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Farming, Food and a Balanced Navajo Lifestyle

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Introduction

“You are what you eat!” Ponder on that thought for a moment...

Now think about saying this to a five-year-old Kindergarten student. I wonder, do they understand what this means? Do they really know that what they eat on a daily basis affects their body? This powerful statement is the essential understanding that will steer my curriculum unit and will pique the curiosity of my eager, young scholars.

Jessica Brantley, Professor of English at Yale University was the seminar leader of “Literature and Information” which I had the honor of attending during the 2015 Yale National Initiative. In this session, we explored a variety of texts (novels, poems, picture books, speeches, etc.) and looked at the different ways of reading them. Each fellow had his or her interpretation of the texts and during the course of the seminar sessions, we were able to hear different views from each of the fellows, which in many cases, led to a whole group discussion. The discussions were intriguing, awe-inspiring and from time to time, emotional and personal. During these times, we also had a chance to explore the relationship between fiction and non-fiction. In the end, we all left with a greater knowledge of the seminar topic. Through the discussions, I came to the conclusion that fiction and non-fiction combined together is a powerful tool in teaching a new concept to Kindergarten students.

“Farms Feed the World” by Lee Sullivan Hill, is a non-fiction book that opens one’s eyes to how important farmers are in our world. We will constantly refer to the information from this book and make connections with other pieces of fiction and nonfiction literature that will be presented throughout this unit. The goal of this curriculum unit is to teach my students about the importance of their everyday well-being and how all the things that we eat in our daily lives have a direct effect on our bodies. Combining classroom education and healthy fresh food helps children to make healthy choices and educates them about where their food comes from¹.

Demographics

My teaching career has been planted on the soil of the Navajo Reservation in a small town called Kayenta. It is located in the northeastern region of Arizona. 92% of our community is made up of people with Navajo in their bloodline. Thirty one percent of all families have income below the poverty line and our school is classified as a Title One school. I have been teaching Kindergarten at Kayenta Elementary School for the past eleven years and four of those years I taught English Language Learners. Typically, I have encountered at least 20 - 25 eager little bodies at the beginning of August every year and spend the next 180 days filling their minds, bodies and souls with not only academic but life skills that they will continue to use as they venture from one grade to the next. From year to year the enrollment for our K-12 students has been steady at around 2000. Our district is different from many others because our buses must travel as far as 50 miles each way to transport our students from home to school. These students wake before the sun rises and return home when the sun is getting ready to set. Some students live in areas with no running water, no electricity, and roads to their home are unpaved. The unpaved roads become hazardous in weather conditions such as heavy rain storms or heavy snow storms. On some of these days, our district calls off school because the roads are unpassable. On the Navajo reservation, students are faced with many barriers, yet they persevere.

Within the past few years, our district has been working on creating and consistently serve healthy foods on a daily basis to our students. The hard work and dedication became evident when in 2011, Kayenta Unified School District won second place out of 380 nationwide submissions in First Lady Michelle Obama's Recipes for Healthy Kids competition. The competition required teams of school nutrition professionals, chefs, students, and community members to work together to develop a creative, nutritious, and kid-approved recipe that could easily be incorporated into the lunch program. Our school created a Stir Fry Chicken Fajita, Squash and Corn dish. The Food Service Director traveled to Washington D.C. to receive the award and to this day, many of the food choices offered at our school are nutritious.

The Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project is a group of community workers who are visible in the community and work with all ages, from infants to elders. Within the Kayenta service area, there are seven individual chapters and each chapter is made up of a small community in which this project serves each chapter. The purposes of the project are to a) provide prevention education to reduce new diabetes cases among the Navajo people, b) to identify individuals who are in pre-diabetes stage to reduce new developments and c) provide diabetes management to reduce complications and disabilities. These objectives are being met by promoting a healthy lifestyle and educating the community in making improvements to nutrition, diet, and exercise. On a daily basis, the project staff members venture out into the community and hold free events, forums and exercise workshops. They are great at getting community members involved and have a very effective outreach program in place. During the school year, they will visit classrooms and teach lessons to our students.

My Kindergarten students are at the point where they are interested in everything and have just begun to peel back the layers of the academic world. Many of my students have had little to no Pre-Kindergarten experience and are therefore entering the classroom with what they have been exposed to at home; students who have had some type of Pre-Kindergarten experience are usually ready for the academic setting. Pre-Kindergarten readiness is not only an issue on the Navajo Reservation but nationwide. According to PBS, "Today, nearly half of America's children are not prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Research shows that children living in poverty enter kindergarten at an especially high disadvantage, particularly in literacy skills."²

Given this staggering statistic, it is extremely important for a child to get the most out of Kindergarten in order to be successful in future grade levels.

Rationale

My unit will expose students to a variety of nonfiction and fiction pieces of literature tied together with hands on activities in order to broaden their understanding of how food will help them stay healthy so that they will not become a part of the diabetes statistic. My unit will be taught using a timeline in three sections: (1) Navajos and Farming (2) Fruits, Vegetables and Our Body (3) Navajos, Diabetes and Exercising. In order for my students to grasp the essential understanding, it is necessary to first build background knowledge of where their food comes from. “Knowing where food grows and who grows it is key to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among young children. The growing experience is a vital component of connecting children to good food and creating memories that last. The connection to growing engages children on an intuitive level.”³ Keep in mind that Kindergarten students are just beginning their academic careers and have had little to no prior content-specific teachings. They will need to learn that food does not magically appear; a process which includes farming enables food to end up on a plate or on the shelves of our local grocery store. Once the food is on a plate it can be eaten and afterwards the food helps some part of the body stay healthy.

Navajos and Farming Rationale

Up to this point in their lives, students have been in their homes where food has been readily available. All they have to do is open the refrigerator or the cupboards and get what they want to eat without thinking of the process that it has gone through in order to get into their homes. In order for my students to appreciate the value of food and its existence, they must realize that a lot of hard work has been put into the process of planting and caring for the food as it was growing. Realizing that a lot of hard work has been put into what they eat might make my students think twice about their portion size, which would lessen the amount of food they might waste on a daily basis.

Fruits, Vegetables and Our Body Rationale

Just like any other human being, my scholars consume food on a daily basis. At such a young age, I am confident that their knowledge is limited when it comes to understanding that the foods they eat help or harm their body. After a weeklong study, my students will be able to explain why one food is better than another and they will also be able to choose the healthier version. For example, when presented with a roasted ear of corn and a bag of the corn chips, the student explanation might be, an ear of corn is much healthier to eat than a bag of corn chips because the corn chips have a lot of fat and salt in it whereas, the ear of corn is natural. It is very important for my young scholars to be exposed to the different types of food, specifically fruits and vegetables for this unit.

Navajos, Diabetes and Exercise Rationale

Diabetes has been on the rise among the Navajo people, particularly with adults. In recent years, children have been diagnosed with childhood diabetes. With that in mind, it is important to persuade my students to start eating healthy and exercising. With the background knowledge that accompanies this unit, they will build

an understanding that in order to stay healthy they have to eat the right combination of foods and exercise on a daily basis. This will then set my young scholars on a lifelong journey of practicing good health and exercise.

Background Knowledge

I grew up on the Navajo Reservation in a home that was comprised of my father, my mother and my three older brothers. We constantly traveled to and from my grandparents' homestead where I was exposed to many of the traditional ceremonies and cultural teachings of the Navajo. The summer immediately following my high school graduation, I began my post-secondary adventure. All through the times that I was away from the reservation, I maintained my spiritual upbringing and respected the teachings that were passed on to me. Some of the information in this unit is from oral teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation. My maternal grandmother and maternal grandfather would speak of these teachings at times that they thought were appropriate. I respect and value the teachings and would like to continue to pass these stories onto my students.

Navajos and Farming

Farming has been an important part of the Navajo history dating back many years, decades, even centuries ago. It is documented that Navajos learned to farm from the Pueblo Indians in the early 1600's and farming became a very crucial skill that the Navajos perfected and lived off of for many years. Before that they were gatherers and hunters. For centuries, the Navajos maintained a balanced lifestyle without the convenience of grocery stores, vehicles and many of today's modern amenities.

To this day, family farming plots are still visible as you travel through the Navajo Reservation. The sad reality is that there are not nearly as many as one would have seen decades ago. In the past few years, as more and more of the younger generations are moving away from home to enter the workforce or attend post-secondary education or for other reasons, the Navajo traditions have been slowly disappearing. For those farms that are still visible, a major crop that they plant on a yearly basis is corn. Corn is significant to our Navajo culture. It represents the basis of life and how one grows from infancy to old age. In this unit, my students will be exposed to the background and basic understanding of the cornstalk in hopes that the oral teachings will continue to be passed onto this generation and future generations.

Corn is one of the main staples of the Navajo way of life. Every spring, many Navajo families plant large fields of corn that they use throughout the fall and winter in many traditional food dishes, such as kneel-down bread, blue corn mush, dried steamed corn and roasted corn. But its use also goes far beyond just nutrition, it also plays a very important part in Navajo prayer. The pollen of the corn, which is dusted off the tassels in the early morning, is then used in ceremonies as well as in prayer. One of the major ceremonies would be when a Navajo girl transitions into womanhood and a large corn cake is cooked underground in a circular pit lined with corn husks. This ceremony concludes the following morning with the cake being cut and shared with all those in attendance and shared with other family members.

As many of the stories are passed on from generation to generation, this particular teaching was passed on to me by my grandmother. The cornstalk is a very sacred plant, sacred because it has its roots in the Emergence Stories as a symbol of life (Emergence Stories can also be referred to as Creation Stories). It has religious

importance specifically as an offering of its pollen to the holy deities. Corn symbolizes growth in development that is similar to human growth from conception to birth to old age which is the same understanding as to how plants grow. Just as plants have to have soil to grow, water to nurture growth, air to breathe, and light for its photosynthesis processes, these are also respective to the elements of life on Mother Earth: Water, Air and Fire. It is for this reason that Navajo people have a spiritual understanding and an appreciation for corn. I intend to pass these oral traditions on to my students during this unit in hopes that they relate these teachings into their own life and continue to pass these teachings on to future generations.

In the classroom, some of my students will understand some type of farming responsibilities whereas others will not. Each year, their background knowledge will differ. At the conclusion of each school year, all of my students will be walking away with a wealth of information related to this unit. With a combination of fiction and non-fiction literature, my students will understand that farmers and farming play a major role in our everyday lives. They will then learn that the fruits and vegetables from the farms will be eaten and it will help their body to stay healthy.

Navajos and Diabetes

“Scientists, other scholars, and the popular media have identified Native Americans and other Indigenous populations as being at risk for diabetes based on their genetic makeup. For example, some researchers have used the ‘thrifty genotype’ hypothesis to explain the higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes mellitus among Native Americans, compared with other ethnic groups. According to this hypothesis, when humans with ‘thrifty’ gene eat a diet high in fat, such as the modern Western diet, they may be more likely to become obese and develop type 2 diabetes than people without that genotype.”⁴

Diabetes is a type of disease in which the body’s inability to produce enough or any insulin causes high levels of glucose in the blood. When you eat, your body turns food into sugars, or what is called glucose. At that point, your pancreas is supposed to release insulin. The insulin then opens up your cells so the glucose can enter and be used as energy. But when a person has diabetes, this does not work. Several major things can go wrong therefore causing the onset of diabetes. Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are the most common forms of the disease.

With Type 1 diabetes, the body’s immune system attacks part of its own pancreas. The immune system mistakenly sees the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas as foreign, and destroys them. This attack is known as autoimmune disease. These cells, called islets are the ones that sense glucose in the blood and, in response, produce the necessary amount of insulin to normalize blood sugars. Insulin serves as a “key” to open your cells, to allow the glucose to enter and allow you to use the glucose for energy. Without insulin, there is no key. The sugar stays and builds up in the blood. The result: the body’s cells starve from the lack of glucose. If left untreated, the high level of blood sugar can damage eyes, kidneys, nerves, and the heart, and can also lead to coma and death.

Often, type 2 is tied to people who are overweight, with a sedentary lifestyle.⁵ This common form is called Type 2 diabetes, or non-insulin dependent diabetes. It is also called adult onset diabetes, since it typically develops after age 35. However, a growing number of younger people are now developing type 2 diabetes. People with type 2 are able to produce some of their own insulin but not enough. And sometimes, the insulin will try to serve as the key to open the body’s cells to allow the glucose to enter. But the key won’t work. The cells won’t open. This is called insulin resistance.

“Diabetes in Navajo people has been reported since the 1960s, with recent reports in adults suggesting

estimates of type 2 diabetes two to four times those of non-Hispanic white populations and rising over the past 20–30 years. However, there are no population-based studies of diabetes occurrence in Navajo youth, although earlier reports suggested that type 2 diabetes in youth was a relatively rare condition. It has been assumed that diabetes in Native American youth is primarily type 2 diabetes.⁶

Given the statistics above, this curriculum unit will intertwine food growth, food facts and stress the importance of eating healthy in hopes that the younger generation will adopt a healthy lifestyle and prevent a rise in the number of youth diagnosed with diabetes.

Content Knowledge

The following content knowledge is included to provide kid-friendly explanations for unfamiliar words or content that may arise in the unit. The type of fruits and vegetables being taught in the unit can be changed.

Information on Fruits

There are many types of fruits. Just to name a few there are tropical, citrus, tree, berries, melons and exotic fruits. A fruit usually has a seed on this inside and grows on a plant such as a tree, bush or on a vine. They are usually edible and most of the fruits are sweet. A fruit is made up of a lot of water, just like the human body. They are good for your body. You can buy fruits at the grocery store or at fresh fruit stands.

Information on Vegetables

There are also many types of vegetables. There are three main ways a vegetable can grow. Root vegetables grow underground. It is important that you be patient with these vegetables because if you pull them out of the ground before they are fully grown, they will not produce a very good crop. The second way vegetables can grow is on a vine. This includes the big, heavy ones like pumpkins, squash, zucchini, and cucumbers which lie on the ground. There are also smaller, lighter ones like peas, beans and tomatoes. These vines are usually tied to poles or nets to help the vine grow upward. The third way vegetables grow is that they sprout up above the ground with strong roots holding them up, also called, shoot vegetables. Some examples are broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, cabbage and Brussels sprouts.

Asparagus

Asparagus is a shoot vegetable that grows from the ground out. It requires time for it to grow and usually grows in not too hot and not too cold places. We like to eat the stalk and the tip of the asparagus. When you make a salad with asparagus it usually makes the salad look nice because of the weird shape that it has. Asparagus is a good source of a vitamin called folate, which is important for healthy blood.

Avocado

An avocado is often mistaken for a vegetable because we eat it like a salad vegetable, but it is actually a fruit because it has a big seed in the middle of it. It grows on an evergreen tree in warm places. Avocados are at their best when they are ripe and very easy to prepare. They can be cut in half with the seed removed and eaten with a little salad dressing, chopped into a salad or you can eat it all by itself. It usually feels squishy

when it is in your mouth. Avocados are a good source of good essential fats that help your heart to stay healthy. The fat in an avocado is the kind of fat that is good for your body.

Broccoli

Broccoli is a vegetable that reminds me of a tree because of the way that it looks. It grows in rows similar to lettuce and grows very well when the weather is cool, not hot. If the weather is too hot, the broccoli will not grow. It has a lot of Vitamin A which helps your eyesight.

Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts are a vegetable and look like mini cabbages. They grow out of the ground in knobby rows on a long tough stalk. They contain loads of vitamin C. Vitamin C helps your body to heal cuts and bruises and to fight colds.

Eggplant

An eggplant is a fruit that grows on a vine, kind of like a tomato. It requires plenty of warm sunlight in order to grow to a perfect size and ripeness. An eggplant is healthy in many different ways. It is a major source of fiber which helps your stomach to get rid of all the food in it.

Fig

Figs are soft sweet fruits, full of small seeds and often eaten dried. They grow on trees in a warm place where it does not rain too much. If it rains too much when they are growing, the fig will split open and they will not grow anymore. Fresh figs are delicious and the fig can be made into jam. A fig can be eaten fresh or it can be dried. Figs are a good source of potassium which helps lower blood pressure.

Grapefruit

A grapefruit is a fruit and grows on a tree just like oranges. Grapefruits help you to not eat too much food because it makes your stomach feel like it is full. It is high in Vitamin C which helps your skin to stay smooth.

Jicama

A jicama is vegetable that grows on a vine like a bean in warm places. The skin on the jicama looks similar to a potato but the skin is thick and cannot be eaten. DO NOT eat the leaves on the jicama because they are poisonous. It is high in Vitamin C which helps your bones to stay healthy.

Kiwi

A kiwi fruit is hairy on the outside and soft in the middle. It is one of the only fruits to be green when it is ripe. You can scoop out the juicy green flesh with a spoon just like a boiled egg! One kiwi fruit contains all the vitamin C you need for a whole day. Vitamin C helps your body to heal cuts and bruises and to fight colds.

Diabetes

To understand diabetes we need to understand what happens to all the food we eat. When we eat our body turns the foods into a kind of sugar called glucose. Glucose is used by the body for energy that we use to help us run, skip, play, swim and even think! You are supposed to have sugar in your blood, but when you have too

much sugar for a long time then it turns into diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is usually called insulin-dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes. When a person has type 1 diabetes, the pancreas in your body cannot make insulin. When you eat, the food you eat still turns into sugar but it can't go to where it is needed. Since it doesn't go anywhere, then it starts to build up and that is when you start to get sick. A person who has Type 1 diabetes requires insulin treatment on a daily basis. They will either have to give themselves a shot or they use an insulin pump.

Type 2 Diabetes

When a person has type 2 diabetes, the pancreas still makes insulin. But insulin doesn't work in the body like it should and the blood sugar levels start to get high. Your body works extra hard to make the insulin that it needs and soon it gets tired. Usually doctors will prescribe medicine to people who have type 2 diabetes and they tell you that you have to start doing a lot of exercise if you want to help your body.

Teaching Strategies

My unit will begin by showing students pictures of Navajo people farming that date back many years and also providing them with a container full of fruits and vegetables. I will give them some time to feel, touch and smell the contents of the container. The pictures as well as the container will provide a lead in to the unit by preparing students for what they will be learning. Students will then be allowed to share their ideas and thoughts about the pictures and contents of the container. After a reading of "Farms Feed the World" by Lee Sullivan Hill, a very important question will be posed, "How are farms and the container of food alike?" With that powerful question, my students will begin to wonder about how important farms are and how they help us. Their responses will vary due to the fact that their background knowledge differs.

As the unit progresses, students will engage in many hands on activities in which each of those activities will be tied to a fiction or non-fiction book. In Kindergarten, it is important for students to be able to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction (real and make believe) as stated by the Common Core standards. Examples of the activities (see below) will include but are not limited to sequencing, food demonstrations, food tasting sessions, guest speaker visits, a field trip to the local grocery store and planting in cups to see the process from seeding to full growth.

This unit will also include viewings of short video clips such as "A Plate Full of Color" by Georgia Perez in which a fiction book is read to them. After the viewing, I will have students create their own plate full of color using more common fruits and vegetables provided. They will share their plate with a partner and students will be required to reflect on the clips through buddy pair shares. Buddy pair shares are going to be one of the major teaching strategies that will be noticeable throughout the unit. Buddy pair share is a time when each student finds a partner and depending on the activity, they will each be verbally sharing their thoughts. Vocabulary development and being able to express one's ideas is very crucial in the early stages of academic learning. The students will be provided with many opportunities to share their own experiences through reading and

writing. Verbalizing and talking with a class partner will be crucial at each step because I believe it is important for each and every student to voice their thoughts and opinions even at a young age.

There will be days set aside for special quests to visit the classroom such as the local Nutritionist, a member of the Special Diabetes Program and the district food service director. These individuals are excellent presenters when it comes to presenting to the younger generation. They will have their own set of literature and hands on activities to share with the students.

This unit is based around food derived from planting and the process that it takes from preparation of seeding to delivering to grocery stores and finally ending up in the confines of their home. Following this learning, the students will participate in activities which will strengthen their understanding that the foods they eat will either harm or help their body.

Navajos and Farming (Week One)

Activity 1

I will begin by reading the nonfiction book, "From Seed to Plant" by Gail Gibbons. After reading the story, I will randomly place four pictures on the Velcro board for the students to see. The pictures will be of (1) a seed, (2) a plant shoot, (3) a budding plant and (4) a full grown plant. We will then have a discussion which will relate to the book and we will discuss what happens first, next, then, and finally. During the discussion, I will choose a student to come select the correct picture and place it in the right sequential order. After completing this as a whole group, I will send students back to their table to sequence a set of given pictures similar to those used in the whole group activity. Having students sequence the pictures at their table reinforces what they learned during the whole group activity. They will also be responsible to verbally share the plant growing process with a class partner.

Activity 2

This particular lesson above will continue by having students each gather materials needed to plant a seed: a plastic see-through cup, a seed, soil and a half cup of water. The students will each have a chance to plant their seed and throughout this process, I will continue to refer to the nonfiction book, "From Seed to Plant". Over the course of the entire unit, we will continue to monitor, record and discuss our growing plants. Students will have their own journals to record the growth process using drawings and student dictations. For example, on day one, they will draw a cup with soil. After one week, they will draw a cup with the shoot of the plant. After each recording, students will share what is happening to their plant with a class partner.

Fruits/Vegetables and our Body (Week Two)

Activity 1

I will begin my lesson by presenting students with the container full of fruits and vegetables that were presented earlier in the unit. Each student will have a recording sheet and for each fruit or vegetable, they will be making predictions and recording on their sheets. The recording sheets will have four pictures depicting sweet, salty, hot and undecided. They will revisit their prediction sheets after the food tasting session (See Activity 2 below) and they will record their final response.

Activity 2

Another lesson will begin with a reading of “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables From A to Z” by Lois Ehlert. I will tie this reading to the book, “Farms Feed the World” by Lee Sullivan Hill and stress the importance that these fruits and vegetables will not exist if it were not for the farmers that we read about. After reading and naming each of the fruits and vegetables, I will present the class with several of the less common fruits and vegetables such as asparagus, grapefruit, avocado, jicama, Brussel sprouts, figs, kiwi and eggplant. While presenting each, I will also explain how each one helps our body stay healthy and if possible, present a visual (for example I will present the asparagus and explain, “Asparagus is a vegetable. We eat the stalk and the tip. It makes our food look more interesting with its unusual shape. Asparagus is a good source of a vitamin called folate, which is important for healthy blood.” Then I will show a picture of blood and place the visual of “blood” beside the asparagus.) I will then have the students sample a piece of asparagus. I will continue in this manner with each of the remaining fruits and vegetables. After sampling, the students will have a chance to create a puzzle in which each fruit or vegetable will match with a part of the body (blood, eye, skin, hair, etc..)

Navajos, Diabetes & Exercising (Week Three)

Activity 1

A special guest will be visiting my students, the local Special Diabetes educator. After reading the book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle, s/he will engage students in exercise using music and the book as an assistant. She will also prepare a simple food recipe such as a fruit smoothie with the students.

Activity 2

As part of the conclusion of the unit, my scholars will take a field trip to tour the local grocery store to learn hands on how the fruits and vegetables end up on the store shelves. They will then be able to choose a couple of fruits and vegetables that they will purchase and take home to share with their family at home. At home, they can share what they have been learning and encourage their family to eat healthy fruits and vegetables.

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Appendix A: Implementing Standards

With the majority of this unit focusing on intertwining fiction and non-fiction simultaneously, it is only appropriate that it will cover the following Common Core State Standards (CCSS). I will incorporate a variety of texts into this unit which will be related to the topics being covered:

Reading Standards for Reading Literature

- a. With prompting and support, the student will ask and answer questions about key details in the story
- b. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories including key details
- c. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
- d. With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
- e. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

- a. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text
- b. With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key ideas of a text
- c. With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text
- d. With prompting and support, identify basic similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g. illustrations, descriptions, or procedures)
- e. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding

Throughout the unit my students will have many opportunities to reflect on the stories, activities and share their understanding through the form of writing. At the beginning of the school year, it is common to see drawings accompanied by random letters. At this point, this is where the students will provide a dictation of what they have drawn and through this dictation, I will be able to determine if a student is grasping the concept being taught. As the year progresses, the writing process will be more evident. The following writing

standards will be covered:

- a. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they will tell the reader the topic or name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book
- b. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- c. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
- d. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Through the activities and different types of literature, the following Arizona Health Standards will be covered in this unit:

- a. The concept of recognizing that healthy behaviors affect personal health
- b. The concept of understanding personal health
- c. The concept of understanding the benefits of making healthy choices

Through the activities and different types of literature, the following Arizona Science Standards will be covered in this unit

- a. Organize (e.g. compare, classify, and sequence) objects, organisms, classify and sequence) objects, organisms, and events according to various characteristics.
- b. Communicate observations with pictographs, pictures, models, and/or words
- c. Communicate with other groups the results of an investigation

Notes

1. Contento, I., Balch, G., & Bronner, Y. "The effectiveness of nutrition education and implications, 2
 2. "Higher Literacy Scores." <http://valuepbs.org/education/higher-literacy-scores.php>
 3. The Food Trust. http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/the-knidergarten-initiative.original.pdf
 4. Sahota, Puneet Chawla. "Genetic histories: Native Americans' accounts of being at risk for diabetes"
 5. Diabetes Research Institute. "What is Diabetes?" <http://www.diabetesresearch.org/what-is-diabetes>
 6. Dabelea, Dana. "Diabetes in Navajo Youth Prevalance, incidence, and clinical characteristics"
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