begin to categorize their family's source of identity. Students' goal is to create a comparative writing piece about their own findings from interviews, literatures and nonfiction books bout Dine history and leaders. How much will it differ from the past and present? The results will be discuss and it maybe that the new generation may acquire their own unique definition of identity. In addition this unit, students will re-examine the importance of telling origin stories to keep our identity embedded in each generation. If the Diné stop telling the stories and practicing the clanship system, our identity as Diné Nation might be just a story to tell.

(Developed for ELA Reading, ELA Writing, Social Studies, and Art Presentation, grade 6; recommended for Navajo History, grades 9-12, and United States History, grade 12)

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