The Navajo Code Talkers

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Overview

In the proposed curriculum, I plan on exploring the history and practice of the Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. In this curriculum, I propose that we explore and discuss why the Navajo Code Talkers were not simply ordinary communication personnel, but rather were personnel who were utilized primarily for "code" communication.[1] For centuries the plight of our Nation's Native American citizens has gone unnoticed, they were forced to leave their tribal lands and live on reservations designed by a foreign government that seized their land. The relationship between these individuals and the nation in which we live has always been strained and the tensions were not eased, during World War II. By focusing on the role of the Navajo Code talkers of World War II, students will gain insight into just one of the unique contributions made by Native Americans in American history.

A group of young Navajo men, known as the Navajo Code Talkers, devised an unbreakable code during World War II that greatly impacted the war in the Pacific. Using the complex language of the Navajos, the Navajo Code Talkers took part in every U.S. Marine assault in 1942-1945 by sending messages that the Japanese were unable to decode. The Japanese did not have a reference point to use to decode messages.[2] Even after the war in the Pacific, the Navajo Code remained potentially valuable. Their skills saved American lives and many military operations. They have earned recognition for their bravery.

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[1] Aeseng, Nathan. *Navajo Code Talkers: America's Secret Weapon in World War II*. New York: Walker & Company, 1992.

[2] Townsend, Kenneth. *Navajo Code Talker History*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000

The use of unwritten and unrecorded Native American languages to create secret codes began as early as World War I when Captain Lawrence overheard Native American peoples speaking their native Choctaw tongue. From that one encounter, Captain Lawrence devised a plan to utilize Native American languages for military use. This task only needed eight special men, all Native American; they needed to translate information into a Native language by telephone or written message and then back into English. Prior to this, Germans broke American codes and tapped into phone lines. Yet, this code was unbreakable.

The Germans were good, but the Japanese were experts in code breaking.[3] The Japanese were used to the figurative language used by Americans because many were taught in America and understood the real context of the message. Choctaw code, however, was very different and thus offered a successful code right away that required little to no training.

During World War II, members of the Navajo tribe were called upon to help their nation, The United States, develop a code that could not be decrypted by the enemy. Phillip Jonhston, the son of a Protestant missionary, had grown up on the Navajo reservation.[4] where he learned their language and their customs. One day as he read the newspaper, an idea came to him to create a code based on the Navajo language,   He took his idea to nearby Camp Eliot where he shared it with Lieutenant James E. Jones, , the Area Signal officer.

The military shared Johnston's interest in creating a code based upon the Navajo language and thus the code talkers were developed. Native Americans, who worked in this division of the Marine Corp, were not consider to be on the same level of their radio intelligence peers, and thus were treated as second class citizens on their own land.

There were approximately 400-500 Native Americans in the United States Marine Corps whose primary job was the transmission of secret tactical messages over military telephone or radio communications net using formal or informally developed codes built upon their native languages.[5] Their services improved Communication in terms of speed of encryption of both ends in front line and allowed US secrets to remain just that - secrets.

Rationale: Operations during World War II

The name "codes talkers" is strongly associated with bilingual Navajo Speakers.[6] I have designed this unit to include several different lessons beginning with researching code talkers with the assistance of the internet and various other reference materials and

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[3] Townsend, Kenneth. *Navajo Code Talker History*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

[4] Durrett, Deanna. *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers.* Library of American Indian History, facts on File, Inc. 1998 .

[5] Holm, Tom. *Code Talkers and Warriors-Native Americans and World War II.* New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007. ISBN 0-7910-9340-9

[6] Aeseng, Nathan. *Navajo Code Talkers: America's Secret Weapon in World War II.* New York: Walker & Company, 1992.

using an interactive Venn diagram tool to create a museum like exhibit that highlights code talkers. The major focus of this unit will be developing a research paper as well as a mural depicting the Navajo Code Talkers.

The overall goal of this unit is to help students understand the important role that the Navajo Code Talkers played in WWII. It is my belief that art and history go hand in hand. Through art you can tell a story about history. Examining this period in American history has provided me with a greater insight into Native American culture. As an individual of both Native American, White and African ancestor I think that we often forget the struggle that those before us had to endure.

As an art teacher the composition of a paper based upon WWII may seem like a daunting task, however I plan to incorporate it within my curriculum just as my students incorporate their daily struggle in their art. I hope to first have the students research the Navajo Code Talkers. During their research, they shall utilize a variety of search engines The use of these various research tools can in fact be the basis of an English lesson, this beginning our cross curricular study of the code talkers

I will teach students how to properly compose a research paper, furthermore, it will help them to expand upon their computer skills. From this data, students will design a mural depicting The Code Talkers. The mural that they design will be based upon their research. Thus, allowing students to gain the knowledge of how to gather and synthesize information, which is part of the NRATE standards.

Objectives

Upon completion of this project, current students will have a greater understanding of Native Americans and the influence that they had on American history. This unit shall focus primarily upon the code talkers and the impact that these individuals had on WWII. During their research, students shall keep a journal. In said journal they will document their journey to knowledge. The can list interesting thoughts and then capture how they felt while they were reading these facts. The documentation of feelings is important, because much of art is based upon feelings. Based upon this journal, they shall create a mural. This mural shall be presented during an assembly and their journals will be turned into teacher to be critiqued.

--Students will be able to determine and analyze the main idea of informational pieces both primary and secondary sources in order to provide an objective summary

--Students will be able to explain the significance of the Navajo Code Talkers and the importance of their Navajo language in order to outline a research paper.

--Students will analyze potential reasons in which the Navajo Code Talkers receive recognition in order to draw conclusions in their journal

--Students will be able to research and design a mural for the Navajo Code Talkers in order to synthesize perception and experience of a particular place

--Students will be able to apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in order to give an oral presentation

--Students will be able to respond and critique the murals of other students in order to hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

Strategies

The population within our school (Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center) is ever changing thus I plan on providing each student with an individual project plan. Furthermore each student will be allowed to utilize classroom resources along with the Internet and the school library. Students will be asked to keep a documentation journal with all of the information that they research. Through research, writing, and the replication of art the students will better understand the impact of the Navajo Code Talkers.

-Students will be able to determine and analyze the main idea of informational pieces both primary and secondary sources in order to provide an objective summary

a. I will model how I read primary and secondary sources with a graphic organizer and taking notes in my journal

--Students will be able to explain the significance of the Navajo Code Talkers and the importance of their Navajo language in order to outline a research paper.

a. I will model for the students a proper outline for a research paper of one to two pages in length. I will model how to cite sources properly. I will ask for them to work with a partner and gather information together and rely on a couple of websites to lessen their burden in doing research in a little amount of time. I propse that students use search engines such as Google and Dogpile and will ask them to compile a list of sites that answer the questions they have brought fourth.

--Students will analyze the potential reasons for which the Navajo Code Talkers have received recognition and draw conclusions in their journal

a. While the students are writing in their journal, I will also write in my journal. I will periodically check the journals (once or twice a week) to monitor their progress and provide them with feedback or additional research questions

--Students will research and design a mural about the Navajo Code Talkers in order to synthesize perception and experience.
a. The hardest part about creating a mural is selecting one theme or central idea for the student to develop. I will provide them with a list of possible themes and resources for the students to choose. This will give a clear focus for the students so that more time can be spent on their display rather than their research.

--Students will be able to apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in order to give an oral presentation

    a. Students will be provided with one rubric for each the mural and the presentation. Everyday in class teacher will review the necessary components of the rubric.

Unit One: Research and Analysis of the Origin and Purpose of Navajo Code Talkers

Monday and Tuesday
Objective: Students will be able to determine and interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words by using an example of a code.

Objective: Students will be able to determine and analyze the main idea of informational pieces in provide an objective summary

Do Now: Activate Prior Knowledge: Teacher will provide overview of the unit with a word association map: Code Talkers and Native Americans

B. Check for Understanding: Display teacher model of word association map for the two concepts and discuss how these two themes will be discussed throughout the course of the unit.

C. Introduction of New Material: Teacher will a) display images of a group of Code Talkers, and b) preview the alphabet of the Navajo Code Talkers. Teacher will ask for student feedback and reaction to the alphabet due to its uniqueness. Teacher will transition into an overview article with excerpts about the Navajo Code Talkers by Nathan Aaseng who wrote *Navajo Code Talkers: America's Secret Weapon in World War II*. Teacher will model for students how to highlight or underline the main idea and topic sentence.

D. Collaborate with Teacher: Teacher and student will complete a journal assessment at the end of each class. The journal writing will last for ten minutes. Each day the teacher will provide a question about each individual theme that will be presented during the unit. For the first and second day of assessment, the teacher will ask students about their response and reaction to history and overview of the Code Talkers. Later in the unit, the teacher will address individual Navajo Code Talkers.

E. Exit Ticket: The journal will be assessed by the teacher in order to determine if students are reflecting on the objective and standard.

Wednesday and Thursday
Objective: Students will be able to determine and interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words

Objective: Students will be able to determine and analyze the main idea of informational pieces in provide an objective summary

Do Now: Identify two or three overall characteristics of the Navajo Code Talkers that you think support the overall origin and purpose of their influence

Check for Understanding: Create a timeline with the students in relation to WWI and WWII and specific dates within the 20th Century. The students will then draw symbols or objects that represent those specific dates from an excerpt from Durret's *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers.* Within this article, students will see a chronological progression of the Navajo Code Talkers and how they saved many lives and missions due to their expertise.

Cooperative Pairs: Give the students ten to 15 minutes to look over the language used by the Navajo Code Talkers (see list of resources). Ask the students to communicate with one another either through writing or verbal expression. Ask the students to show their creativity with talking to their partner. This could also allow time for students to draw symbols or respond to the language in terms of drawing or sketching. Give the students enough time to play with the language and create mock sentences or code.

Independent Practice: Allow ten minutes for journal reflection, especially about the play on language and how the Navajo Code Talkers were successful in their assignments during WWI and WWII.

E. Exit Ticket: The journal will be assessed by the teacher in order to determine if students are reflecting on the objective and standard.

Friday
Objective: Students will be able to determine and interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words

Students will analyze potential reasons for which the Navajo Code Talkers have received praise and recognition for their work in order to draw conclusions in their journal.

Do Now: Teacher will put on the board five to six different examples of the Navajo Code Talker's language and ask students to decipher the language in their journals.

Check for Understanding: True and False on the chronological order of the Navajo Code Talkers in WWI and WWII based on Durret's *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers.*

Introduction of New Material: Teacher will provide a brief synopsis on five Navajo Code Talkers. These five Navajo Code Talkers are discussed in great length during the teacher's preparation of the unit in Holm's *Code Talkers and Warriors: Native Americans and World War II.* Within the informational text, the teacher can select the Navajo Code Talkers for the students or allow the students to select their own. In this case, the teacher selected, Alan Dale June, John Brown, Chester Nez, Lloyd Oliver, and Joe Palmer. There were 29 original Navajo Code Talkers. Based on the extent of the

teacher's research, the teacher picked the five individuals with the most information. The teacher can give the list of 29 to the students and when it comes time for them to research on Monday and Tuesday, they can problem solve and brainstorm with one individual from the list.

Collaborate with teacher: Based on the synopsis, students can draw and sketch symbols or portraits that represent one of the five Navajo Code Talkers. This will allow students to start to see how they can synthesize their reading with their artwork. The teacher will model a sketch or drawing or painting for one particular Navajo Code Talker. The teacher will ask for feedback and suggestions from the students.

Independent Practice: Students will sketch or draw a portrait or symbols based on one of the Navajo Code Talkers from the synopsis. The teacher will monitor the students' progress and provide feedback and more possible ways to decode the paragraph.

Exit Ticket: If there is time remaining, students can reflect in their journal and draw conclusions about the progress and success of the Navajo Code Talkers. The journal will be assessed by the teacher in order to determine if students are reflecting on the objective and standard.

Unit Two: Research Paper , Creation and Presentation of Navajo Code Talkers

Monday and Tuesday
Objective: Students will be able to explain the significance of the Navajo Code Talkers and the importance of their Navajo language in order to outline a research paper.

Do Now: How do you know when you can trust a source of information? How do you know if this source of information is a trustworthy source?

Check for Understanding: Outline and Procedures for writing a five paragraph research paper on one of the following topics: a) an individual Navajo Code Talker throughhis biography, mission, and impact on WWII; b) the specific language and details of the Navajo Code itself; and c) the overall impact the Navajo Code Talkers had on WWII.

Introduction of New Material: Teacher will model for the students an outline for each of the theme options. The teacher will discuss the specifics needed in the research stage of the project based on topic.

Collaborate with Teacher: Teacher will go to one website, www.lapahie.com/NavajoCodeTalker and ask the students why this website can be trusted. What makes this a good website to use for research? While this is happening, a student volunteer is creating a poster with this checklist. Teacher will then go to the wiki site for the Navajo Code Talkers and demonstrate why students have to be careful about some of the information presented on the website, especially if there isn't a footnote that links to the proper website for the information.

Cooperative Practice: Students work with a partner who has the same research topic..
Students are using their journal or word processor to keep track of their sources and the
information they will use to develop their research papers. Teacher is monitoring the
room and helping with the small groups.

Exit Ticket: If there is time remaining, students can reflect in their journal and draw
conclusions about the progress and success of the Navajo Code Talkers. The journal will
be assessed by the teacher in order to determine if students are reflecting on the objective
and standard.

Unit Three: Mural Design, Creation and Presentation of Navajo Code Talkers

Monday and Tuesday
Objective: Students will be able to explain the significance of the Navajo Code Talkers
and the importance of their Navajo language in order to create a mural.

Objective: Students will be able to research and design a mural for the Navajo Code
Talkers in order to synthesize perception and experience of a particular place

Do Now: Teacher shares with the students several models of murals about different
topics and if possible one on the Navajo Code Talkers. The teacher asks students to
develop a checklist for this project.

Collaborate with Teacher: Teacher presents model paper of about one the Navajo Code
Talkers. The students need to review the research paper checklist and offer feedback to
the teacher about what is proficient and needs improvement.

Introduction into New Material: The teacher will use the standard state assessment for
writing, the PSSA writing rubric for informational text. The teacher will hand out the
rubric to the students so they can begin to type or write their paper. Said teacher, will also
give students an example of a mural on which they can base their work. The proposed
project is rooted in both language arts and art in that they will be both writing a research
paper and drawing a mural.

Cooperative Pairs: Students work with a different partner yet someone who share topic
and begin to write their introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs. The pair will
provide instant feedback based on content and style. The student will leave the paper for
the teacher to review before tomorrow's lesson of writing a final draft. Some students
will find that they need more research or they need more grammatical revision. Allow 30
to 45 minutes for students to write their rough draft. The will need more time problem
solving and fixing errors since the final will be written in the next lesson.

Exit Ticket: If there is time remaining, students can reflect in their journal and draw
conclusions about the progress and success of the Navajo Code Talkers. The journal will

be assessed by the teacher in order to determine if students are reflecting on the objective and standard.

Wednesday and Thursday

Objective: Students will be able to research and design a mural for the Navajo Code Talkers in order to synthesize perception and experience of a particular place

Outcome: Upon completion, the students will be able to identify and evaluate the Code Talkers with images and summarization

Procedures:

Remind students that their goal is to synthesize what they have learned from their research into their mural.
Students should work in their groups on their exhibit. Teacher will circulate and offer support while they are working. It may take more than one session to complete.

By the close of the lesson, students should have gathered a significant amount of information on the Code Talkers. This information should be typed and ready for the exhibit. For example, it should be mounted on a poster board or project board. Pictures of the Code Talkers should be featured on the board along with any facts. Lastly their writing should be placed on front.

Oral Presentations Requirements

When presenting exhibitions, students must have all information clearly displayed. They should have pictures of the Navajo Code Talkers and relevant facts. All reports must be three to five minutes in length and typed a copy of their speech must be given to the instructor before they present.

Closing statement will be read after the assessment of the activities: "I hope that all of you enjoyed this unit on The Navajo Code Talkers, as much as I enjoyed teaching it. I think that in studying this time period, we were not only able to learn about Navajo Code Talkers, but also realize their impact they had on US History."

Unit Four: Reflection Journal of Purpose and Impact

1. What was your overall opinion of this unit? Do you think that the Navajo Code Talkers truly had an effect on US History?

Student Reflection/Assessment:
There will be a brief exam given at the conclusion of the lesson. This assessment will require students to write a brief paragraph, summarizing what they have learned. They will be required to reference specific dates, a brief overview of the conflict that brought about the war, people, examples of the code, and perhaps to reference at least one mission

using the code . An overall assessment will also include the mural. Their journals will be submitted and a portion of their grade shall be derived from the amount of research reflected in the student's journal.

Content Standards

IRA/NCTE Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts. Among these texts are fiction and non-fiction classical and contemporary works.
2. Students adjust their use of spoken written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences.
3. Students enjoy a wide variety of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately o communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
4. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Appendix A

Name:_____
Date:_____

<u>Directions:</u> This list of resources, may be used as a way to quickly locate information on the assigned topic. You may use the sites listed or use a search engine of your choice to generate your own list.

Student Resources

Navajo Code Talkers History,
www.brownieblocks.com/navajocodetalkers.html
This site, gives a brief history of the Navajo Code talkers and the medal that they won in 2001.

Navajo Code Talkers, interviews and videos
Navajocodetalkers.org
This site, hosts videos   and gives a historical perspective on the Navajo code talkers and their impact on history.

  Navajo C*ode Talkers* cryptology - Naval *History*
www.history.navy.mil/.../faq61-2.ht...
This site, tells how the *Navajo code talkers* took part in every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945.

World War II:
www.historynet.com/world-war-ii-navajo-code-talkers.htm
History Net
This site tells how the Navajo Code Talkers eventually, *Navajo code talkers* served with all six Marine divisions in the ..

Navajo Code Talkers
racerelations.about.com › About News & Issues
by Nadra Kareem Nittle – This site list the various words and phrases used by the code talkers.

Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code — Central ...
https://www.cia.gov/...
This site gives a history of the code talkers.

All that you need to know about the *Navajo Code Talkers*

mprofaca.cro.net/navajo.html
This site gives a history of the Navajo code talkers.

Code Talkers
www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/.../codetalkers/reso...
This site gives a list of websites that can be used to find vital information on the code talkers.

Annotated Bibliography

1. Holm, Tom Code Talkers and Warriors: Native Americans and World War II (Landmark Events in Native American History). Chelsea house Publisher, 2007. This text tells about the role that the Native American code Talkers played in the war. It is a good source to use when looking for facts.

2. Aaseng, Nathan. *Navajo Code Talkers: America's Secret Weapon in World War II*. New York: Walker & Company, 1992.
   This text tells how the codes utilized by the Native Americans aided with the war effort. This site is useful, in that it gives a graphic description of the role of the Native American Code talkers in the war effort.

3. Durrett, Deanne. *Unsung Heroes of World Wat II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers.* University of Nebraska Press, 1998. *Originally published New York, New York,* Library of American Indian History, facts on File, Inc.ca. 1998.
   This text gives a history of the code talkers. I used this site, when looking for information on the history of the code talkers.

4. Holm, Tom. *Code Talkers and Warriors-Native Americans and World War II*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007. ISBN 0-7910-9340-9
   This text gives a history of the code talkers and their participation in the war effort.

5. World War II: Retrived from : www.historynet.com/world-war-ii-navajo-code-talkers.htm
   This site gives a list of sites that can be utilized, when conducting research. This is a good site to use, when looking for examples of murals.

6. Retrieved from www.wikepedia.com Impact of the Code Talkers