



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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

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## **Adapting Culture from Book to Film: Laughing Boy**

Curriculum Unit 18.03.09, published September 2018

by Jolene Smith

### **Introduction**

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The Kayenta Middle School is one of four schools within the Kayenta Unified School District. The four public schools are on the Navajo reservation located in the northeastern part of Arizona: the ABC pre-school, elementary, middle and the high school. There are about 2,000 students in the district with 92% Navajo (Dine') student population. The region is located in a rural area, and the nearest town is about 150 miles away. The community serves smaller outlying rural towns within a fifty-mile radius, busing students at four a.m. from their homes and returning home at eight p.m. to some areas. Many parents prefer their children attending the Kayenta public school because of the demands and rigor of the Common Core Standards Curriculum and the 3-12 sports program.

I teach one of the six fifth grade classes. Each classroom cluster ranges from 25 to 30 students with varied learning styles. There are general education, special education, and English Language Learner students in our inclusion classrooms. Many of our students are raised by their grandparents (cheii or nalii), or their aunts or uncles. Many Diné families reside within a large extended family, living in their grandparents' home. Some families have strong traditional ties with Diné culture and language, and some families prefer the Western Christianity belief. But, the typical knowledge parents share is that the Diné culture and language are important, and is declining rapidly.

### **Content**

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When I was a young student, I was always told to read the assigned texts. The expected literature were Basel textbooks, which are still used in our schools today. As a young girl, I always wanted to read American Indian books, and I would search for them. Towards the end of my third-grade year, my father moved me from the boarding school to the public school, whose library had many, many books. I had found one a unique edition, *The Owl in the Cedar Tree* by Scott Momaday. I read this book numerous times and felt connected with the character. When I was in fifth grade, I recall reading a social studies chapter book about Lewis and Clark exploring the West. I saw a picture of the two men standing on a cliff edge with Sacajawea pointing towards

the western horizon. I wondered who she was and I wanted to know more about her. I did not read about her until I was in high school and had found a book about her, *Sacajawea* by Anna Waldo. These experiences of searching for specific books inspired me to read when I was young. As a teacher, I give my students opportunities to share their experiences about their reading. This is how I can make connections with my students in finding out the type of genre they enjoy reading, then support and supplement their interest. Today, there are numerous resources available for students, and they need guidance in finding them. I want my students to know and see what is available in the vast collections of university libraries. I know our district requires teachers to follow their curriculum, but we can always supplement our students' enjoyment when choosing to read their selections of literature.

Our fifth grade English Language Art (ELA) curriculum will begin using the Wit and Wisdom program for our reading and writing curriculum in the coming school year. I am not particularly thrilled about this curriculum in our district because it is another scripted curriculum. The culture and language portion is not required and not a priority. I felt this is important because many of our students are predominantly of Diné heritage and needs frequent exposure to their own culture and language.

The curriculum I will be creating will be a fifth-grade literature and social study unit that will be taught to general education students, with the inclusion of Special Education students and English Language Learners. I would like my students to know and understand how adaptations from literature to movies change historical and cultural perspectives. I will use Oliver La Farge's *Laughing Boy*, published in 1920 and the film *Laughing Boy* produced in 1934. Laughing Boy is a young Navajo man living in the northern part of the Navajo reservation. He meets Slim Girl, also known as Lily, who was schooled at a boarding school off the reservation. Attending the dormitory school, she lost most of her cultural traditions and became accustomed to the Western society lifestyle. Her questionable morals with men like George Hartshorne—from whom she got luxuries were her downfall and led to her not becoming an excellent Navajo wife. Laughing Boy and Slim Girl meet at a formal gathering place, Tsé Łaní, which is currently between Pinion and Chinle on the Diné Nation. According to the novel, the dance was a four-day event, which was either a Fire Dance or Ndaa'. After the four-day ceremony, the two leave the event and eventually marry, despite the disapproval of his relatives and friends at the ceremonial event. They felt that Lily's life as a town Indian way will make her an unsuitable wife. Their marriage was a temporary due to their vast differences, and they begin to draw away from one another. Eventually, Laughing Boy learns of Slim Girl's loose morals, which ultimately gets her killed. Laughing Boy is alone again. He accepts her loss and returns to the north and to the ceremonial dances to sing again.

*Laughing Boy* the movie, did not use Diné actors and actresses. The actor Ramon Navarro, a Mexican film actor, played the role of Laughing Boy, and actress Lupe Velez, a Mexican stage and screen actress, played the role of Slim Girl and Lily. How does this change affect our understanding of the film? Does it make the movie less authentic, or is it just a directorial choice, such as showing the actor singing as in a play or an opera? The actor, Ramon, did not or could not sing the actual songs from the novel. Maybe a director decided to have him sing a song in English. I think it would have been more beautiful in Navajo with a drum. The director, W.S. Van Dyke, is known the film world as "One-Take Woody" because of his efficiency in completing a movie quickly and under budget. He has more sympathy with the American Indian portrayal on film and he was very serious about stereotypical comments and supported American Indian actors on set. In 1933, Van Dyke produced the *Eskimo*. The movie was a box office hit and led him to produce more movies. He had a big heart and helped employ people who were part of the film industry. Of course, the change of the primary roles of the characters in the movie was a significant deviation from literature and from the historical events of the Diné way of life back in the early 1900s. The two Mexican actors did not fit into the scenes because they did not look like American Indians and stood out as typical 'Hollywood Indian' personas. Their character portrayal

was not genuine or convincing. The actual Navajo Indians in the background made the movie more realistic and were connected with their culture, using the language. As I viewed the video, I was able to hear the background voices of Navajo conversations. If these actors, actress, and had director studied the Diné culture and language maybe the actors would have performed better and the production would have been a successful box office release. But the movie did not do well when it was released. It was a box office flop. Although the film did not do well in the cinema world, it is still a resource I can use as a medium for my curriculum unit.

I want my students to recognize and understand the adaptations of a book and how the characters and events are portrayed in a film. They will analyze how *Laughing Boy* and *Slim Girl/Lily* confront conflicts within their relationship because of their cultural differences and how the characters begin to change and accept each other's character traits, attitudes, habits, and demeanors. The questions will connect to the conventional idea of educational choice for self and others. Does living the Navajo way of life and living as an American make a person's life difficult during the early 1900s? How is being different not wrong? And, how the book and film weave the stereotype of what it is to be a good Navajo and how it is not good to be an American. We will discuss the cultural dance, their wedding, marriage life and *Slim Girl/Lily* to *Lily/Slim Girl*. We will address the difference between the book and film, the details of what adaptations mean and examples of how directors and viewers understand the changes.

## **Adaptations**

Novels and films are two different media. As Brigitte stated, "adaptation is a translation of text from one medium to another and often source text remains."<sup>1</sup> But the key things the books and film share are the characters, settings, and the story. In the film world, the production includes a team of movie experts and directors collaborating before, during, and after creating the movie. The challenge for the team is staying faithful to the book and thinking of the literature as a movie, a screenplay made for a film. The director has to think about how to structure the story to hold the viewer's attention for the length of the movie, which is unlike a book. There are similar features in literature and entertainment that the cinema world can use regarding technology. In order to understand the issue of adaptation, students will deal with the task of retelling the story using moving pictures, music, color, and the location of the setting.

The movie, *Laughing Boy*, used black and white as Brigitte stated during one of our seminar sessions, the human face is very important to film. The close up of the face is a major resource for film, but it does not exist in the theater.<sup>2</sup> As in the movie, Van Dyke filmed numerous facial close up shot of Slim Girl's the eyes with tears, creating an emotional connection to Slim Girl's plea. The black-and-white colors lend an element of flawlessness to the skin because of the thick black and whitest white colors. The light and dark tones of black-and-white create definite contrasts. Brigitte shared during the Akira Kurosawa clips, how the focus on the face in the frame also draws the viewer back to the bigger frame. Sometimes the viewer's eye moves directly to the face because of the amount of light on the subject. These are some of the reasons why black-and-white films should stay black-and-white and makes these films true classics.

But the film business has drastically changed with the advancements of technology. These technological adaptations make it possible to mirror literary work and films. The basic black and white films have some advantage and the same goes for color movies. The movie *Laughing Boy* attempted to stay faithful to the novel but used "mise-en-scene of lighting, texture, and the setting"<sup>3</sup> to make the background and the close up of the faces of actor/actress beautiful. In the film many of the scenes were loosely adapted because the Mexican actor and actress who played a Navajo couple in the culture were unsuited for the role of Navajo

characters. The dance, wedding, marriage, and the Slim Girl and Lily character roles are key events in the book and film that demonstrate adaptations from one of the media into the other.

## **The Dance**

*Laughing Boy* is a Navajo love story, and the 1934 movie begins with the dance. In the novel, Laughing Boy prepares to travel to the Tsé Łani to attend and sing at the dance. He enjoys the additional events that happen there, such as the singing, the horse racing, and selling his silver jewelry. In both book and movie, the character Slim Girl attends the dance, too. As she danced with other men, Laughing Boy noticed her. She is unlike the other Navajo women because of her extravagant silver and turquoise jewelry and the way she carried herself caught his attention. The difference between the novel and the film involves how the people accepted her attendance and how the dance is conducted. On the screen, the women reject her presence and tell Slim Girl to leave, and that her kind is not welcome. Then the male elders ask her to go, so she leaves the camp and finds Laughing Boy and follows him. The dance was a brief event. The dancers moved within individual circles like they are spinning around and not in a whole group, and they circled around the campfire. In the film, Laughing Boy runs off and does not complete the dance, whereas, in the book, the entire ceremonial event lasts for three days. During the dancing, the couple moves in a circle around the central fire with other dancers from the beginning to the end of the song. After they finished their dance, Laughing Boy had to pay her for the dance, which he does. Both media included details about betting and a horse race. The movie sequence shows Laughing Boy making a bet with another rider known as Redman, a Ute Indian. (What is a Ute man doing at a Navajo ceremony dance?) During the race Redman knocks him off his horse, and Laughing Boy loses the competition, thereby losing his money, bow guard, and horse. In the book chapter, Laughing Boy won the horse race and sold his jewelry.

I know, and some of my students will know, about the events that happen at these ceremonial dances. These events are sacred and will not have betting and horse racing because these ceremonies are for healing. The patient may need protection or a healing prayer and sing conducted. Betting, horse races, and contests are usually during nation fairs, like the Navajo Nation Fair, the Blanding, Chinle, Shiprock, and Tuba City Fairs which happening during the autumn season.

## **Wedding**

Another significant adaptation from the text and to the film is the couple's wedding. Both the book and movie did not elaborate on details of a Navajo wedding. A Navajo marriage begins before sundown in a newly built hooghan the men folks have constructed. As the event occurs, the groom sits in the eastern part of the hooghan, and the rest of his family sit at the northern part of the hooghan, the same goes with the bride and her family on the southern side. A wedding ceremonial process is a long event. A Navajo basket with blue cornmeal mush, the sprinkled corn pollen and the washing of the hands are the significant symbolic union for the bride and groom. These essential rituals prepare the couple for growth, home and a new family and a stronger tie to K'e. K'e is a Navajo concept for kinship as to clan, family, relatives, grandparents and great-great grandparents on both the matrilineal and patrilineal sides. At the conclusion of the ceremony, elders from both families give suggestions about how to be a good wife, husband, and parents in their new home and family. The traditional wedding is still conducted today, and some of my students' families assist with the activities. The author and the director do not elaborate on this significant event, and I believe this is an important life decision when a young couple is marrying.

Although the film implied that a wedding has happened, it was not thoroughly explained. This is another adaption between the two genres. The scenes in the movie stated a wedding has happened because Laughing

Boy's mother said they had been married for three months, and she has to learn to kill a goat. When Slim Girl could not butcher the goat, his mother stated, "Our ways will never be your ways, you have lived the life of the Whiteman too long."<sup>4</sup> Slim Girl wants to move away to their hooghan with Laughing Boy. He replied saying that they have to wait for two more years. Slim Girl suggested that they return to town so that she can sell her jewelry and rug to get more money so that the couple can move away to their own home. She was not happy living with his family.

The novel included many wedding rituals there were not reverent or essential because Slim Girl was excited and wanted the ceremony to end. They were married at the house Hartshorn had purchased. The town Indian known as Yellowhorse conducted the wedding. Yes, the Navajo basket was used, but instead of blue cornmeal mush, yellow corn was used. Laughing Boy was confused and accepted the marriage. He sang a prayer and thought they were married beautifully. Afterward, the small group ate what was available as their feast and shared whiskey with each other. The marriage was not a significant event because family, relatives, and clans were not informed or in attendance. This is unlike Laughing Boy's character because he is a traditional Navajo who believes in the Dine Circle of Life. Maybe, Laughing Boy just went along with the wedding because he knew his family did not agree with his marrying Slim Girl.

### **Married Life**

The novel displayed specific events of Laughing Boy and Slim Girl's relationship as harmonious endless lovers. Slim Girl learned the Navajo way of life by weaving rugs, residing in a hooghan, assisting her husband, and becoming a Navajo wife. In addition to her duties as wife, she traveled to the ceremonial events Laughing Boy attended. Laughing Boy's marital happiness with Slim Girl completed him as a contented husband. He was cautious when they went to visit his family in the North. Slim Girl carefully made sure she conducted herself correctly. Laughing Boy approved of her actions while interacting with his family. "Out of the corner of his eye, without seeming to pay attention, he watched Slim Girl with relish as she said and did exactly the right things, giving an excellent impersonation of just any attractive woman."<sup>5</sup> The book focused on the relationship of the couple as what an ideal couple should be. La Farge used some factual events of what a Navajo wife does within her hooghan and what a husband does to provide for the home. He most likely used his own marriage as an example of married life. Although their marriage was blissful, Slim Girl was very cautious when she returned to Los Palos and made plans to leave when Laughing Boy took his herd of horses to the range for days. Lily's return to town shows she still yearns for the American lifestyle even though she knows her marriage is wonderful. She is engaged in a tug-of-war between being a traditional Navajo and being an Anglo-American.

This is in contrast to the film scenes of Slim Girl. She was not happy residing with Laughing Boy's family in the North. His mother, sister, and grandmother required her to do many chores to help Slim Girl become an acceptable Navajo wife. The demanding tasks, such as weaving a rug with designs different from the usual designs, did not work out. Laughing Boy's mother once again says, "You have lived with the Whiteman too long, our life will never work for you."<sup>6</sup> That her in-laws tell her to do chores is not true to the culture because the couple should be residing with her family and clan and in her family's home area. But Slim Girl rationalizes with Laughing Boy, "To be different is not a bad thing,"<sup>7</sup> because she knows she is unlike other Navajo women. She tells Laughing Boy to let her trade and sell things in town to get more money to buy their hooghan, livestock, and jewelry.

## **Slim Girl and Lily**

Both the novel and movie have the character play two roles--from Slim Girl to Lily, then from Lily to Slim Girl. She can travel to Los Palos to meet with the cowboy, George Hartshorn, as Lily, then return home, changing back to Slim Girl an excellent Navajo wife. After marrying Laughing Boy, Slim Girl's goal is to play her Lily role in order to obtain more money so as to have sufficient wealth when the couple leaves to journey north to his family. Wealth here means money, silver and turquoise jewelry, and livestock (horses and sheep). The novel describes Lily's activities in the town with George and his jealousy about not having her around as much. George wanted Lily for himself. In this sense "he gave her more money than he ever had before, more than he could well afford, seeking to bind her to him, knowing that that was no way to arrive at truth, but craving, if she was lying to him, to be lied to so well he would be convinced."<sup>8</sup> Lily began to play the two roles for her own benefit: "She could shape and bend men, and she could control her destinies in theirs."<sup>9</sup> The power of controlling men became her means of gaining happiness. But each time she returns to Laughing Boy, Slim Girl was irritable, angry, and moody. She was the same irritable character Lily when she returned to Los Palos. "Feeling less sure of herself, she was over-careful, and betrayed more than ever that reserve of something withheld that belonged inevitably to her double life."<sup>10</sup>

This is unlike the movie, which included two sequences of Lily in town with George Hartshorn. The first sequence shows Lily changing from her traditional clothing to American apparel to meet Hartshorn. There is also the sequence when Lily revisits the orphanage and distributes candy to the children. She confronts the dorm supervisor and says her peace to her, "I know, fix the bed, sweep the floor, clean the kitchen, and no candy,"<sup>11</sup> then she throws the bag of candies into the air for all the children. "I know your rules, and now I don't need to follow them, and I can do what I want,"<sup>12</sup> and walks away. Lily revisiting the orphanage is how the director show empathy towards the native children. Near the end of the movie, Lily revisits George, and during this scene, Laughing Boy comes to visit her in town. When he enters the house she stays in and sees Lily with another man, Laughing Boy pulls out his bow and arrow to shoot Hartshorn and ends up killing Lily. The novel tells a different story about how Slim Girl dies: while the couple travels to the North, Red Man shoots her. He shoots his rifle from a distance aiming at Laughing Boy, but the bullet hits Slim Girl. He leaves quickly and does not know she was shot and that he killed her.

In both of the two mediums, the characters (Laughing Boy, his paternal family, the people at the dance, and his friend) reiterated and stressed that the importance of living a Navajo lifestyle is greater than living like an American to Slim Girl. Slim Girl/Lily begins to prove that living in both worlds is acceptable and can use the American ways to benefit the Navajo way of life. Her assertion that, "To be different is not a bad thing," is her justification of being able to adapt and to live in both worlds.

## **The Language of Film**

When young children watch a movie, they do not pay attention to the lighting, camera angles and movements, character placement, and setting. They focus on the quick changes of the characters or moments of action, like a chase or a fight scene. Children enjoy the colors and constant motion of an action movie. Viewing a film for them is about entertainment and family get-togethers. But students can also learn to see the film at an academic analysis level and use literature and movies as the tools for learning. Comparing and contrasting the scenes puts them into a critical analysis mode and gives them a purpose, so students learn and understand the how and why of movie production. Maybe in two or three of them it will spark their interest in working in the film world.

To understand and know how to look at movies, students need to use film vocabulary to begin to look at the screen to catch the why, how, and where of the camera's movement. This is one of the basics of watching a scene. As Brigitte mentioned during our seminar sessions, the pacing, editing, lighting, composition of the frame, camera angle (shots, cut, long take, high angle, and low angle), the placement of the human figures, and the human voice staged (the voiced lip sync) are the many film elements a student can look for when watching a film. I will focus on specific film terminology in connection with the film. For example, at the beginning of the movie, there is a long shot view of the landscape and the group of horse riders entering the valley, then the camera moves to a high angle, then pans from left to right following the horse riders.

## Strategies

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This unit will be taught for three weeks. I plan to explain it as an integrated social study unit while embedding the Diné culture and language. The English language art of listening, speaking, reading and writing will be interrelated into the curriculum unit. While teaching my unit, students will meet as a whole class, then four students in a small group for team task, then there will be independent assignments. The small groups will be heterogeneous, so the varied learning styles and academic ranges of students will supplement each other when working on team tasks.

### Movie Clips

I plan to use short clips of the movie to discuss the adaptation of events from parts of La Farge's book to the corresponding scene of the film. I will guide and model the literature read then view the movie clip and then discuss both media with regard to what the adaptations in chapter one in the novel and the first clip of the film are. Both mediums begin with the dance, a cultural adaptation. The "think pair share" strategy is used to differentiate instruction. It gives students time to think about the topic so as to come up with an idea, then shares their thoughts with a partner. The two partners share their point of views about the film's adaptation of the novel, focusing on the dance as cultural. The strategy promotes participation and gives me a quick assessment to see and hear what students are generating about the topic read and seen. It helps students to develop a coherent understanding of the given subject and makes them able to accept other students' points of view. I will use this strategy for the other topics: the wedding, married life, and Slim Girl and Lily.

### Characterization Strategy

Characterization is a strategy the author or director uses to reveal the personality of the character directly or indirectly. Careful thought to characterization will allow students to think differently about the role(s) and to make connections to human nature as an actual human. We begin with the basics, then move to the critical analysis of the creative technique. The examples below are Slim Girl's components of her personality as a character.

The physical description is the most basic and is not complicated. Students describe what and how they see the character(s). For example, Slim Girl, petite, wears many bracelets and necklaces.

Names can tell a lot about a character's cultural background, educational and professional status and where they live. Slim Girl lives with Laughing Boy and lives in a hooghan. She is thin and petite but strong. Lily lives in Los Palos in a house and has an American name.

Actions show how the character(s) act physically or verbally and how they interact with other characters. Their behavior specifies whether they are humble or arrogant, good-natured or mean-spirited, sympathetic or selfish, cultured or rude. Lily wants power and knows how to manipulate a man for her benefit. She uses Hartshorn to obtain money for her personal goals. Slim Girl intends to relearn her culture to be a good wife because she loves Laughing Boy.

The environment is the world in which the character lives or has lived. Slim Girl live in a semi-desert region of northern Arizona. She lives in a hooghan with Laughing Boy. Lily lives in a small town known a Los Palos across the railroad tracks.

Interests are essential in characterization. Certain personality types fit certain kinds of benefits, like a chess player may have different attitude toward life than a fast-paced video player. A rock climber views life from a different angle than a surfer on a beach. Slim Girl wants to be an excellent Navajo wife. She learns the ways of living in a hooghan like weaving a rug and cooking for Laughing Boy. Lily wants money and to live like the Americans in town. She sleeps on a bed, sits on a chair, and dresses in American clothes.

Mannerisms are gestures, postures, and repetitive behaviors. They can be annoying, strange, and lovable or any way the character is viewed in the literature. At the beginning of the novel, Slim Girl is demanding and wants to dance with Laughing Boy. She does not give up, and she annoyed Laughing Boy.

Attitude describes how a character looks at life's events, obstacles, and faults. A character views other characters and experiences with a positive, negative, biased, superior or neutral attitude. Slim Girl did not like the idea of visiting his family because her thoughts of them were negative. Lily did not like visiting Hartshorn because she got married and preferred Laughing Boy.

Dialogue is the way the character says the words they say to others. The words they use can be intelligent, ignorant or academic language. The speed of talking can express nervousness or relaxation. If the speech is hesitant, the character may be shy or telling lies or may speak another language. Slim Girl was careful when talking to Laughing Boy's mother. Lily spoke loudly and laughed when she was with Hartshorn.

Thoughts show the true feelings of a character. Are they confident or insecure, happy or sad, frightened or brave, honest or dishonest? Slim Girl felt delighted when they were married. Lily was delighted when Hartshorn purchased a new dress for her.

When other characters in the story view the main character, they can react to him or her any way they choose. They can admire, hate, envy, and feel uneasy, excited, anxious, angry or scared around him or her. The characters can view him or her differently from the way he or she sees him or herself. Laughing Boy's family saw Slim Girl as different because she is known in the town of Los Palos. But Laughing Boy still loved her.

Our past experiences make us what we are. Your character is the result of everything that has happened to you in your life. Give your style a unique history to which you respond in a unique way and you will have a memorable character. Slim Girl relearns to weave a rug, although it had strange geometric designs. Laughing Boy liked her rug. Lily knows how to make more money from selling her turquoise jewelry.

### **Process Grid Strategy**

A Process Grid Strategy is model created from the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), Marcia



Brechtel's book. It is a grid with categories across the top and down the side of the table. The teacher writes what the students say in the appropriate box grid based on the information learned from prior discussion, categorizing, evaluating and compare and contrast. Afterward, this activity is extended to writing an expository paragraph. Below is an example of how I use this strategy. The critical idea is to teach students how to use this grid. Teach them slowly and while you scaffold the plan.

Adaptation Dance Wedding Marriage Slim Girl Lily Laughing Boy

Novel

Movie

## Classroom Activities

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### Think-Pair-Share Activity

Before introducing the Think-Pair-Share strategy to the students, I decide on a critical question for my lesson. In this lesson the adaptation of film from a literary text is the focus. The essential question and additional questions will help target fundamental concepts that your students have been studying. For example, write and share with students the question: How does adaptation from the film change the outcome and how does it make connections to the text? Next, describe the strategy and purpose with the students, and provide steps for discussions. Explain to students they will (1) think about a topic or answer to a question, (2) pair with a partner and discuss the problem or subject, and (3) share ideas with the whole class. Then I model the step to make sure my students understand how to use the strategy. Give students time to ask questions so that they can conduct the questioning activity. Once my students follow my expectations for using the procedure, I will monitor and support students as they go through the steps below. Teachers may also ask students to write or diagram their responses while doing the Think-Pair-Share activity. Think: I begin by asking a higher-level question about the text or film students will be discussing. Students need to "think" about what they know or have learned about the topic for a given amount of time (about 1-2 minutes).

Pair: One student will be paired with another student. I may choose or assign pairs, or let students pick their partner. Be cognizant of student needs and skills in reading, attention, language, and behavior when pairing them. Students share their thoughts about the question with their partner, discuss ideas, and then ask questions to their partner about their views on the topic (2-5 minutes).

Share: Once partners have sufficient time to share their thoughts and have a discussion, I open the debate to the whole class. This allows each partner to present their thoughts, ideas, and questions they had to the class. After the "share," I have pairs share again to talk about how their thinking changed while listening to other partners.

### Characterization Activity

Characterization is an activity students will generate on a graphic organizer, focusing on one or two characters in literature and a film. Students will need to analyze the personality of characters directly or indirectly and closely. They will need to think carefully about characterization to make connections to the role of an actual human. They begin at the primary level to the critical level.

## CHARACTERIZATION

LAUGHING  
BOY      REDMAN

The physical description

Names of the character(s)

Actions of the character(s)

The environment is the world in which a character lives or has lived

Interests are important in characterization

Mannerisms are gestures, postures, and repetitive behaviors.

Attitude describes how a character looks at life's events, obstacles, and faults

Dialogue is the way the character say words they say to others.

Thoughts show the true feelings of a character

How other characters in the story view the main character, since they can react to him or her any way they choose

Our past experiences make us what we are

### Process Grid Activity

Students fold a blank sheet, then draw a line horizontally and vertically to create boxes for the process grid. The labels are across the top and down the side of the network. The students brainstorm, discuss and share information they have learned. After coming to a consensus, students begin to fill in the boxes, writing in the correct knowledge gained from the previous lesson taught. Afterwards, this activity is extended to writing an expository paragraph.

Character Analysis Slim Girl Lily Laughing Boy George Hartshorn Redman Laughing Boy's mother

Novel

Movie

## Teacher Resources

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## Endnotes

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1. Peucker, Brigitte. Intensive Seminar Session July 2018
2. Peucker, Brigitte. Intensive Seminar Session July 2018.
3. Peucker, Brigitte. Intensive Seminar Session July 2018
4. Peucker, Brigitte. Intensive Seminar Session July 2018.
5. Van Dyke, W. S. director, *Laughing Boy*, Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1934
6. La Farge, Oliver. *Laughing Boy* p.99
7. Van Dyke, W. S. director, *Laughing Boy*, Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1934
8. La Farge, Oliver. *Laughing Boy* p.132
9. La Farge, Oliver. *Laughing Boy* p.133
10. La Farge, Oliver. *Laughing Boy* p.135
11. Van Dyke, W. S. director, *Laughing Boy*, Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1934
12. Van Dyke, W. S. director, *Laughing Boy*, Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1934

## Appendix

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### Arizona History Standards

Students will explore the historical concepts of exploration and colonization. They will know the various Native American tribes who have resided and reside throughout the North American continent. Along with learning about the native tribes, students will describe the ways European colonist adapted and used the environment. (S4.C5.PO1)

The student will identify how exchange helps the buyers and sellers as a method of trade in early North America. (S5.C1.PO3)

American History is essential for students to analyze our nation's experience through time, to distinguish the relationships of events and people, and to interpret significant patterns, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in Arizona and American history. Students will apply the teachings of history to their lives as

respectable citizens of the United States. (5.S1)

Students will examine topics or questions related to historical studies and current issues as historical research. By using primary and secondary sources effectively, students gain accurate and relevant information. They will be able to understand past events and to apply their analysis of cumulative events. (S5.C1)

### **Diné Government and History Curriculum Grades 4th-6<sup>th</sup>**

Students will understand the connections between their own culture, sacred sites, and historical events. They will demonstrate their cultural knowledge shared with their family. (5.C2)

Students will understand the integrity of their culture, language, and values that are protected and sustained by the Diné. They will identify the teachings of Diné culture and history. (5.C4.PO2)

### **English Language Arts Standards**

These standards are a brief overview of the skills a student will learn in fifth grade. Each rule is applied to increased focus as a progression to challenge students when comprehending texts and applying tasks.

#### **Reading Standards for Literature**

Students will independently and proficiently read grade-appropriate literature from a variety of genres then advance to a complex novel. While reading the works of literature, students will determine themes, author's use of figurative language, a quote from the text, compare and contrast, analyze text structures and elements of literature.

#### **Reading Standards for Informational Text**

Students will read and analyze grade informational text from a variety of content areas: history/social studies, science, and technical documents. Then determine to mean from reading and to summarize informational text accurately and integrate information from a variety of books to learn different points of view.

#### **Writing Standards**

Students will write an opinion and critical pieces that include evidence to support ideas, transition words, precise vocabulary and a conclusion.

Students will write narratives that include a precise sequence of events, descriptive details, dialogue, and words that show a change in time. Then plan, draft, revise and edit to produce clear and coherent writing for the opinion, explanatory and narratives.

#### **Speaking and Listening Standards**

Students will collaborate in discussions while effectively speaking and listening to topics, ideas, facts, details, and multimedia. They will prepare for debate by reading and studying the required materials, and to paraphrase information from a wide range of sources.

## Language Standards

Students will demonstrate mastery of grade level conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and to construct paragraphs that include an introduction of the topic, supporting details, and conclusion. Also use knowledge of Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots to determine the meaning of unknown words and meaning of idioms and figurative language.

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