



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2014 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Images, 1776-1914

Anasazi Images on Navajo Land

Curriculum Unit 14.01.04, published September 2014

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Introduction

I teach 9th through 12th grader special education students at Monument Valley High School on the Navajo reservation. I have around 40-50 students per semester. My students consists of 95% Native Americans and 5% White, Mexican, Island Pacifiers', or African American. We are small nit community; this town of 7,000 people resides within Kayenta. Our school reaches out to the families of students that live in a 45 miles radius. The closest city is a 3 hour drive in one direction. Most of the students are on a free or reduced meal plan and about ¼ of our high school students live without running water or electricity in their home.

An important culture circumstance has me in a small dilemma. Since we reside and teach on the Navajo reservation, over 50% of the Navajo's continue to implement their cultural lifestyle. Other's choose a religious way of life or are atheist. Since my unit will view Anasazi ruins, a few parents may not want their child to go on the fieldtrip to Monument Valley to see petroglyphs up close. I have been told that Navajo's who live a cultural lifestyle do not step on land where a group has once inhabited the area.

"*Native and European Arts at the Boundaries of Culture,*" in American Encounters, a new college-level textbook in American Art, focuses on the time period from 1820s to the 1850. A key image is a chromolithograph by the American artist and traveler by George Catlin, *Wi-Jun-Jon (Pigeon's Egg Head) Going to and Returning from Washington*. This image shows a native man twice: once, he is wearing his traditional regalia, in the other image he is dresses in white men's clothing. I believe that when the Navajo students see this image, they will begin to think about the typical stereotypes they hear from their older family members. Not to mention the movie industry continues to portray Native Americans as feather wearing, body painting, long hair, and 70% nudity. The students will need to know how to compare and contrast as part of their curriculum, *Wi-Jun-Jon* will only make it easier to decipher what is cultural and what is contemporize. Students may note that the headdress worn clearly represents Northern Plains Indian tribe. Such stereotype names may include Chief or Injun. Moccasins are distinct between tribes as well. As for the Native in the military style wear, my students may note the usual way he is holding an umbrella, wearing a top hat with a military uniform on. When students study history, this image is not what they have imaged of the early American wars. This painting is also used on Robert F. Berkhofer Jr book called *The While Man's Indian* and has become an important symbol of the changes forced upon Native American culture in the nineteenth century. ¹

In his *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger reminds us that all images are man-made. ² In this book, it focuses on how sight comes before words. Berger shows how our background knowledge can affect what we actually see. In the seminar of Understanding history and society through images, 1777-1914, we all viewed paintings and had to express our thoughts. In a few of the landscapes, I noted that I was the only one that felt the dark clouds hovering over the forest area was comforting while others felt like it was a dark and gloomy place. My background knowledge tells me that rain will water the plants, which in turns will feed the animals, which the animal will feed the people.

In the Yale Center for British Art, paintings by John Constable were viewed during the seminar. As Tim Barringer writes in *Opulence & Anxiety Landscape Paintings from the Royal Academy of Arts, 2007*, Constable felt a deep sense of connection to the landscape with which he grew up:

"'Painting is another word for feeling', he wrote, 'I associate my "careless boyhood" to all that lies by the banks of the Stour. [These scenes] made me a painter.' Many of his earlier works, meticulously crafted on canvases three or four feet wide, were painted outside, observed detail by detail from the motif by a process he called 'natural painture'."

What captured my particular attention was John Constable's *Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames-Morning after a Stormy Night*, 1829 (oil on canvas). I had noticed a sunray in the background just underneath the clouds, painted with extreme truth to nature. The Navajo's believe the sunrays are meant to bring good vibes. In Navajo, the sunray is called Shandiin. In several of John Constable's paintings take up half the picture. This is something I could use in teaching at Monument Valley High School. Weather plays a key factor in our lifestyle. We see big black clouds as welcoming nourishment to our Mother Earth. Navajo lifestyle is based on using the Earth to feed, clothe, and shelter the people. The storm brings life back in our plants and trees, which we use as herbs to heal or treat certain ailments. It also brings water that animals and people will drink.

As my encounter with Constable reveals, art can connect us with people from other places and other times. All around the Navajo reservation, there are numerous cliff dwellings, ruins, and a variety of ancient art works, which long pre-date the arrival of the Navajo in the nineteenth century. Tourists admire these mysterious inscriptions and wonder what these images represent. Most areas are easily accessible to visitors and tour guides are available to offer their best interpretations of the Anasazi's history.

We do not know very much about the Anasazi tribe who inhabited current day Navajo land around the late 1600's and early 1700's. They built their villages in dwellings off the cliffs in very remote areas. Anasazi means Ancient Ones, who are believed to be descendants of Pueblo's and Zuni Native American tribes. Four states: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona; share evidence of these Ancient Ones and their civilization. The Anasazi people are thought to have been farmers, hunters, gatherers, and nomadic migrators. Few clear facts or archaeological remains survive to inform us about their existence, their unique life style and their eventual extinction.

Navajos have the advantage of living in the area of these ruins and hieroglyphs and have made use of some motifs from the drawings in their ceremonies. The images used in ceremonies are similar to those seen on the rocks in Monument Valley, Utah or in Navajo National Monument. The Navajo's ceremonial drawings are abstract images that represent animals, humans, deities, and the constellations. Ceremonies are done by the Navajo people. There are four types conducted which all relate to healing. Healing an illness, mental or internal which requires a medicine man (Shaman) to perform.

To make students aware of their existence, a map of the ruins around Navajo land will be shown to the class so students will grasp a visual representation of how closely the ruins surrounds them. Images of the petroglyphs will be posted on poster boards as a reference. Students will also take a field trip down the dirt roads of Monument Valley, Utah to see up close a few of the petroglyphs.

This unit, *Anasazi Images on Navajo land*, will be a 9-10th grade writing project. It will be taught integrating ELA Common Core Standards and the Dine' Philosophy of Education Standards. It will cover the course of 4 weeks for 45 minutes every other day. With implementing the Arizona Common Core Standards, we should be working to get our students college and career ready by the time they exit from high school. Each lesson will be aligned to at CCS and short activities will be added to aid and increase the student's comprehension skills.

Purpose/Rationale

After reviewing our districts State Assessments score, I have been looking for ways to increase my students' reading and writing skills. The Common Core standards also incorporate more discussions and critical thinking strategies. Now our students will be asked to explain their answers more extensively. I believe that, given the opportunity to learn from other states participants on how they are writing their curriculum units and lesson plans will only enhance and broaden my knowledge. I learned from attending YNI 2013 that our students' reading materials are too basic. So this year with YNI 2014, I feel I am better prepared to explore with the literature, arts, and advice from the coordinators to plan out an extensive unit, using a variety of approaches that will coincide with Special Education strategies and use of CCC standards.

I believe one big advantage we have is the nearby ruin in Navajo National Monument, which is about a thirty minute drive from Kayenta, Az. Monument Valley is also a thirty minute drive in the other direction. Our school resides on the Navajo reservation so our entrance into both Navajo parks is free of charge for the students. The tour guides speak both English and Navajo and that will benefit our bilingual students.

I teach English to students with a learning disability and English Language Learners, who are all low level and struggling readers and writers. We have close to 80 students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) just at the high school. My lessons incorporate the Common Core Standards and Special Education strategies. Students in my class may be identified as Learning Disabled, Other Health Impairment, Emotional Disabled, Vision or Hearing Impairment, or have a Mild Intellectual Disability. They are expected to state the state standardized test like their peers. The Special Education strategies and accommodations used are written in each student's IEP. Such accommodations are reading aloud, more one to one instruction, include visual aids in the lesson, and combine kinesthetic/auditory/visual strategies. One accommodations students benefit from is using color markers. My poster boards will be dark but images used will be lighter. Students need to see all the primary colors in front of them. Dark colors used for the writing and light colors are used as a highlight for importance. Students need to have lesson repeated in a variety of ways to add in the comprehension. One approach of teaching method will only cause a few frustrations. Reading aloud all components of literature and retelling facts aids in understanding the lessons.

Background Information:

Anasazi AD 300- AD 1300

The word Anasazi was given by the Navajo people. It means Ancient Ones. However, in some books, the name has been interpreted as Ancient Enemies. Oral stories from current residents in Kayenta, Arizona refer to the Anasazi's as the Ancient Ones. They are believed to be long descendants of the Pueblo tribes that currently reside in New Mexico. Literature dates the existence of the Anasazi's back to AD 300 to about AD 1300. They migrated around the Four Corners: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, building their homes in mountainous areas or in cliff dwellings. The Ancestral Pueblos may have reached the limit of the natural resources available to them. ³ The ruins close to Kayenta are all cliff dwellings. Navajo National Monument houses the closest Anasazi ruin, called Betatikin. There are tour guides available to take groups down to view the ruins. It's about an hour and a half hike down and two hour hike back up. The trail is treacherous and literally is a steep trail. The guide makes several stops for the tourists to catch their breaths. The guide also points out the plants along the trail. Some plants are used to make tea, or to wash, and others are used as a medicine. Visitors must stay on the path while walking thru the abandoned village. They are not allowed to touch, sit, or lean on any of the rock formations. Visitors will see a few of the petroglyphs on the walls of the ruins. They are able to make out certain animals, people, and tools. The drawings were made in the part of the dwelling that is well protected from weathering. From the website, Who Were The Anasazi?- Bureau of Land Management, 2012.

"The earliest published reference was by Kidder in the mid-1930s....J.O. Brew (1946) rails against the use of the term 'Anasazi' on the grounds that a Navajo term is inappropriate for an obviously Puebloan culture, that 'Baskemaker-Pueblo' or 'Puebloan' had precedence in the literature, and would do just as well for continues reference to this culture tradition... My guess is that this Navajo word... caught on in the middle 1930s [with archaeologists because] it did not imply any particular cultural relationship... It was bad practice to pre-judge the historical conclusions by identifying a prehistoric archaeological complex with some historically or ethnographically known culture."

Navajo

The Navajo reservation's perimeter covers 27,000 square miles. During the latest US 2010 Census count, there are 166,800 registered Navajo people that live on the reservation. This does not include the Navajo's living off the reservation. The next largest ethnic group living on the reservation is the Whites. The Navajo reservation is also larger than 10 US states. ⁴ Kayenta's population reaches around 7,000 residents. The public school has 730 high school students and 1,853 total students enrolled in the school district. There is a 98% rate of American Indian students enrolled. Other nationalities enrolled are: White, Mexican, Black, and Polynesian. The Navajo language is not part of the curriculum, so it is taught as an elective class. Such elective classes are Navajo Arts and Crafts. Students in this class are taught to make beaded key chains, weave sash belts, beaded bracelets, and basket makers. Another elective class is Navajo Language I and II. Students learn the foundation of the clanship, the roles of men and women and depending on the season students learn about Navajo deities. This particular class is also in charge of putting together activities for the Native American celebration that is held every October. The celebration resembles a typical high school homecoming week. Every day is designated a Spirit Day: clan t-shirt day (students write their clans using shirt paint), moccasin day, traditional dress day, or hair bun/do day. Contests are set up for cooking, dressing,

singing, and dancing. It's nice to see during lunch time in our courtyard the dancing. The non-native teachers are pulled into the circle by the students to join the Harmony dance.

Since the treaty of 1864, Navajo's who were captured were released from Fort Sumner, New Mexico and informed that a land with boundaries has been set aside for their permanent stay. At least 200 died during the 18-day, 300-mile (500-km) trek. Between 8,000 and 9,000 people were settled on an area of 40 square miles (104 km²), with a peak population of 9,022 by the spring of 1865. ⁵ After the long journey back, most families moved in various places to start rebuilding an established home.

Petroglyph

Petroglyph derives from the Greek words petro and glyphs. The word petro means rock and glyphs means carvings or engravings. Petroglyphs are made using a sharp tool and a hammer like tool. Tools are used to remove a small portion from the top of the rock. Some can relate to this as chiseling or pecking at the rock. Early Native Americans drew images to represent an event, spirituality, or the season. The Anasazi style can be dated back from AD 300 to AD 1300. Most of their images are animals, their hand, and people. Images were made in specific places and hold specific or special meaning. It does not stand for a particular word or sound.

Hieroglyph

The term "Hieroglyphs" derives from the Greek words for sacred writing. Most archeologists use the term hieroglyphs for ancient Egyptian or the Mayan people. Each picture may represent a sound, number, or a particular word. The Maya script had been deciphered by 90% by the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the past 5 years, the news media focused on the Mayan's calendar interpretation that the world was to come to an end in 2012. Mayans have more than a 1,000 signs in their writing. One sign may represent a syllables or phonetic. ⁶ No one speaks or writes the language as seen in hieroglyphs, the Mayans were one of the very few tribes, prior to European conquest, to establish a written language.

Pictograph

Pictographs are often used as simple, pictorial, representational symbols by most contemporary cultures. ⁷ Individuals may use a form of powder, dark rock or blood to make the picture art. In Canyonlands, Utah, there are bigger than life size ghostly figures drawn on the rocks.



Hieroglyphic- has meaning, a letter or word or sound.



Pictograph- colored art; powdered minerals, plant, charcoal, or blood



Petroglyph- carving or engraving into the rock.

Activity 1

The first activity the students will be in a whole group setting. The students will go on a local field trip to Monument Valley to see a variety of petroglyphs. This field trip will initiate the lesson. Students will need to see artifacts first hand in order to comprehend the differences between ancient and contemporary. They may see images of animal, people, and/or simple objects. On a drawing sketch pad, each student will copy 3 petroglyphs, making careful drawings.

Activity 2

In this activity they will analyze George Catlin's painting, *Wi-Jun-Jon (Pigeon's Egg Head) Going to and Returning from Washington*. This will raise questions about the history of native American peoples in the nineteenth century. Each student will be given a worksheet that compares and contrast into a prewriting activity. The painting will have a strong effect on the students' opinion. But they will be reminded about the year of the drawing and open discussions about the painting will be monitored. I would like for the students to freely express their opinions, which will be posted on the whiteboard. (Courtesy of Google)



Activity 3

The third activity involves students bringing in a family made artwork for a Show and Tell. This will allow students to think about the contribution and richness of Navajo visual and material culture. Students will be given 5 things they may bring; beadwork, weaving, silver smith, pottery making, or drawings. Students will be encouraged to express appreciation and honor in the family craftsmanship. They will compose a short 3 paragraph summary on the person, the art, and the meaningful message it represents. Each student will read their summaries and display the items for 4 days in the school's showcase.

Activity 4

The fourth activity will be end product. Students will need to create their own pictograph on a half sheet of poster board. The image will be one of the three choices set by the teacher. They may choose from: sports, livestock, or creative drawing. They will get their sketch pad out from the field trip and look at the images they drew. This will give them an idea on how to draw simple images. The students should not make their drawings real life that resembles a portrait. This is so students who never drew will not feel petrified. Drawings will not

be judged.

Objective: Students will view petroglyphs to get a first-hand visual understanding of the ancient artwork. They will think critically about ancient petroglyphs and compare them to modern styles of art work.

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Additional Resources

Step Up to Writing. Sopris West Educational Services www.sopriswest.com

<http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/hieroglyphs/qt/012109MayaScrip.htm>

Appendix

Common Core Standards

http://www.azed.gov/azcommoncore/files/2012/09/accs-9-12-ela-standards-final09_17_2012.pdf

Office of Dine Culture, Language, and Community Service

[http://www.odclc.navajo-nsn.gov/Books%20\(pdf%20files\)/Taa%20Sha%20\(yellow\)/i%20to%20ix/i%20to%20ix.pdf](http://www.odclc.navajo-nsn.gov/Books%20(pdf%20files)/Taa%20Sha%20(yellow)/i%20to%20ix/i%20to%20ix.pdf)

Notes

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3. http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ahc/who_were_the_anasazi.html
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