



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2016 Volume III: "Over the Rainbow": Fantasy Lands, Dream Worlds, and Magic Kingdoms

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## **Journey to the Sun: Reclaiming Imagination and Self-esteem through Culture and History**

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### **Introduction**

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*"Now," she said to them.*

*"You are reading to go on.*

*"You have the power to seek help for yourselves and for your people.*

*"Be on your way, then. And walk in beauty."*

*And with those words from her the two youths placed the sacred naay44' ats'os in a medicine bundle which she had prepared for them, stood up, thanked her, and departed on their quest.*

*Since they now knew fully who they were, and since they now had a distinct purpose in traveling, they set out confidently, it is said.*

Ever since I first heard the Din4 stories of creation, I was enamored by how fantastic they were. Stories of monsters, man-eating plants, incredible journeys, world shaking floods, and talking animals all caught my attention. I didn't completely understand the meaning or purpose of the stories until later, but I did enjoy them for the entertainment value when I was a child. It wasn't until a few years ago that I heard them and read them again that I was able to see these tales with a different understanding. These epics were a part of my history, a part of who I am as a Din4 woman, and are all retold orally through ceremonies and daily traditional activities. I had no idea how essential these tales were to our everyday way of life as Nihook11' Diyin Din4'4, the Holy Beings of the Earth's Surface. From the very beginning of life in the Black World, to the present day, we are meant to be thoughtful, gracious, resilient, kind beings of beauty, and somehow, we forgot all of that.

During Westward Expansion, and the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny, Native people have been subjected to terrible traumas. Our lands, culture, language, and livelihood all taken away from us in an effort to make us more "civilized" and tamed Americans. We were forced to forget our past and embrace the future. Our lands and our minds were raped, and in the wake of that devastation, we led ourselves to believe that we were worthless, and not beautiful like we once were. This is the way it is felt on the side of the Native reserve, or at

least in the way I perceive things. Many may be in a state of denial, but the effects of our abuse are present in alcoholism, suicide, sexual assault, murders, unemployment, substandard living, diseases, poor nutrition, poor math and reading skills, and low graduation rates at the high school and college level. In an effort to inspire and incite to perform at his or her best, I believe a student's boost in self-esteem, self-identity and a return to the use of the imagination is what's needed.

The story of the Twins shows the determination and strength one has when knowing and believing in oneself, and having a goal in mind. We all have a purpose in this world, and we all can achieve it by recognizing the obstacles but striving to overcome with positive affirmations of beauty in nature and self. It is also important to support systems for themselves, and their fathers, in an attempt to save their people like the twins had along the way. In this tale, young Navajo boys search for themselves, and for their father in an attempt to help their people from terrible monsters. Through belief in themselves and the help of family and friends, the boys overcome great obstacles to receive gifts of great weapons to rid the earth of monsters, and restore balance to earth.

## Rationale

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Imagination, or lack of it, is what creates the need for this curriculum, but more importantly the need to restore self-confidence, self-respect, self-esteem, and self-identity. The target audience of this unit is for the Din4 student, but it can be utilized by any Native Nation, or students of color. It's not exclusive to oppressed peoples, but they are who I had in mind while writing this. The reasoning for this is American Indian/Alaskan Natives account for 1.5 percent of the United States population with 28% being under the age of 18. Suicide amongst Native people is the highest of all ethnic groups in the United States, so much so, that Lakota and Din4 Nations have declared their Nations in a state of emergency due to the high numbers of youth suicide. 32.4% of children under the age of 18 are considered to be living in poverty. Mortality rates from alcoholism are 514% higher than that of the general population, Diabetes is 177% higher than the general population. High school graduation rates for AI/AN is at 47% with high school dropout rates being double the national average. 1 out of 10 AI/AN over the age of 12 will be victim to a violent crime, while 1 out of 4 AI/AN women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime.

This unit is created for students in the first and second grades. It is 98% Din4, with all children living on the reservation. 99% of students do not speak the Din4 language and 97% do not understand the Din4 language. Classroom sizes range from 18 to 25 students per class, with 60% or more reading below grade level.

## Objective

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Imagination is something hard to come by these days, and in the past, when I've asked my students what could happen, what they think, or give them free reign to imagine, they struggled with what to do. It's hard being a child in a world where there's so much reality that forces you to grow up, be tough, don't touch, leave it alone, be quiet, this is what you're supposed to do, this is how it's supposed to be, don't tell, shut up, you're stupid, that's dumb, and you can't. All these words I've heard parents, brothers and sisters and adults tell

children, not just at school but in outside settings. I know that there are many real problems on the rez, and in places where there are poor children of color. Factors like having to care for siblings, the home, parents who abuse substances, having something to eat, staying warm, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual abuse are all real possibilities that many of our children have to face. I can understand why it's so difficult to have imagination when it's so much easier to numb your thoughts with television, or video games.

With this unit, my main objective is that I would like for my students to re-enter the fantasy world, suspend their disbelief by providing them with our surreal history, create the paracosm they can be present in, and share with others. Let them know that there are many dangers, and many obstacles, but there are people, and beings present that will help them and will always try their best to keep them safe. The students will then be able to retell the stories they heard to another person, create their own stories, or add to ones that they've heard. Students will illustrate setting, character, events and will be able to recite, and reuse Din4 vocabulary. Finally, students will have pride in themselves. With these stories of perseverance, and courage I would hope that they will say, "I can too". I will learn these songs to be my protection, I can help myself and my people out of hardship. I can and will practice hard to outrun those who are faster than me because I have what it takes. I have the weapons to guide me safely home, and I have the morals and mind set to know when to use them.

## Background

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It is an extremely difficult task to provide stories that have to include the events leading up to the climax without spending too much time doing so. In writing, there is a specific formula to follow, you begin with the exposure of the tale, you hit the inciting incident, and rising events follow suit. You reach the climax, then steadily roll down with falling action, and gently roll out with denouement, and you've reached the end, we all live happily ever after. This unit should focus on the journey of the Twin Warriors, and introduce, or acquaint our children with an adventure in which they can escape. Imagination is something that should be cherished, and with stories so vibrant it would be wrong of me to introduce a unit of epic journeys that place the reader in the subjunctive through tales of insect people, holes in the sky that lead to new worlds (perhaps more real in the sciences), and a stolen Water Monster baby. Here, Freytag's pyramid is pushed to the side, and instead we climb the plateaus of suspended disbelief. The story wants you to hear what sounds unlikely, but is regarded as a real history to the people who created, and have retold it for centuries. With this in mind, I have included a shortened version of the events leading to the unit foci for the sake of the instructor. These tales could be utilized, and spent more time on, and it is up to the instructor to make that decision, but the main event is the Journey to the Sun and the monster battles, and in this case, the emergence summary is the exposition of this dream-like epic.

## Emergence

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With stories of origin and creation, it is best to start at the beginning, because that's the point of the tale being told, where does it all begin? In the Din4 culture there are sacred colors that correspond with the directions, the mountains, time of day, human development, seasons, and the process of thinking. Four is a sacred number, many things happen in fours, and in the beginning, we have four major worlds that we lived in prior to the one we reside in now. The worlds that we emerged from have their own color representation, and specific inhabitants. In this unit, I will summarize as best I can these stories that are much loved and respected by the Din4 people. Keep in mind that these narratives are meant to be told orally, and should be done so in a way that you as the story teller make it your own. Let it become your voice, your life, your experience to pass down to the listener. We are not a people that merely recites our history from written works, we are a people who connect these tales through life because they are deeply rooted in our way of thinking, and living, and surviving.

For the stories in this curriculum I refer to the translated work of prominent medicine men by three non-Navajo authors/editors, Raymond Friday Locke, Aileen O'Bryan, Paul Zolbrod. For the majority of the stories in this curriculum, I use the oral narratives from Johnson Dennison, Avery Denny, Grace Tracy, Rose Fasthorse-Nofchissey, and from Ethelou Yazzie. These people are still alive, and still hold the stories that have been passed to them by their parents.

### First World

The First world is associated with the color black. It was a world of mist and darkness, and was inhabited by Mist or Air Spirit people, coyote, and insects. In the First world is where First Man and First Woman were created by the merging of two clouds from two directions, with color representations for each direction. First Man was created by the merging of a black cloud from the North, and a white cloud of the East. First Woman through the same process of South-blue cloud, and West-yellow cloud. Where the two clouds merge, the mists of both clouds join together, creating pillars where the Holy people, who are ever present, leave a perfect ear of corn. At the meeting of the clouds, First Man and First Woman are created, and come forth with a perfect ear of corn. First man had a perfect ear of white corn, and First Woman had a perfect ear of yellow corn.

The insect beings and Holy ones lived in peace, but only for a while. In the First World, the insect people began to fight amongst each other and they started great civil wars. The Holy Beings that were present and who were guardians of the land kicked the Insect people out of the First World. The Insect People flew up toward the sky and searched for a place to exit. The First World was like a floating island and the Insect people had to make their way up into the sky and there they found a small hole in one of the edges of the sky and they made their way through to the Second World.

### Second World

When the Insect people arrived to the Second World, also known as the Blue World, they noticed there were already beings that lived in this world. Bluebirds, Blue Jays, Blue Hawks, and Blue Herons. Badger, Kit Foxes, Wildcats, and Mountain Lions also were residents of the area. Representatives of the land noticed the emerging newcomers and invited them to stay because of similar appearances. The group of Insect people were happy and lived in peace with the animal people of the Blue World, but it wasn't long before the evil from the First World caught up with them. Warring began, the Insect people had disrespected the residents of

the Blue World, which caused them to banish the Insect People. According to O'Bryan, Locke, and Zolbrod, the Insect People flew up to the edge of the sky again and located a hole to exit, while in the oral narratives First Man had performed a ceremony using the knowledge he had gained in the First, and living in the Second World then led the people up to the next world by creating a type of escalator made of precious stones.

### **Third World**

The Insect beings once again made their entry into the Third World, or the Yellow World, and in this world there were many small animals like chipmunk, squirrel, spiders, snakes, and cats. In this world there were two rivers that crossed each other, and present were our six sacred mountains, Sis Naajin7, Tsoodzi[, Dook'o'ooos[77d, Dib4 Nitsaa, Dzi[ N1'oodi[ii, Dzi[ Ch'0ol'9'9. In other stories, the mountains remain in the same place all throughout the worlds, and in each world, mountain soil is collected and carried in a bundle to the next new world. During the people's stay in this world, everyone lived well together as before in the previous worlds and soon quarreling began to happen again which forced the people to move up and out again. In Ethelou Yazzie's version Coyote was the instigator of the forced move in the Third World, for he stole the babies of Water Monster causing a great flood to drive out the people. In Zolbrod, O'Bryan, and Locke's version, the Fourth World is where the big flood happens, but it's caused by the separation of the sexes. However, in the majority of the versions of the emergence story, the Fourth World is where the separation of the sexes occurs.

### **Fourth World**

In the Fourth World there was a dispute between First Man and First Woman which caused the separation of genders. Men went to one side of the river, and women remained on the other side. The genders stayed separated for years, and as both sides saw that this wasn't working out they came back together. In one version, offerings were made to the water to repair the split and to put life back in balance. While doing this Coyote witnessed the water offering and noticed babies in the water that belonged to Water Monster, and when no one was looking, Coyote stole one of the babies. Water Monster became enraged, and summoned large white walls of water to destroy the land. The people saw the white walls and proceeded to gather their belongings and escape. The people tried planting seeds of different trees to try to reach the sky to escape, but they weren't growing tall enough. An old man, and a young man came forth and planted 32 reeds that grew tall and merged together to widen enough for people to enter and climb. In another version, a male reed is planted at first but didn't make it, so a female reed was planted by First Man, and that was what reached the top. In both stories, the people entered the reed, and climbed up and made it to the next world.

For some storytellers, this world we live in now is the Fourth World, for others, we are in the Fifth World, but both agree that the final World (until we travel to the next one) is called the Glittering World. Whether you're going by Fourth or Fifth, this final world is where most of our natural surroundings are acknowledged as created. The sun, moon, stars, fire, lodges, life, death, mountain forms, people of today and gambling were created, each having its own tale to go along with how it came to be. Here in this World is where we start to hear about the threat of monsters. They are great beings with special powers used to kill and eat humans.

## White Shell Woman

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This woman could be seen as the Messiah of our culture. What is not mentioned in either text, but was told to me by a well esteemed medicine man named Johnson Dennison, is that the Holy People (who I didn't mention too much of in the emergence section) and First Man decided to leave all their problems behind again, and journey to a new world. The men came to the agreement that this was a good idea and they all agreed on leaving. All the while the men were talking and planning, First Woman was outside of the Hogan (dwelling) and overheard everything that was said. After the meeting was over and First Man and First Woman were alone, First Woman had told First Man that what they discussed was wrong. She had told him that we can't keep running away from our problems because they will follow us and they will continue to be there, just like with the previous worlds. She told her husband that they needed to stay here and fight, especially since they took so much effort to create what is here in front of them.

First Man thought about what his wife said, and just as the sun was peeking above the horizon he went outside to look at the land that just a few hours before he wanted to leave. He stood outside of his home, and looked to the east, and he could see the strip of white light that was the sun, and he could see the darkness of the night with stars still shining brilliantly. He could see the beautiful mountains, the valleys, and hear the singing of the birds in the trees. He smelled dew, and moisture in the air, and took in all that was around him. He looked around and felt tears well up inside him, tears that come when witnessing something incredibly beautiful, something so sacred that it moves your soul. He knew his wife was right, and went back to the Holy People to tell them what they needed to do.

The council thought hard, and proclaimed that a child should be born, and this child will hold the answer to the problems that they faced. First Man was out walking near his dwelling and noticed clouds hanging low on top of Dzi[ Ch'0ol'9'9 and went to investigate. Because the threat of being eaten by monsters was very real, First Man sang traveling songs that would keep him safe from harm. He climbed to the top Dzi[ Ch'0ol'9'9 and nothing was there. This happened for the next three days, but with each day he would hear the cries of a baby and each time he reached the top there would be nothing. On the fourth day (sacred number) as he neared the top there was a flash of lightning, rainbow, and rainfall all at the same time. He reached the top and found lying in the middle of the mountain top a little baby girl. She was bound in her cradle board, swaddled in all four colors of clouds. The cradle was made of rainbow, zig zag lightning, straight lightning, and sunrays. First Man took this little baby and out of the bushes, and then Talking God appears. Talking God is a Holy being that's been present since the beginning. He plays a major role in every story but doesn't talk. He can only make a *whu* sound, much like an owl. Talking God approached First Man and made it known through mysterious magical ways (there is an actual word for this, 7I7I7k'ehgo) that he wanted to raise the child, and they argued who would be the best caretaker. First Man who was more like the child reasoned well, and was told by Talking God to make a cradle replica once they get home. The cradle replica that was made is the same one that is used today.

In four days the baby grew into a young woman and had her menses, and with this, she was given her puberty ceremony. The young woman went through her ceremony which includes running to the east every morning, not being lazy, not eating certain foods, grinding corn, and sewing husks together to make the lining of her sacred corn cake. The ceremony that was performed for her is the same ceremony that Din4 girls go through when they reach puberty. Unfortunately, not all girls do this due to family conflict with religious beliefs, finding a medicine man, time, supplies, or not being well informed of the procedures.

After her puberty ceremony White Shell Woman is courted by the Sun. The Sun is a man that travels through the sky and carries a burning bright disc from east to west. They came together and conceived twins that are to be the warriors that kill the monsters.

## Twins Journey to their Father

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After White Shell Woman married and conceived with the Sun it is said she carried the twin boys for 9 days, each day representing a month. When the boys were let into the world, it took them four days to grow into adolescent children. They would run and play around the mountain where they lived, Dzi[ N1'oodi[ii, Huerfano Mesa. They were given bows and arrows to learn to shoot, and were encouraged to run to strengthen their legs. It is said that their Grandfathers, Talking God and Black God came over to them one day and challenged them to a foot race. The grandfathers beat the young boys and informed the twins that they would return for a rematch. Through mysterious magical ways, the wind told the boys that they needed to practice running as much as they could to beat the Holy People. The boys practiced and practiced, and were faster and stronger but still got beaten by the Holy ones, and this carried on for four races. The fourth race was when the boys found their stride, and were able to keep their quick and powerful pace. The boys beat the Holy people, and the Holy people were quite pleased at the endurance, speed, strength and determination of the children.

The threat of the monsters was still very much present, and White Shell Woman always had to remind the boys of the monsters and asked that they stay close by. One day White Shell Woman noticed Walking Giant coming their way, and quickly gathered her boys and hid them inside their home. Walking Giant goes up to her home, and peeks through her doorway and asks what she's cooking for dinner. She tells him that she's making corn cake and that she's not inviting him to eat. Walking Giant told her that he didn't care for corn cake but was very interested in eating little boys. White Shell Woman told the giant that there were no boys around, and no children had been around since he had already eaten most everyone anyway. Walking Giant asked why there were children's footprints around and White Shell Woman had told them that she made them because she was lonely. Walking Giant bought her story and left the area. The boys came out from hiding and were frightened to hear and think about what could have happened. They knew that something needed to be done, and prior to this event, the boys had been asking around at who their father was. They had heard in passing that their father was a powerful man who possessed many weapons, and when they asked their mother about him, she would not tell them who he was. The boys knew they had to make a journey to find their father, and ask him for weapons to kill the monsters.

The boys left their home without much knowledge as to where to go. The boys traveled on the Holy road which is a rainbow road that through mysterious magical events, appeared at their doorway, and led them in the right direction. Although it was planned by the Holy beings for these two boys to be the warriors of the people, by no means did the Holy people make it easy for them, or give them the Holy road to travel straight to their destination, what lessons are to be learned in that?

The boys continued on their journey and came upon a hole in the ground where smoke was coming up. Curious, the brothers went to the hole and peered down and saw a little old lady sitting inside. She looked up at them and told them to come down and visit with her. The brothers used the ladder that was sticking out the of hole and into the dwelling. They shook hands and exchanged kinship. It was Spider Woman who they had met, and she welcomed her guests, her grandsons with food and revelations of who their father is. Spider

Woman told the boys of their father, how to get to his dwelling, the obstacles in the way, and how to get passed the obstacles. She taught them songs and chants that would allow safe passage, and gave the boys magic feathers that would lift them up and away from danger. She made the boys practice the chants until they knew them by heart, and warned them of tricks and paths that look safe but are meant to deceive then kill. The boys were very happy to receive such great mentorship and thanked their grandmother and made their way out. The boys began their journey to visit the sun.

The first obstacle that they came to was the Rocks that Close Together. When a traveler begins walking in the canyon, the canyon walls suddenly shut closed, immediately killing whatever was caught in between. During this time, humans, all things in nature could communicate on a different level of understanding each other, and with this in mind, the boys approached the canyon and the canyon asked them questions about their intended destinations. The boys didn't divulge much information, and stepped into the canyon, but immediately hopped back out. The canyon walls slammed shut, but missed the boys and just after the boys took out their magic feathers, recited the chant Spider Woman taught them and were allowed to pass unharmed (Zolbrod, 200). In O'Bryan's and Yazzie's version, when the boys come upon the canyon, they are taken across by the measuring worm, and sometimes tobacco worm who uses mysterious magical abilities and in doing so also gives the boys some advice about their father and presents to them two balls of his spit. The boys are instructed to put the spit balls into their mouths when it is time to smoke tobacco so they won't be killed by the poisons.

The path that the boys were on led them to a patch of reeds, and the reeds that were present were razor sharp. When a traveler approaches, the reeds would be inviting, tricking the traveler into thinking the path is clear, but once you step in, the reeds would flap about, slicing and killing the traveler. The boys knew about the dark ways of the reeds, and took a step in and quickly jumped out. The boys watched as the reeds began thrashing about, and again the reeds tried to gather as much information about their travel plans like the canyon before, but the boys wouldn't divulge and continued with their chant, and their feather for safe passage.

The boys went through the same pattern through several more obstacles like a cactus field that would grow huge and charge at each other to pierce, beat down and eat the traveler. Next was a dune of boiling sands and travelers that would climb the dune would be devoured by its quick shifting, and sudden pulling. A story that is mentioned in neither of the books, but has been told to me by Johnson Dennison is that there was also a point where the boys came to a mountain with two paths around it. One path was in the shadow of the mountain, and seems short and wide, a pleasant travel in the hot sun. The other path was long, windy, and in the sun's light. The boys were told to stay to the right, and journey in the lighted path otherwise they will face old age quickly. The boys forgot about this warning that they got at the beginning of their journey and when they came to the mountain they started on the shady trail. The further they got, the further along they aged, and suddenly they noticed the aging and quickly turned back. The boys had progressed to middle age. In some stories like Zolbrod and O'Bryan, the boys aren't aged until they meet their father.

The twins pass all the obstacles and make it to the house of the Sun, they are transported from Earth to a dwelling in the sky by a rainbow road. They arrive at the doors, and are threatened by a bear and a mountain lion as guardians of the Sun's home. A beautiful woman appears in the doorway and asks them what their business is at the house of the Sun, and the twins proceed to tell her that they are the sons of the Sun and they wish to ask him for his help. She looked at the twins and invited them in to her home. The twins saw that the house was decorated with many precious stones, furs, and animals. The twins waited with the other children of the Sun, and when it was almost time for the Sun to return they heard the sound of hoofs coming



toward the house. It was the Sun! The wife took the twins and hid them, she wrapped them up in clouds to the North of the home and put them on a shelf.

The Sun entered, and immediately looked around to search for whomever came into the home. He asked his wife who was there. He told her he saw two people come into his home around noon time. His wife then asked him where he goes during the day, she reminded him that he told her that he remained on his course and stayed true to his duty. After saying this, she told the Sun that his sons from Earth have come to see them, and she revealed to the Sun, the twins who were rolled up in the clouds.

The Sun was angered and to prove that the young men weren't his sons, he picked up the twins and threw them against the wall in all four directions, and in all four directions there were spikes sticking out of the walls. The twins weren't harmed by the spikes, and when the Sun saw this, he thought, they might be my children, but with the Sun being very skeptical, he put the young men to a series of tests. He told them that they should celebrate their coming together by smoking some tobacco. The Sun put his tobacco in his pipe and handed it to the twins, and fortunately for them, there was a small wind that spoke to them. A small voice in their ears that reminded them of the spit balls the worm had given them, and quickly, the twins put the worm spit in their mouths and smoked the tobacco. The twins smoked and smoked, and were unharmed from the Sun's tobacco. The Sun had thought to himself, they might be my children, but they might not. The Sun then told the twins that they need to take a sweat bath, especially after such a long journey, and immediately he sent his sons from his wife at their dwelling to prepare the fire, and to gather the stones for the sweat bath. The same small wind approached their ears, and whispered to them that the Sun will make it so brutally hot that they will not survive, the wind told the twins that badger will dig a hole in the lodge for the twins to hide in, and cover themselves with stones to block the heat. While in there, the twins would need to reply to the Sun to keep the Sun thinking they're sitting in direct heat of the stones. The twins did as they were told and fooled the Sun, in which the Sun was thoroughly impressed, and finally accepted that they are in fact his offspring.

The Sun then called upon his sons and daughters at his dwelling to dress the twins up in flint armor of all four colors to act as an armor, and to mold them in his image. The twins were given chiseled faces, abs, biceps, and their hair was lightly pulled to make it long and lustrous. The Sun then asked what else they needed, and offered them domestic animals, precious stones, food of all kind, but the twins had told him that although those gifts had benefit, it wasn't what they needed at that moment. The young men had seen bows and arrows of different types of lightning hanging over the door and asked the Sun for them. When asked what it was for, the twins informed their father of the dangers on earth. The Sun informed them that if he were to give them the weapons they would need to kill One Walking Giant first, and then they may go after the rest. In Kristofic's graphic novel type adaptation it is mentioned that the Giant needed to strike the first blow because the Giant is also the son of the Sun and a respectful killing was necessary. In O'Bryan, the Sun was to make the first strike, and then the twins were free to continue. With this information the twins took the gifted weapons, and were sent on a rainbow back down to earth to kill the One Walking Giant.

## **Killing the Monsters**

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The journey to the Sun has been made, and the twins now have many monsters to rid the earth of. Each monster has a dwelling, and story accompanied with it which tells of the residence, and the actions that took place to kill it. The stories vary, and the monsters will sometimes also vary depending on who the storyteller

is. It is too much to tell each of the stories corresponding with each of the monsters especially when the activities to follow should only take a week to complete. The killing of One Walking Giant must be told though, the reason it must be told is because it is the first of the many to follow, and because the rest will take much time, it is essential to at least tell one in brief. I do believe that it would take a whole semester, to tell all these stories, and have lessons attached, so in this case I will briefly describe each monster, and where it is they may be located.

### **One Walking Giant - Y4'ii Tsoh**

The twins were let off their Holy rainbow road at T0 Sidoh, Hot Springs, which is known today as Tocito. From there they walked toward Mount Taylor near Grants, NM, this is where they were told Ye'ii Tsoh lived. The twins waited for Walking Giant, and soon enough they heard his thunderous footsteps, and saw his head bobbing up and down at the horizon. Ye'ii Tsoh approached Bluewater Lake and took four drinks, nearly emptying the lake. One of the twins known as Naay44' Neezgh1n7, Monster Slayer is the slayer. He is the warrior of the two, while his brother T0 Baj7shch7n7, Child-Born-for-Water would be on the sidelines making sure his brother is kept safe by use of ritual. Monster Slayer made his presence known, and Walking Giant spotted him, and let him know that he was going to kill Monster Slayer and eat him right away. Giant threw the first blow by shooting a bolt of lightning at him, Monster Slayer was able to move and dart, and strike the Giant with his lightning bolts, straight and zig-zag. Walking Giant fell to the ground, and bled out. The twins approached his dead body, and decapitated him. Child-Born-of-Water was the one to scalp, or decapitate, and was also known as Na'7d7gish7. As the blood started to flow out, the twins got the message that the blood should not touch or else the Giant will be revived. Monster Slayer used a flint blade to block the blood tracks, and to this day the blood is evidenced in Grants as the lava flow.

### **The Horned/Antlered Monster that Charges- Deelg44d**

After the first monster that was killed (One Walking Giant) the twins drop the head of the slain with their mom, how sweet, then they're off again to the direction of the next monster which is Deelg44d. This monster is called the Horned Monster that Charges, which means that if you're walking and this monster spots you, it will charge at you like a train, and mow you down, piercing you with its horns or antlers, and stomp you to death. This monster is said to dwell at a place called Bik'i Halzhin, the Dark Plain. This monster was much too fast for Monster Slayer, he wasn't sure how he was to kill him. He sat far enough away to watch it, and make a plan. As he was planning, gopher came to him and asked if he needed help. Monster Slayer told the gopher what he wanted to do, and gopher told him that the monster's skin was like armor and couldn't be pierced, but gopher would chew his way, and dig an opening at the monster's heart for Monster Slayer to pierce with his flint knife. Gopher scurried away and dug a hole right under the monster and gnawed away at the armor. The monster was unaware of what happened and when Monster Slayer charged, he was able to duck and stab him right in the open area.

### **Monster Birds - Ts4 nin1h1l44h**

Next on the monster list are the Monster Birds, Ts4 nin1h1l44h, otherwise known as perched on top of the rock. These monsters live at a place called Ts4 Bit'a'7, Rock with Wings, and it is known as Black Pinnacle which is Southwest of Shiprock, NM. This site has been featured in such films as The Lone Ranger, and Transformers 2. The monsters can be described as two flying creatures, one male and one female, large enough to pick people up and drop them into a nest to feed their two baby monsters. The male arrives with the male rain, and female arrives with the female rain. Monster Slayer waited until he saw the monster birds leave and climbed up the pinnacle. When he arrived the babies of the monster squealed and cried, Monster

Slayer told them to be quiet and he would let them live. He asked them when their parents would be back, and they informed him of the rains. The female arrived first, and Monster Slayer drew his lightning arrow, and shot it down. The same was done for the male monster bird as well. Monster Slayer kept his promise to the babies, and proclaimed that they will be transformed into the eagle, and the owl. They are a reminder of what monsters lived on earth, and how they came to live a life of purpose and are now revered by many.

### **Monster that Kicks People Off a Cliff - Ts4 dah h0dz77[ta]ii**

This monster is said to live near the La Plata mountains, which is Dib4 Nitsaa, at a place called Ts4 deez'1h7, Tall Standing Rock. This monster that goes by the name, Ts4 dah h0dz77[ta]ii, Monster that Kicks People Off a Cliff, looks much like a giant man would. He is thought to have been a man made of rock, but when Monster Slayer approached, he saw that it was a man who was laying on his back with his legs folded in front of him. His hair was fused or a part of the mountain, like roots of tree growing from the side of a mountain. He laid at the edge of a path, and when travelers approached, he would be welcoming and inviting for those to pass in front, then when they get close, he would kick them off the mountain down to a pit where the monster's children feasted on the bodies of the kicked. Monster Slayer pretended he was going to pass in front of the monster, and jumped back each time. The fourth time is when he stabbed the monster with his flint knife, and cut the monster's hair free from the canyon that it was attached to. The body fall into the pit, and the children down below ate their father. When Monster Slayer went down to see the commotion, he caught a child and saw how ugly it was with its face smeared with blood, he tossed it toward Navajo Mountain and proposed it to be buzzard as a reminder of what once roamed the earth, and to live a new life with a new purpose.

### **Monster that Kills with its Eyes - Bin11' yee aghan7**

Bin11' yee aghan7, Monster that Kills with it Eyes is said to live at Ts4gh1lzhin7, Black Rock with a hole in it, supposedly south of Huerfano Mesa in New Mexico. In Yazzie's version it is a solo monster that hypnotizes its victim by staring at it and then eats it, in O'Bryan's version it is a family that lives in a Hogan with big, bulging eyes that also hypnotize with stares, and Zolbrod's version also mentions the family, and bulging eyes, but instead of hypnotism, their eyes expel lightning bolts. Monster Slayer enters the home of the family when he invited in, and they all begin to stare at him. Just as they start to emit their powers to kill, Monster Slayer threw salt into their eyes, and smoke blinded them. Monster Slayer then killed them with his flint knife and lightning arrows once they were rendered defenseless. These beings were then turned into flies as a reminder of their presence once before on this land.

### **Wandering Rock that Kills - Ts4 naagh1ii**

Ts4 naagh1ii is said to have lived at a place called Ts4[b1h7, or Grey Rock/Light Colored Rock, and in O'Bryan it dwells at a place called, B44sh[igai, or Shining Rock/Silver Rock. The directions of this place aren't given except for that it is near a body of water and is lured toward the San Juan River. This monster rolls, and jumps at the victim. It will rush upon the traveler and crush the body and devour it. Monster Slayer had to jump, duck, and dive to out with the rock because even though it didn't appear to have brains, it reacted quick and seemed like it knew where the traveler would move next. When the rock was destroyed, Monster Slayer proclaimed it to be of use to the Din4, it would become the flint that we use to build fires with.

### **Sleep, Hunger, Old Age, Poverty, Lice - Bi[, Dichin, S3, T4'4'9, Yaa'**

There is no specified location for where these monsters were found, and the question that I wonder is whether or not these beings could be considered monsters at all. According to Yazzie, these beings dwelled in a large

cave, or underground chamber. They all appear to be human and are a bit weathered. One of the beings was fast asleep, another being was skin and bones, another being was very, very old, another was laying on the floor with tattered clothing, and a dirty appearance, and the last had lice crawling all over him. The twins together discovered this chamber and entered with intent to kill, but one of the men begged for their lives. He had told the twins that they should be spared so that the living people on earth will appreciate what they have or face the consequences of one of the ills they represent. The twins thought about this, and agreed to let them live and this is why if you don't care for yourself you get lice, we shouldn't sleep so much, we need to remember to eat, we need to work hard to not live in poverty, and to enjoy our youth. There's a joke that people say that if you sleep in the day, or sleep in, it is Bi[ Hastiin, or Bi[ Asdz33, depending on the gender of whose sleeping, that's holding you down. Also, if you don't fix your bed you remain lazy all day because Sleepy man, or Sleepy woman is still in your bed waiting for you.

## Strategies

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The way I envision this curriculum unit is for the instructor to read the summary that is provided, and retell it to the children. Retell as if the story is a part of you is the key to making it resonate within the minds and hearts of our children. There are resources to books that provide the stories at length, but I do understand that some people do not have as easy an access as those in the Four Corners area of the United States.

October would be a good time to begin the unit, the slow transition from summer to fall is noticeable, and to the Din4, October is our New Year. For those who are non-Din4, a suggested start day would be on Indigenous People's Day, or to most, Columbus Day. With our understanding of the Discovery of New Lands, it would be great to inform our students that there were indeed people here before Columbus's arrival, and that we do have a rich culture and history which has held on through centuries of attempted erasure.

Introduce the story by letting the students know that according to literary terms, it is mythology, but for the people who carry it on, it is history. Students should be reminded to keep their ears, hearts, and imagination open when being told the story because it should be delivered orally, and if you can, without text in hand. A KWL will be the first part, or if you prefer to alter this graphic organizer to fit your lesson, it can be changed. After the story is told and first activity is done, then you can introduce text to read off of, or have them read themselves. Please remind your students that there are many versions of this story because everyone will picture, and tell just a little different.

Students will retell their stories they heard and to retell a family member about what they were told. This is to keep the thought in their mind, and to engage their family and hopefully awaken family knowledge of the story itself. Students will then illustrate a character they heard about as they see it in their imagination. Throughout the giving and retelling of these stories in each quarter, a different illustration will be made with a caption that describes what it is he/she drew. In the third quarter, having heard the story three times now, the students come up with their own short story. It can be a continuation, it can be an altered event, or they can use a monster and make it their own. Here is where they use what they know, and make a story for themselves. It is important to pass their story on orally, but it is also important to record it for those that aren't as fortunate and won't hear these stories. Your voice should be shared, and rightfully so because what you say matters, and you matter. The twins are your ancestors, and you are just as brave as them, and just like them they came into this world with a purpose, and with love for their people. Students can make a

booklet to share with someone else, someone in school, a family member, a local business, their friends, whomever.

## Classroom Activities

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The classroom activities that follow will take up to one week for each quarter, or can be reduced to two activities within one week. The activities will be provided, it is up to the Instructor to decide when and where to use what's given.

### Activity 1

Objectives: Students will use a KWL to introduce or be reminded of the story of the Warrior Twins. Students will listen then retell the story of the Warrior Twins to another person in their family.

Instructor will introduce the lesson through use of a KWL. What do you know about the Hero Twins, or the Twin Warriors? For those who won't immediately know what the Twin Warriors would be about, ease into providing who the Din4 are first, and that this is a part of their creation story, then ease into the KWL.

K                      W                      L  
(What I know) (What I want to know) (What I learned)

Instructor will then tell the story of the Hero Twins. It is advisable that the instructor must really step into the position of story teller. The story has been laid out here in this unit, but if the instructor is not confident in telling the story, or would rather have a script, *Din4 Bahane'* by Paul Zolbrod is a good book that retains a storyteller voice. It is available through Amazon, and local Navajo reservation stores that carry books. Another excellent hard copy resource would be Ethelou Yazzie's *Navajo History*. It is also available through Amazon, but in limited numbers, but it can also be purchased at the Din4 College bookstore.

Students, with the guidance of the instructor, fill in the learned part of the KWL. Review KWL, and have the students tell their parents/guardian/siblings the story they heard when they get home. For documentation, create a sign off sheet for the listener to sign off on to prove the story was told by the student.

### Activity 2

Objective: Students will listen to the story of the Warrior Twins and will choose a character from the story to illustrate by using his/her imagination.

Reread/retell the story of the Twins journey to the sun as a refresher. If you chose to purchase Yazzie, or Zolbrod's works, you may make copies of the reading to utilize in the classroom as a follow along. After the story is told/read to the students, let them think about a character that stood out to them. Let them envision what that character would look like, and let them draw a picture of what he/she/it would look like. Design the character based off what the student knows from the story. Be mindful to not show any pictures of what the twins or other characters look like from another person's perspective. Students need to keep their imagination fresh without influence from another person's interpretation.

### Activity 3

Objective: Students will listen to the story of the Warrior Twins and will choose to illustrate a scene from the story. Students will then write a one paragraph description of what's happening in the illustration.

Retell/reread the story as a reminder then students will illustrate a scene of their choosing from the story. Try to keep them from choosing the same scene if that's possible. Students will then write a paragraph for the illustration detailing what's happening. Try to encourage the use of a storyteller voice, but if not, no pressure. This is meant to be fun and smooth, not discouraging. I say this as a reminder to myself and other Din4 teachers.

### Activity 4

Objectives: Students will retell the story of the Warrior Twins to another student. Students will create their own stories using their imagination and knowledge of the Warrior Twins.

If the opportunity for your students to tell the story to a grade younger presents itself, or it could be arranged, that would be excellent. Otherwise, have the students retell the story to another classmate. Students should be feeling confident, or more at ease with retelling the story. Next, inform the students that it is their turn to create a story. It can be a continuation of a character's story from the Warrior Twins, an alternate ending, a spin-off, or a completely new set of heroes with new monsters to battle. Let the students create their own story by letting them illustrate the new characters, or new scenes, and write a short narrative to go along. Utilize a graphic organizer of your choice, and follow with the revision process of writing. Students will then tell their new story to their classmates, family members, pets, or whomever.

## Appendix

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Standards follow the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards, also known as Common Core intended for the Second grade. The standards fall under English Language Arts, and will also include standards from the Department of Din4 Education.

2.RI.7- Use information gained from the illustrations and words in print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters setting or plot.

2.W.3- Write narratives in which they recount a well elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

2.SL.2- Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally through other media.

2.W.5- With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

Standard: I will develop and apply critical thinking to establish relationships with the environment. Concept 3- I

will have respect. PO 2. I will demonstrate self-respect. PO 4. I will express and value my grandparent's Din4 way of life teaching.

Standard: I will understand and apply the Navajo Nation Laws. Concept 2- I will identify my life goals. PO 1. I will recognize the value of positive self-esteem.

## Teacher Resources

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