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AIM and Native American political activism in the 20th century

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by Jolene Smith

Introduction

Native Americans have been living on the North American continent for thousands of years. They were moved from the lands they occupied onto reservations established by the US government in the 1800s. The forced movement traumatically affected tribes and wiped out clans and whole families. Today, federally recognized tribes work with the government to obtain funds to sustain the tribes. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a government agency, was established to assist the tribal government in distributing funds to sustain the tribes. Although the BIA agency assisted, many tribes lacked basic living standards. For example, running water and electricity were not in many homes. The tribal office has voiced these concerns, but their voices and advocacy did not travel far up the BIA ladder. Eventually, some individuals stepped up to fight the struggles for the primary living standard on the reservation. These individuals created a movement known as the American Indian Movement (AIM). These leaders became prominent figures who fought for better housing, better health care, native language and culture education, and treaty rights.

Many tribes signed numerous treaties with the government during the 1700s to the 1900s. The government did not recognize most treaties unless the tribes stayed on their reservation. The last treaty signed was when tribes agreed to stay on their reservations, and then the government provided for their livelihood. The government did not support many tribes in urban areas near large cities. These tribes relied on the churches because churches use American Indians to get funds. Many examples of how the government helped the tribes were not suitable for many tribal families, like the food distribution program known as the monthly commodity trucks. I remember these trucks parked at the chapter house distributing cases of can food. Some of the cans were outdated and were not suitable to eat.

I want my students to know native historical events and native leaders who made changes for the good of their people. I want my students to understand how and why the American Indian Movement (AIM) formed a coalition to help their tribal community and helped other tribes across the nation. They will learn how AIM informed other tribes using the news networks and how the leaders help individuals and families in need and fight police brutality and white community members who dislike American Indians. My students will learn about the AIM influential leaders and read about the leaders' lives, objectives, and causes in how the leaders stood for Indian rights.

My students are fifth graders, and the majority of them are Diné who live in the town of Kayenta. However,

some students reside in outlying areas that are about 25 to 70 miles away from school. These students are bussed from their homes and to school during their school day. For example, Rough Rock is about 70 miles one-way and one-hundred forty-mile round trip. That is many miles for students to travel to school. Other outlying areas are Dennehosto, Chilchinbeto, Baby Rock, Black Mesa, Tsegi, Cow Springs, Betatakin, Shonto, Diversion Dam, Oljato, and Monument Valley. Families in these outlying areas prefer to have their child(ren) attend the Kayenta School District because of its resources like Chromebooks, hotspots, delivered breakfast and lunches and learning packets for online distance learning.

Rational

Historical biography is a topic I know will interest my students because learning about individual Native Americans who made a difference in improving their tribe regarding family needs, cultural and language preservation, police brutality in border towns and urban cities, and working the BIA. These Native Americans have stepped up and informed the public and the world about the treatment of their tribes.

I chose the topic of AIM because they helped struggling native families across the nation. When native people needed help, they called the AIM leaders, and they would come. I want my students to read, write, and view video clips about the AIM leaders and how they overcame their obstacles and stepped up to overcome their struggles for their tribe. In our Diné culture, we tell our students, “T’aa hwo ajit’eeh go adoolneel,” meaning it is up to you to decide what needs to be done or do what you need to do.

I will use various classroom strategies and activities to help students comprehend the content with engaging stories about these leaders. In addition, strategies and activities like scaffolding, frontloading information, pictorial visuals, repetitive phrases, chunking information, color-coding and songs, rap, & chants in Diné will help students stay focused and engaged. Using these classroom approaches will help the student absorb and remember the content while learning about the content. When I teach these strategies, I create and use colorful graphic organizers with thoughtful, engaging examples of various topics.

Content Objective

My fifth-grade unit will encompass integrated Social Studies, English Language Arts (ELA), and Diné culture and language. My students will learn and read about how and why the American Indian Movement leaders established their movement. I will focus on four leaders of AIM because they were prominent native figures during the 1970s. I want students to understand how these leaders addressed tribal concerns with the US government. My students will view short news snippets of the AIM activities then we will discuss the video. Students will repetitively interpret other tribal vocabulary words and align them with the Diné language for the ELA portion. My students will keep an interactive journal about their learning, complete a compare, and contrast summary about the key events and leaders when writing. In addition, I want students to begin thinking about issues relevant to the Diné reservation. My students will think and decide how they can begin to solve some problems on the reservation. Students can solve problems within their communities (remember, many of my students come from outlying areas about 50 to 70 miles from Kayenta). At the end of my unit,

students will share their learning with their families and communities to evaluate what leaders and movements can benefit them.

Below are fundamental questions students need to know as an enduring understanding:

1. What qualities make a good leader and why?
2. What made the AIM leaders so influential?
3. Think of how the leaders of AIM solve tribal issues. How would you solve a tribal problem?
4. AIM leaders were determined and committed to their causes. Write something that you are passionate about and explain that you could lead others to care about your cause.
5. Who is a great leader, and how do they inspire you?

Content

The American Indian Movement (AIM)

AIM movement was established in the late 1960s and has continued into the 20th century. Today, Mr. Clyde Bellecourt still runs the American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council. The Autonomous Chapters of the American Indian Movement are located in Denver, Colorado, established by Russell Means.

The AIM leaders were unsatisfied with how their people were living since they were forced onto reservations and into urban cities. The BIA had informed many tribes to move to the cities. They were promised a place to live with government stipends. Therefore, many tribal families and AIM leaders took advantage of the idea of living in the cities. Congress approved the Indian Removal Act, and their goal was to assimilate Native Americans into the cities to integrate into the white communities. The government's plan was not what the Indians expected as living in the city. Families lived in rundown apartments or hotels and could not obtain jobs and quality education for their children.

Dennis Banks was wary of how the Indians were treated, especially the police brutalities. He was sent to prison for stealing six bags of food. While in prison he heard, people were demonstrating and voicing their rights concerns, and he thought, what about the Indians. Where are we? We should be out there demonstrating our issues and causes, too. After Banks was released from jail, he decided to do something about native issues.

He created leaflets, informed people of a meeting. The people met in a basement of an old church. About two hundred people attended, and one of them was Clyde Bellecourt. The two, Banks and Bellecourt, were nominated leaders for AIM. Russell Means and John Trudell came later. Many women also contributed to the movement.

Among these were Pal Bellanger, an original AIM member whose nearly fifty years of service to the movement near her nickname "Grandma AIM": Sarah Bad Heart Bull, who was beaten and jailed in Custer, South Dakota, while protesting her son's murder; and Anna Mae Aquash, a member of the Mi'kmaq First Nation who left her family in Canada during Wounded Knee, where she took up arms and fought alongside the men.¹

The newly formed coalition, the AIM Patrol, was from the Black Panther members in San Francisco. The focus of AIM was to help the urban Indians in Minneapolis remedy and aid the victims of police abuse. They established a Legal Rights Center, the Indian Health Board, and the Heart of the Earth Survival School.

Eventually, AIM widens its focus to the national level. Individuals from various tribes would call upon the AIM leaders to assist with their cause, issue or be visible at the site. Alcatraz, Pine Ridge Reservation, The Black Hills, The Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, The Trail of Broken Treaties, and The BIA take over are some of the well-known events AIM had actively participated in and attended.

Alcatraz

The Alcatraz take over began in 1969 to 1971, which was a 19-month occupation. The goal of the takeover was to obtain the deed and return the island to the Native Americans. After the Alcatraz takeover, the natives disseminated and returned to their lives, but this event initiated an additional takeover of other sites by Native American Indian activists.

Pine Ridge

The Pine Ridge Reservation killings and trials during the 70s were troubled times for Sioux tribes because the tribal governments and the US would not help the local families that needed protection. The tribal president, named Dick Wilson, was a man of personal gains focusing on his family and relatives to work with him on tribal funding and programs. Anyone on the reservation who opposed him was killed or seriously injured. Russell Means, an AIM leader, was informed of the incidences on his reservation. He and other AIM leaders were in attendance during some of the court hearings. The outcome ended in the white men serving time, which was rare because the men usually did not go to prison.

Black Hills

The Black Hills was the heart of Lakota land and where Mount Rushmore is located. In 1971, AIM and groups of Native Americans occupied the carved presidents on Mount Rushmore. The purpose of the occupation was to honor the 1868 treaty. The natives claimed the area was again native land. From the Native American perspective, Mount Rushmore symbolized broken promises of theft of land and genocide from the four presidents

Mayflower and Plymouth

The Mayflower ship and Plymouth Rock are historical relics, which marked the settlement of Pilgrims onto the new land from England. Russell Means, Dennis Banks, John Trudell, and Anna Aquash, AIM leaders, intruded onto a Thanksgiving event in 1970. The event marked the 350th anniversary of Pilgrims on the Mayflower landed at Plymouth Rock. The AIM group invaded the area to voice their concern of Native American's point of view about the two historical symbols. The AIM leaders informed the new media to explain the real meaning of the markers.

Wounded Knee

During 1970, AIM leaders occupied Wounded Knee for about seventy days. The purpose of the takeover was to impeach the Oglala Lakota tribal president, Dick Wilson, and to review and enforce the treaty rights. AIM considered Wilson's tribal government corrupted and not for the benefit of the tribe. The AIM leaders informed the news media and Wilson's political deeds and how the US government did not comply with tribal treaties.

Federal law enforcement, the US marshals, and national guards block the entrance into Wounded Knee to ward off food and necessity supplies, the news media, and supporters for the cause. The AIM leaders established their base in a church and at a trading post at Wounded Knee. As a result, two AIM leaders were killed, an FBI agent wounded, and demands were not met. Nixon was occupied with the Watergate scandal. Historically, the Wounded Knee standoff was the most prolonged civil disorder in 200 years, and it inspired the indigenous people and young activists.

Trail of Broken Treaties

The Trail of Broken Treaties was a long walk to inform the government to fulfill the treaty promises to the Native Americans, which was initiated in 1972. The AIM leaders began the walk in Washington State and California and ended in Washington DC. When the crowd arrived in Washington, they had no place to stay. A previous agreement with government officials and Means was made before Washington's arrival. Bellecourt and Means decided to go to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building to ask about the accommodations. They ended up overtaking the building for about a week. When the police arrived, AIM barricaded the facility and requested a top government official to hear their demand. They had formulated a twenty-point position paper of their needs. Although most of these points dealt with re-establishing treaty relations and sovereignty, a request for respecting our spirituality was made.²

The Nixon administration agreed to consider their demands and paid for their return home. The actions of AIM damaging the BIA building and taking all of the essential documents became the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) watch. The action made AIM a target of COINTELPRO, the FBI's covert operations meant to disrupt domestic political organizations.³

Aftermath

A shoot-out happened at Jumping Bull's home with AIM, and two FBI agents and one AIM supporter were killed. The incident causes the FBI to arrest and interrogate the AIM supporters and leaders. Anna Mae Aquash was a prominent female leader with AIM, and she was targeted as an FBI informant. Many of the AIM leaders were interrogated, which caused infighting among the leaders. Russell Means was distraught that one of their own was killed, Anna Mae Aquash. He blamed Bellecourt and Banks for letting it happen. Means finally left AIM and started a branch in Denver.

Both movements still exist today and still have a common goal in helping the Indians with housing, jobs, education, ceremonial and religious rights, and sacred sites.

AIM Leaders

I chose the four leaders because they were very influential and active in the AIM movement. Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, Russell Means, and Anna Mae Aquash demonstrated their dynamic force and voiced their concerns to the government about the treatment of Native people in the United States. They believed they could make changes in Indian lives and bring back traditional beliefs, language, and culture. I know students will connect with these leaders because they hear and see issues and concerns from their family members who work in specific worksites like the Indian Health Service, Tribal Offices, government facilities, and the local township. My students usually share what family members were stressed about, like equity, promotion, and female rights.

Dennis Banks

On April 12, 1937, Dennis Banks was born at Federal Dam on Leech Lake Indian reservation in Minnesota. He died on October 27, 2019. His grandparents, aunt, and older siblings raised him. His mother remarried, and he had never met his father. At the age of five years, he and his siblings were taken away to a boarding school. As he aged, Banks was transferred to another boarding school further away in South Dakota. He ran away from the school many times and was caught and returned to the school. When Dennis was in eighth grade, and ran away again but made it home this time. He stayed on the reservation to help his grandparents trap lines, chop wood, make maple syrup, and harvest wild rice.

By seventeen years, Banks enlisted to the air force. He was stationed in Japan, and while there, Dennis married a Japanese girl and had a daughter. He was ordered to return to the states and was discharged from the air force. He tried numerous times to return to Japan and failed because of a lack of money. He eventually stayed in St. Paul and Minneapolis, hitting bars and drinking.

His drinking and being arrested was a routine, and the mistake he made was shoplifting. He was caught for shoplifting and ended up in prison. While in prison, he read about movements voicing their concerns to the news media. Banks thought, where are the Indians and their plea for native rights are. After his release, Banks had his first meeting in a basement of a rundown church. There he educated himself about Indian history and saw a need for an Indian Movement to address Indian issues, like police brutality, housing, and employment in Minneapolis.

Thus, the AIM movement began with Banks as their initial and influential leader. Banks initiated 'The Trail of Broken Treaties,' a walk from the west to the east coast. Dennis participated in actions that affected Indian lands with fishing rights, sacred sites, police brutalities, religious and ceremonies rites, and the 1800 treaties. He participated in other movements like Mount Rushmore, the May Flower, Plymouth Rock, BIA Headquarters, Wounded Knee, the Hopi/Navajo Joint Use Area, Leech Lake fishing, and harvesting rites.

Banks believes that with all the movements voicing their concern, what about the American Indians? For everyone who had taken in the Trail of Broken Treaties, the takeover had been a victory.⁴ For the first time, members of some two hundred tribes have acted together for a common cause.⁵ Many of his activities were radical, but Banks felt he made a difference in displaying leadership with the AIM movement. He opened the eyes to the younger generation to change their lifestyle in holding onto the old way of living and blending them with the modern Western life.

Clyde Bellecourt

Clyde Bellecourt was born on May 8, 1936. Clyde stated, "I am a member of the Mississippi Band of the Great Anishinaabe Nation. I was born and raised on the White Earth Reservation in northwestern Minnesota."⁶ The US government calls his people Chippewa. As a youth, Bellecourt had problems with school and eventually dropped out. He and his friend were involved with burglaries and robberies and ended up in the juvenile system. He is tall for his age. At 16, the system moved him into a regular adult prison system with hard criminals. His parents were informed that Clyde would be in the system for a couple of years. He ended up in the prison system longer than expected. While in prison, Bellecourt took up boxing, attended classes for his education. He wanted to be a certified license to run a power plant. He was unhappy with the prison system and went on a hunger strike; he fasted for over thirty days. His fasting earned respect from other native prisoners. While in prison, Bellecourt established cultural gatherings for the natives beginning with a drum.

The songs help the men gain self-esteem and start a cultural restoration program.

After his release from prison, Bellecourt changed his life to help his people with education and restore cultural practices. He realized that women were at the forefront.

The women were raising the kids; they looked the future in the eye every day. It was always the women who stood up for the movement, even though many never received credit for their contributions. The Anishinaabe and many other Indigenous cultures recognized the women as the true leaders, the ones who select our leaders.⁷

While in Minneapolis, Bellecourt had his group of natives formed their organization, and at the same time, Dennis Banks had his group. Banks had invited Bellecourt to his meeting and heard about the unlivable conditions of the Minneapolis natives. The two leaders clashed, but when issues arose with natives like attacks of police brutality, poor housing, education of native children, and unemployment, the two leaders joined forces to tackle the problems. Both leaders knew that they would vanish if they did not do anything about their people. Eventually, the two groups named themselves the Concerned Indian American Coalition.

Eventually, they changed their name to the American Indian Movement because Indians were aiming to do this or that. Bellecourt was not happy with the organization's name; he wanted to change it because the acronym was CIA. An older woman at the meeting suggested calling their group AIM. Bellecourt did not like the word Indian as the name for people in India. The older woman stated the name Indian oppresses us, and we can use it to free us, which made sense to Bellecourt.

Clyde Bellecourt has been the key leader for AIM, and he has done many good things for the American Indian. After Wounded Knee, AIM was no longer in the spotlight with the news media. Today, Bellecourt made sure the AIM chapter in Minnesota continues to upgrade the conditions of Indian people in the urban cities. The health care, education, and welfare were established like the Native American Clinic and Indian Health Care Board, American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council, Federation of Native Controlled Charter School, Legal Right Center, Migizi Commutations, National Coalition against Racism in Sports and Media, and Little Earth of United Tribes.⁸ These entities in urban cities gave the Indian people purpose and security while living in the city's outlying areas.

Bellecourt continues to sustain AIM within the Great Lakes and Minneapolis regions. Bellecourt had a rough life when he was young, but he climbed out of the miserable education of boarding schools and prison life. He founded the AIM movement, and Bellecourt did what he could to protect the sacred land and regain the natural resources native people used to sustain their living. His goal was to have native people gain self-determination and to gain self destiny.

Russell Means

Russell Means was born on November 10, 1939, at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota. He died in his hometown at Pine Ridge at the age of 72. Russell Means was an Oglala Sioux Indian. Means' first encounter with AIM was when he was organizing a Cleveland Indian Center. Dennis Banks called Means and invited him to a convention of churches in Detroit. They wanted his support and knew Means was a good speaker. They introduced themselves, and Means was given a pamphlet explaining the AIM. He glanced over the literature, and the quotation got his attention. The quote was from Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé. The quote read:

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free

to choose my teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think, and act for myself—and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty.⁹

Means stated, “Those words nailed me. Although I could not articulate it, from that moment, I was for AIM with all my heart and soul.”¹⁰ While at the convention of churches, Means met Dennis Banks and Clyde Bellecourt. The two were examples of what native leaders of AIM Means looked for in defending native rights. If Dennis and Clyde could work for their people every day to reverse centuries of oppression and racial injustice, so could I.¹¹ AIM’s actions against the churches, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and educational system initiated Means role as a leader.

Means eventually left his position with the ‘Cleveland American Indian Center’ and began his involvement in numerous AIM causes that helped the Indian people. His focus centered in Dakota areas where the tribes experienced strife from their chairperson and other local issues within the reservations.

Russell Means was an outspoken, stoic, radical, aggressive, and passionate leader for the Indian cause. Means and AIM members invaded and took over monumental places called Mount Rushmore, located in the Black Hills, a sacred area to the tribes. Banks and Means seized the Mayflower and occupied courthouses in numerous sites to defend Indian rights. The core leaders, Bellecourt, Banks, Means, occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs Headquarters in Washington DC and took many records. The most prolonged hold was overtaking Wounded Knee. Means stated, “For the first time in generations, we had stood up to the white man. A few hungry people with shotguns and hunting rifles had taken everything the US government dished out for seventy-one days—and most of us had lived to tell about it.”¹² Means was very passionate with AIM’s to inspire change and have native people take control of their own lives and not have BIA direct their livelihood. He acted in movies and TV series, conducted speeches at conventions, presented to congress, created numerous videos about his belief in mother earth, and informed the US government’s treatment of the American Indians.

Anna Mae Aquash

Anna Mae Aquash was born on March 27, 1945, on the Micmac reserve, five miles outside Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.¹³ Anna lived with her two sisters and her mother. Her mother worked as a housekeeper and babysat for friends in return for room and board, food for her daughters. Anna completed her education up to ninth grade.

Eventually, Anna left with Jake Maloney (a Micmac) to Boston. While in Boston, she married and had two daughters. Anna was concerned for other Micmacs who lived in Boston. She became increasingly intent on doing something for her people, particularly the youngsters who dropped out of school without skills and a future.¹⁴ Her concerns were expressed more and more. Soon, tensions arose between the couple because of Jake’s extramarital affairs. The breakup of their marriage caused her to spend more time at bars and in jails. She and her friends began a small group program of alcoholics. The group became the Boston Indian Council (BIC). They took part in the Mayflower demonstration, which linked the east coast Indians with AIM.

Anna left her sewing job. That fall, Anna Mae left the Elvin Selow factory to teach at TRIBE (Teaching and Research in Bicultural Education), an Indian learning and cultural center near Bar Harbor, Maine.¹⁵ In November 1972, Anna Mae and others from the Boston Indian Council join the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington which climaxed AIM’s Trail of Broken Treaties caravan.¹⁶

From the demonstrations, Anna met Nogeeshik Aquash. After meeting him, Anna's character and attitude changed because she was earnest with what she wanted to do. She knew there was more out there. When the occupation of Wounded Knee took place, the couple took advantage of traveling to South Dakota. They camped at Crow Dog's Paradise. Crow Dog's camp harbored food, medical supplies, and weapons from outside supporters. Anna and others smuggled the needed supplies into the Wounded Knee camp. She was comfortable at the camp and a hard worker. Anna dug bunkers and took part in the nightly patrols. She remained calm during the firefights. She considered herself a female warrior and did not hesitate to take one work usually done by the men.¹⁷

While at the camp, the two married in a traditional Sioux ceremony. The ceremony made her determined to live an Indian way of life. Her participation at Wounded Knee marked her as a person dedicated to Indian struggles and established her as an AIM sympathizer and supporter.¹⁸ Anna Mae and Nogeeshik Aquash left Wounded Knee before the occupation ended on May 8, 1973, after spending about a month in the occupied village.¹⁹

Anna was well established with the AIM and took on many responsibilities and decision-making of policies and programs. When she believed in an idea—such as the need for solid ongoing programs to back up the dramatic confrontations that had become AIM's trademark—she pushed them aggressively and relentlessly.²⁰ Anna was looking into the future for the younger generation to become future leaders of AIM. She believed new leaders should continually emerge, regenerating AIM's momentum, strengthening the movement, and broadening its appeal.²¹ Anna believed that female leaders could make a difference in supporting the AIM movement. Her passion is sharing her goals to bring young leaders to learn and see what the movement can do in leadership and establish future goals for the native people.

From the comparative safety of community organizing in Boston, Anna Mae Aquash entered a far deadlier political environment due to her participation at Wounded Knee.²² Anna knew the dangers of her involvement with AIM and the dangers of the interrogation from the FBI. However, she trusted the movement and organized events and attended many AIM meetings with the key leaders.

Teaching Strategies

As I teach my unit, I want my Navajo students to know about native leaders who have made changes with their tribes even though some of these leaders had to conduct radical actions to get the attention of the US government. These leaders share personal experiences shared with others because the majority do not know their activities and causes. Many American Indian tribes have differences and have some similarities within their language and culture. For example, I am reading about Clyde Bellecourt's autobiography, *The Thunder Before the Storm*. In one of the chapters, he mentions wolf in his language, and our Dine language wolf has the same wording ma'ii, which was very interesting. I will use some of the literature I have read within my teaching, create pictorial charts about each leader, and then create a chant/song about them. Therefore, when students sing the pieces, they will remember who they are and what they have done to help their people and all natives.

I will use books, videos, newspaper clippings, and interviews to help students understand more about AIM and

today's movement and leaders. Students will interview their grandparents to see if they know about AIM events. The interviews will give the class new insights into the movement. For example, I know Gloria Grant-Means resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and her parents live in Chinle, Arizona, which is not far from Kayenta. She will be one of my interviews to gather more information about Russell Means.

Narrative Input Chart

I teach fifth-grade students, and many of my Navajo students are visual. A narrative input chart focuses on strong oral language tradition like native storytelling. Critical language skills are used in the story format. The story format allows for increased comprehension of academic concepts. While telling the story about Dennis Banks, I will use pictures to aid understanding. Banks was the prominent AIM leader who initiated the movement, focusing on the narrative chart beginning with birth, residential schools, military, prison, AIM movement, aftermath, and death. I will format the oral narrative pattern as an autobiographical genre. I will use critical events of his life from the book he has written to create the visual. In addition to the visuals, key vocabulary terms embedded into the narrative will aid the content.

The process of teaching the narrative input chart is to read the pictures with important events written on the back of the photographs then ask for responses from the students. As I read each photo, they are placed onto a large chart with a background (a sketch of his reservation Leech Lake Indian Reservations in northern Minnesota). This strategy is reviewed throughout the week, focusing on the content, vocabulary, and speech bubble quotes.

Expert Group

Expert groups are 3-4 students in small heterogeneous groups in which each student becomes an expert on a particular topic. Each individual is given an expert paper about a topic (Clyde Bellecourt, Russell Means, and Anna Aquash) with text and boxes and a mind map with categories. Numbered heads is a strategy in which students are assigned a number 1-4. So, a selected expert student is chosen by their number. For example, all the ones from groups are experts in Clyde Bellecourt's topic, and so on. The teacher and the expert group read the mind map categories. Then the teacher uses pictures to aid comprehension and identify the main ideas to connect with the process grid. The teacher and group read one paragraph at a time, next the teacher guides to highlight the main ideas. For each highlight, students sketch a picture to connect with the underlined words. As the teacher and students progress through the paragraphs, the teacher gradually leads the responsibility to the students to come up with the main ideas. Students record their information onto their mind map. After their mind map is completed, students retell the learned knowledge to the teacher. The teacher explains to the students that they will share the expert information with their group as an expert person about the topic learned.

Process Grid

The Process Grid is a chart that categorizes essential concepts from previous content learned, like the information from the expert groups. The grid is organized at the top and down the side with the topic and facts on the top. For example, the side of the grid can have the leader names, and then the top of the grid can have tribe, location, and the participant in AIM, the goals, and outcomes. The expert teams confer with their group and decide what facts go in the column row. The teacher randomly calls on individual students from the teams to share their answers. In addition, students are allowed to provide information from other charts displayed (pictorial, narrative input charts, exploration charts, the Cognitive Content Dictionary, Chant/Song Chart, Sentence Pattern Chart, and Inquiry Chart) onto the process grid to complete the information.

Teaching Activities

To teach my three-week unit to my Navajo students, I will begin with an inquiry chart. An inquiry chart is a T-chart drawn on a chart paper with two columns. The two questions are written in colored markers in which the teacher records what students quoted. Additional activities like Text & You - writing, Exploration Report - questioning, The Important Thing About - paragraph frame, and interactive journals are assigned to students to attain a depth of knowledge and comprehensible input about the narrative input chart.

While guiding students with the expert groups, the teacher uses photos as visuals to aid understanding. Picture file cards are photos of the unit used in small groups to sort and connect to specific topics, strategies, or activities. Picture file cards of the leaders, maps, events, and documents are realia for students to connect historical information. The teacher needs to create about fifty laminated photos because the picture file cards are helpful when reviewing other charts like the pictorial, narrative, chants & raps, exploration report, observation chart, expert groups, big books, and literacy awards.

After completing the process grid, students will write a comparison and contrast paragraphs about the AIM movement and leaders. The co-operative strip paragraph is an activity that uses sentence strips and pocket charts. The student teams write a collaborative sentence using the information from the process grid. All the sentence strips are inserted into the pocket charts in a paragraph format, and then the teacher edits the team's writing using an editing checklist with the students. The students are given numerous opportunities to reread and revise the paragraphs. After completing the paragraph, students begin another section working as a team using a team pocket chart and sentence strip.

Throughout the unit, I will review the fundamental questions about leadership and how students understand the leaders of AIM to discuss and share their interpretation about the leader's way of addressing their issues. I will use the word *naat'aanii* to explain what leadership means within the Navajo culture. The Navajo (Diné) word *naat'aanii* is used to signify Diné men and women who are planners, orators, and community leaders.²³ Today, Diné uses *naat'aanii* when referring to the chairman, presidents, council delegates, and chapter officials.²⁴ A *naat'aanii* carries significant responsibilities, and the individual must always put their people first and not their own goals. The *naat'aanii* commit to the welfare of the people because they have specific knowledge and experiences. They negotiate, teach, and mediate for the people, and in turn, the *naat'aanii* is trusted for their leadership.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

My curriculum unit: AIM and Native American political activism in the 20th century, focuses on the autobiographies of the key leaders who voiced and demonstrated their concerns on Indian rights by treaties, land, education, religion, and the BIA. The state standards are aligned to the topics in my unit.

Social Studies

5.C2.1 Explain how democracy relies on people's responsible participation within the context of critical historical events pre-American Revolution to Industrialization.²⁵ Key concepts include using the First Amendment (free speech, religion, press, assembly, petition) and protest movements. Students will read

about Native American protests and the actions of Indigenous people.

5.C4.1 Using primary and secondary sources to examine historical and contemporary means of changing society through laws and policies to address public problems.²⁶ Key is the formation and development of social and reform movements and responses to industrialism and poverty at the turn of the century. Students will read about how native leaders created awareness and change Indian people's perception of the BIA policies.

5.G3.1 Use critical historical events with geographic tools to analyze the causes and effects of environmental and technological events on human settlements and migration.²⁷ Key information is the territorial expansion upon Indian lands, the education institution of Indian children, the positive and negative impact on the environment and the growth of cities, and the impact of transportation and infrastructure on settlement and migration of Indian people. Students will read about the relocation of native people to the cities.

5.H2.1 Use primary and secondary sources to summarize the causes and effects of conflicts, resolutions, and social movements throughout the historical timeframe.²⁸ Key topics include cultural, political, and economic disputes with the US government and the Indian people. Students read and discuss issues of AIM takeover of public landmarks and sacred sites.

5.H4.1 Use primary and secondary sources to describe how different groups shaped the United States' multicultural society within the historical timeframe.²⁹ Students learn how the AIM movement change the lives of native people and the Indigenous perspective of their history.

Navajo (Diné) Standards

4th -6th Diné Government Standards

Standard: Diné Bi Beenahaz'aanii Atse Silei baa akonisin dooleel. [I will understand and apply the Navajo Nation Laws (Traditional Law, Customary Law; Natural Law and Common Law)].

Concept 1: Diyin Bits'aadee' Beehaz'aanii - Dine Traditional Law: Diyin bits'aadee bibeelahaz'aanii choosh'ii dooleel. (I will apply the Dine traditional law by formulating ideas).

PO3. Naat'aanii ya eehozinii shil beehozin dooleel. (I will identify the attributes of a good Navajo leader). The Navajo Standard supports naat'aanii concept and for students to think about their role as a leader.

Resources

Below are videos my students will view and discuss to connect with the AIM leaders in my unit.

From the C-SPAN Video Library - Mr. Means harshly criticizes the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian leadership of reservations. 1989 - American Indian Activist Russell Means testifies at Senate Hearing. This was his first of six appearances on C-SPAN. Begin 1:42:20 to 2:19:12 for Means addressing the Senate. Entire Hearing: [https://www.c-span.org/video/?5987-1/...](https://www.c-span.org/video/?5987-1/)

Storied 1968: American Indian Movement. <http://www.mnhs.org/historycenter/act...> AIM—the American Indian

Movement—begin in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on July 28, 1968. It started taking form when 200 people from the Indian community turned out for a meeting called by Native American community activists led by George Mitchell, Dennis Banks, and Clyde Bellecourt. Learn from one of the co-founders, Clyde Bellecourt, about the movement and its growth over the past 50 years. Much of the still photography in this piece was taken by Dick Bancroft, author of “We Are Still Here: A Photographic History of the American Indian Movement.” Bancroft recently passed away at the age of 90. He was a longtime chronicler of the Indigenous plight and esteemed MNHS Press published author. The remaining images are courtesy of the American Indian Movement Interpretive Center. To learn more about the event of 1968, be sure to visit the 1968 Exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.

US History Lesson 7: Native American Civil Rights – Termination Policy and AIM. SS.912.A.7.9: Examines the similarities of social movements (Native Americans, Hispanics, women, antiwar protesters) of the 1960s and 1970s. All images and narration are used strictly for educational purposes. <https://youtu.be/7EdeDP9uBFA>

National History Day 2018 – Centuries of Broken Treaties: The American Indian Movement
<https://youtu.be/aS2zavkC47w>

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Notes

¹ mnopedia.org/group/american-indian-movement-aim

² Ghost Riders Road 10

³ mnopedia.org/group/american-indian-movement-aim

⁴ Ojibwa Warrior 144

⁵ Ibid 144

⁶ the Thunder before the Storm 7

⁷ Ibid 47

⁸ Ibid 255

⁹ Where White Men Fear to Tread 150

¹⁰ Ibid 150

¹¹ Ibid 153

¹² Ibid 295

¹³ Anna Mae Aquash 47

¹⁴ Ibid 57

¹⁵ Ibid 59

¹⁶ Ibid 61

¹⁷ Ibid 63

¹⁸ Ibid 64

¹⁹ Ibid 64

²⁰ Ibid 119

²¹ Ibid 119

²² Ibid 65.

²³ Naat'aanii

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Arizona Department of Education: Fifth Grade United States Studies

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

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