



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2018 Volume III: Adaptation: Literature, Film and Society

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## Adapting Culture from Book to Film: Laughing Boy

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by Jolene Smith

This unit teaches students how to analyze adaptations from book to film. The texts used are *Laughing Boy* the novel by Oliver La Farge and S. W. Van Dyke's 1934 *Laughing Boy* movie. Students will need to know what adaptation means when analyzing the movie. They also need to study the vocabulary used in analyzing a film, so they know what to look for when viewing the DVD. Academic learning involves watching short clips of particular scenes and discussing the adaptations with their peers. I will show clips of the dance, wedding, married life, and the characters Slim Girl and Lily so that students can analyze and evaluate them to study and identify adaptations. Teaching strategies and classroom activities are the applications students will use to explore the adaptation from the novel to the film. Think-Pair-Share, Characterization, and creating a grid to distinguish the difference between the source text and the film are activities students will use to learn the main content. As students study the book and film, they will practice and learn their own culture and language. The novel and movie *Laughing Boy* are about Dine (Navajo) history and are focused on a love story about the couple, Laughing Boy and Slim Girl.

(Developed for Social Studies, English Language Arts (reading and writing), and Diné (Navajo) Language, Grade 5; recommended for Social Studies, grades 5-6)

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