Unit 3/Week 3

Title: *I am a Native of North America*

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.4, RI.7.6; W.7.2, W.7.4, W.7.9; SL.7.1; L.7.1, L.7.2

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

The ways people treat both each other and the natural environment in which they live has an impact on human communities. It is important for all cultures to work together to create a strong community and a healthy environment no matter what their backgrounds.

Synopsis

In the reflective essay “I Am a Native of North America,” Chief Dan George compares his native North American culture with that of white culture and expresses his views on aspects of white culture that he feels are wrong. He believes that the Native tradition of communal living and caring for the environment is more positive than the dominant white culture’s desire to live separately from each other and the natural world around them.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Teach/reengage the idea of reflective essay, noting that this type of essay is a type of literary nonfiction. Also teach/ reengage the concepts of tolerance, integration, etc. with your students.
2. Students read the entire selection independently; give them something to look for such as difficult vocabulary, images, or sensory detail, etc.
3. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along, or students take turns reading aloud to each other.
4. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.).

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| What are three things Chief Dan George claims people learn from growing up in communal homes? | He describes how people learned to live together, to serve each other, and to respect the rights of others. |
| What do you think Dan George means by, “In the course of my lifetime, I have lived in two distinct cultures”? | With these words, Chief Dan George is showing that although he grew up in a traditional Native American culture, he has since left that culture to be a part of white culture. Like many Native Americans, he left the traditional way of living in a community surrounded by nature to live a more “white” existence in American big cities. |
| What lesson did he learn about nature from his culture? | Chief Dan George says he learned “a deep respect for everything in nature.” |
| What examples does he give to show this? | Two examples he gave of these lessons were listening to his father say “Thank you, thank you” to the world and when his father told him he shouldn’t kill fish just for fun.” |
| What does Chief Dan George mean when he refers to “smoke houses”? | The author is talking about modern apartment buildings. He is using “smoke houses” to refer to the fact that apartment buildings are communal houses like the smoke houses he grew up in. |
| How does Chief Dan George feel about people who live in “smoke houses?” Why are these feelings important to his message? | He feels that the people who live in these large houses or apartment buildings don’t know or care about each other. This is important to his message because he is comparing these kinds of communities to the one in which he grew up, and he prefers communal living. |
| What puzzles Chief Dan George about his “white brother”? Why does he have a difficult time understanding these characteristics? | For one thing, Dan George explains how he can’t understand “the deep hate that exists among people…a culture that spends more on wars…than it does on education and welfare…” This puzzles him because in his culture, education of children is valued and the welfare of everyone in the community is important. He is also confused about the white society that “even attacks nature and abuses her.” Again, this is foreign to him because in his culture, nature is cherished as a vital part of human lives. |
| What does Chief Dan George say about his “white brothers” ability to love? Why is this so important to him? | He wonders if his “white brother” loves only things that he owns but not things that are “outside or beyond him”. This is important to him because he feels that “man must love fully or he will become the lowest of the animals.” |
| Why does Chief Dan George say his culture “has little to offer yours”? | He says this because his culture did not have modern technology and conveniences when white people came to America. In modern times people from his culture are poor and seen as un-modern. |
| Although he states that his culture “has little to offer yours,” he also believes there are some ideas his culture could add to white culture. What are these ideas? | He describes his culture’s dedication to friendship and companionship as well as the ability to live with others. His culture also did not “prize the hoarding of private possessions.” |
| What language and text structures does Chief Dan George use to strengthen his point of view that white culture could learn important lessons from traditional Native American culture? | To strengthen his point of view, Dan George compares what both people from both white and Native cultures need. He states, “Love is something you and I must have”. He then goes on to discuss how that love benefits all people by saying that with that love we gain “strength and joy” and that “we are creative” because of it. |
| Although Chief Dan George says, “my culture has little to offer yours”, what does he still wish people in white culture had done? Why is this important to him? | Chief Dan George states “everyone likes to give as well as receive”. By this he means that although what his culture has to offer may seem small, their attitudes about friendship and companionship could have been important lessons for white culture. He believes that if the white culture had “taken something” “good and beautiful” from his culture, it would have made Native Americans feel their culture was valued. Then both cultures could have benefitted from sharing equally. |
| What is the “brotherhood” that Chief Dan George talks about at the end of his essay? | The brotherhood he talks about is what would happen if both his Native American culture and white culture would begin to respect and love each other. He states that “You must truly love us, be patient with us and share with us. And we must love you – with a genuine love that forgives and forgets…” |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | self-esteem  reassuring | communal  welfare  indifferent  prize  hoard  integration  scorn  ridicule |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | distinct  promote | cultures  rights  justifies  distrust |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt:

*In “I Am a Native of North America,” Chief Dan George expresses his views of community, which are based on his experiences growing up in the traditional ways of his Native American culture. He contrasts his beliefs as a Native American with those of white society. What problems does he see in today’s white communities? What kind of community does he suggest is best? Write two or three paragraphs describing his views. Include evidence from the text to support your ideas.*

* Teacher Instructions:

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students will complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should guide students in gathering and using any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions earlier. Some students will need a good deal of help gathering this evidence, especially if this process is new.
3. Students will label each piece of evidence about the different attitudes as either W for White or N for Native American attitudes to compare and contrast these attitudes and Chief Dan George’s perspective of them.

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| ***Evidence of Attitudes***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Label***  ***W (White) or N (Native)*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “...people learned to live with one another; learned to serve one another; learned to respect the rights of one another.” | N | This is what people in his community learned from each other by growing up in communal houses. |
| “there was a deep respect for everything in nature that surrounded them” | N | This is also the message everyone was taught in his Native American culture. |
| **“**You must respect them. You must not kill them just for the fun of it.” | N | His father taught him that killing for fun was not respecting and valuing what nature has to provide for humans, that killing for food is necessary and shows respect for those animals. |
| “People in one apartment do not even know the people in the next and care less about them.” | W | Here Chief Dan George is talking about the differences in white culture to show how it is not as loving. |
| “a culture that justifies the killing of millions” | W | Again talking about white culture, he can’t believe how many people have been killed in wars begun by white cultures. |
| “It is hard for me to understand a culture that…attacks nature and abuses her.” | W | Chief Dan George also cannot understand how white culture can mistreat the Earth. This is very different from the Native American view of nature. |
| “I wonder if he has ever really learned to love at all.” | W | Because of the abuses of each other and the Earth, Chief Dan George believes that white people have not learned to love anyone. |
| “You must truly love us, be patient with us and share with us. And we must love you – with a genuine love that forgives and forgets…” | N | This is Chief Dan George’s argument for what would make the integration of these two cultures into one great culture that respects each other and the Earth. It is especially important that white culture is patient as Native Americans learn to integrate their traditional culture with white culture. It is also equally important that Native Americans learn to forgive the discrimination and destruction of their communities that white culture caused. |
| “This is brotherhood…” | N | Brotherhood is what he wants from this integration of the two cultures. He believes that this brotherhood can only happen if people from both cultures learn to accept and love each other for their unique contributions. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e., expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade/reading level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/> OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (e.g., modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer

In the reflective essay, “I Am a Native of North America,” Chief Dan George expresses his views of Native American and white cultures. When talking about his own upbringing, he describes how he grew up living in communal houses where “...people learned to live with one another; learned to serve one another; learned to respect the rights of one another”. To him, this helped create a warm and caring community. He also claims that in his culture, “there was a deep respect for everything in nature that surrounded them”. To support this idea, he recounts an incident with his father. When as a boy Chief Dan George was fishing just for fun, his father stopped him, saying, **“**You must respect [the fish]. You must not kill them just for the fun of it”. To Chief Dan George’s thinking, a community cannot be healthy unless its members feel a clear connection to the natural world. He clearly thinks his own upbringing had definite benefits that other cultures could look to as a model.

In contrast, Chief Dan George describes what he sees as problems with modern white society. Unlike his own culture, in modern communities, people don’t live communally, but rather separate from each other. He writes, “people in one apartment do not even know the people in the next and care less about them.” He sees this a problem because people in such a living situation don’t learn to take care of each other. Chief Dan George believes this lack of connection causes even further damage, both to the environment and with repeated wars in which millions are killed.

In fact, Chief Dan George even questions whether people in modern society have learned how to love anything: their neighbors, nature, or even their families. He sees love for one another as the solution to this terrible dilemma. He believes that without this love our communities will fail. When trying to bring both Native American and modern white cultures together, he knows this will be difficult. Addressing members of the white cultural community, he states, “You must truly love us, be patient with us and share with us. And we must love you – with a genuine love that forgives and forgets…”. He believes if this mutual love could happen, then a greater brotherhood could be created, a brotherhood that would provide an even more positive community for all.

Additional Tasks

* Read the following articles and research about the Salish Native American Tribe of which Chief Dan George was a member. Find out what values are common in this cultural group. Write an essay about these values and what they reveal about this culture.

<http://www.cskt.org/hc/salishculture.htm>

<http://ph.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0843236.html>

<http://www.joejack.com/coastsalishhistory.html>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/dan-george>

* Sample response:

There are several Coast Salish tribes living around Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest. The city of Seattle is named after one of their great chiefs. In the Salish culture, human beings are seen as a part of the environment around them. They don’t separate themselves from the natural world but are a part of it. In their traditional ways, tribal elders told stories about the culture, both their legends and history. Most importantly, these narratives taught children to be respectful listeners so that they could understand these lessons and pass them on to future generations.

Notes to Teacher:

* Make sure that your students understand the concepts of tolerance and integration.
* Make sure that your students understand that the text they are reading belongs to the literary nonfiction genre of reflective essay. As defined in the Pearson Literature Anthology, pg. 441, a reflective essay is prose that presents a writer’s thoughts and feelings – or reflections – about an experience or idea. The purpose is to communicate these thoughts and feelings so that readers will respond with thoughts and feelings of their own. As you read a reflective essay, think about the ideas the writer is sharing.
* Also make clear to the students that they will be writing an analytical essay *based* on a reflective essay.
* Links to help further teach the reflective essay genre:

<http://www.ehow.com/info_8773811_format-reflective-essay.html>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Reflection-Paper>