**Whose History Should We Teach?**

**Teaching Notes**

**Related Cases:** There have been substantial change on the issues in this case over time.Follow-up cases are “Waiting Patiently - 500 Years” (2016, Hurtado and Smith) and “Making the High School Diploma Mean Something” (2014, Smith with Dence and Thacker), “Since Time Immemorial: Developing Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum for Washington’s Schools” (2025, Smith, Brown and Costantino)

**Case Objectives:** (These apply only when the case is administered with student research as an essential component)

1. To introduce students to the culture, history, and government of their nearest tribe or tribes.
2. To have students learn history of these tribes from the Native American perspective.
3. To have students investigate and analyze the impact of federal policy and Euro-American immigration on the Native Americans.

**Issues critical to this case:**

1. What is history?
2. Assimilation
3. Self-Governance
4. How cultures undergo change from an external force.
5. The intent and impact of federal policies towards Native Americans.
6. International agreements and treaties.

What is “culture” and who gets to decides if a particular culture is superior or inferior

**Learning Outcomes** (These apply only when the case is administered with student research as an essential component)

Students will come to their own understanding of the concept of history.

Students will identify and analyze the relationships between historical events.

Students will express a point of view and support it by at least three reasons.

Students will investigate and understand the following historical concepts and events from the perspective of the U.S. government.

* Assimilation

Doctrine of Discovery

The Effects of Colonization

Marshall Trilogy

Removal

Reservation System

Allotment Act of 1887

* Self-Governance

Treaty Negotiations

Nation Within a Nation

Reservation System

Students will understand the role of Christianity as a factor in European expansion.

Students will understand the following historical concepts and events from the perspective of the Native Americans.

* Assimilation

Doctrine of Discovery

The Effects of Colonization

Marshall Trilogy

Removal

Reservation System

Allotment Act of 1887

* Self-Governance

Treaty Negotiations

Nation Within a Nation

Reservation System

* Washington Treaties

End of Treaty-making

Executive Order Tribes

Sovereignty

Students will understand how national interests are maintained through international agreements and treaties.

Students will understand the concept of federal power.

Students will understand the consequences of treaties on the lives of the nations involved.

Students will understand the concept of assimilation through education.

Students will investigate the federal policy towards the education of Native American tribal people.

Students will analyze the significance of Captain R. H. Pratt’s motto: “Kill the Indian and Save the Man.”

Students will understand the continuous impact of this policy on contemporary Native American communities.

Students will become familiar with Washington State House Bill 1495.

Students will incorporate their new knowledge and revisit Essential Question 1.

**Intended Audience:**

High schools and high school faculty so the curriculum can be adapted for grades k-12. Can also be used with college audiences.

**Implementation:**

This case can be (and has been) implemented in various ways. Some of the possible activities include the following:

Research-based Activities (# 2,3, and 4 below)

1. Put students into small groups. Ask them to discuss the following questions: What is history? Whose voice should we listen to when studying history? Why? Students will divide into small groups. They will discuss the following questions: What is history? Whose voice should we listen to when studying history? Why?
2. Have students research and analyze the historical eras of discovery, colonization, the Marshall decisions, removal and reservations, the Allotment Act and assimilation and explain patterns of historical continuity and change in this succession of policies in a research paper. Have students write from the perspective of the American Indian tribes.
3. Students will be divided into two groups. Group A will develop an argument supporting the position that since the treaties were signed a long time ago, we don’t need to honor them at the present time. Students will defend their positions. Group B will develop an argument supporting the validity of the treaty rights at the present time. Students will investigate the meaning of the following statement: “The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory… together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Students will develop a group concept of tribal sovereignty of the 21st century, and they will defend their positions.
4. Students will research and analyze the history of Native American education as a federal policy. Students will research and discuss the impact of “cultural genocide” on contemporary Native American communities.
5. Students will divide into the different roles in the case and form a strategy to present that point of view before an audience of possible decision-makers in this situation (School Board, principal, colleagues).

**Description of Field Testing:**

As of December 1, 2006, this case had been field tested 6 times with different types of audiences.

Seminar/discussion: We first administered the case study to a group of 36 K-12 teachers at the National Education Association conference in Orlando in June of 2006. We divided the group into four small groups. After they read the case, they were asked to reach a group consensus about what should Mary Kramer do? Nobody in this audience had any real knowledge of Native American history. After a short expression of concern about what had happened to the Native Americans in American history, they turned the conversation to themselves and what they knew. They then talked about their perspectives of the plight of students of color (mostly African-Americans) in their classrooms.

Role playing: The case has also been used with college students in the Eastern U S who, it turned out knew nothing about Native Americans. In this 50 minute session with 8 students, the case was first read by everyone and then role plays were used with volunteer students assuming the role of the major characters, including the principal, who is not written into the case as presented. The volunteers picked up the dialogue where the case ends as they do to talk with the principal about what to do.. The students enacting the role were fairly good at impromptu acting around the conflicts presented in the case but they had no Native perspective to bring to the discussion.

Using the same role play approach with volunteers, the case was also used with faculty and staff interested in and quite knowledgeable about Native history. The students enacting the role were very good at impromptu acting around the conflicts presented in the case and they added substantial Native perspective to the discussion.

It was interesting to compare these two role playing field tests to see the radically differing interpretations of the characters point of view. In both of these enactments, the audience played an observor role watching the role play. Role playing would be more effective if all students were divided into groups to prepare to the different characters. Both case enactments would have also benefited from more debriefing of the issues at the end.

Discussion: In another three hour discussion-based session with a group of 12 faculty and staff knowledgeable about Native American history and culture, the case was preceded by showing a short film on Indian boarding schools.

Interrupted Case: Small group/large group. The most recent field test involved using the case as an interrupted case with 80 reservation-based Native students in the state where this case is set. Students sat in groups of 6-8 at 10 different tables. Part I involved reading and commenting on House Bill 1495. The teachers led a short lecture about the main points of HB 1495 with questions and answers from the students. In Part 2 students read and then discussed in their small groups “Whose History Should We Teach…” and prepared posters summarizing the main issues and the best solution to the situation. The director of Indian Education from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction led this session and ended the session by summarizing more recent developments around HB 1495. We believe this way of teaching the case was the most effective of all the field tests.

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