**Tribal Legacies and Contemporary Struggles  
in the Defense of Sovereignty: Standing Rock, 2016**

by Professor Michael W. Taylor

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Subject: Social Studies

Grade Band: Community College (but could also work for high school)

Length of Unit: would vary depending on the amount of lessons dedicated to this overall focus.

**Introduction**

**Dear Colleagues**

Professor Taylor writes: “Learning—in its fullness as good, beautiful, and true—can best illuminate a deep contextual discernment of the historical, cultural, and spiritual journey and encounters of Native peoples, and therefore lead to a hope for an awakening of natural affinity among cultures. In this effort, an exploration of historical and contemporary efforts to defend sovereignty, especially as related to protecting sources water—because as the Lakota say, Mní Wičóni (“[Water] is Life”)—are offered as examples in an effort to perpetuate learning in terms of discernment and affinity.”

**Overview**

The Tribal Legacies curriculum is designed to bring the richness of the American Indian experience to the mainstream story of the Lewis and Clark “Corps of Discovery,” which has been widely recounted over the generations but rarely with the full range of possible perspectives and rarely with a recognition of the lasting effects of colonization impacting contemporary battles over such things as a pipeline. The topic of engagement among Native peoples and non-Natives has been a mainstay **historically, culturally, and spiritually** since European contact in North America. Here, we consider a part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (a National Park)—the Great Plains of the United States, especially what is now known as North Dakota. We believe that place-based learning can be especially effective. We focus on a grassroots environmental movement launched in early 2016 that culminated in a nearly year-long protest encampment meant to defend the waters of the Missouri, Mississippi, and Lake Oahe from toxic oil spills. People of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation were joined by thousands of people of Tribal Nations who often traveled great distances to offer their support and attract international attention to the cause. We will also suggest some other efforts at the defense of waters and sovereignty to contextualize what happened at Standing Rock.

**Historical**: The historical background to this crisis is essential for deep understanding. We will begin with the establishment of treaties and territories that surround the DAPL protest area. An understanding of the impact of such treaties made between Native American people and the United States Government—especially as they define the general area where the DAPL protest took place—aids in clarifying and understanding many of the issues leading to and continuing today regarding the sacredness of land and water. Further discovery and discernment will be applied to additional examples of Native American and U.S. Government encounters with such examples as: military engagements (Wounded Knee, Killdeer, Bluff Where They Dig for Paint, i.e. the location of the University of Mary, Bismarck, North Dakota), the creation of reservations, allotments, boarding schools, and other relationship that create historical trauma. We will see how this impacted the overall reluctance to embrace “good faith” negotiation in terms of government hearings and other experiences during the establishment of the pipeline. We will also launch our inquiry by examining oppositional points of view, including the expressions of the prevailing media, the Energy Transfer Partners, and the U.S. government, to set the scene and enrich our understanding of the many facets of the conflict.

**Cultural**: A second major goal is to help learners discover and discern Native and Non-Native cultures that make up the areas enveloping the DAPL site. Consideration will be given to the depth of Native existence in the area and richness of peoples within the overall Native cultures, both pre- and post-European contact. In addition, with explorers such as Lewis and Clark and the waves of subsequent settlers, consideration will be given to non-Native cultures in this general area, and what such contact has meant for all groups—in general and in particular—as a way to understand more deeply the DAPL protest and the responses to the protest by private industry (e.g. Energy Transfer Partners and the TigerSwan hired soldiers) and public officials and governments (local, state, and federal). As a pivot to a study of the spiritual dimensions, cultural considerations will also be examined here in terms of the Forward Operating Base (FOB) for law enforcement and the US Military, the various protest camps (e.g. Oceti Sakowin, Red Warrior, Rose Bud, Sacred Stone), and the local communities like Standing Rock (including Cannonball, Solen, and Fort Yates), Mandan, and Bismarck, where many gathered to express their various reactions (positive and negative) regarding the DAPL protest.

**Spiritual**: The third and final approach involves discovering and discerning Native and non-Native expressions of spirituality from the epicenter of such collective activity at the main protest camp, Oceti Sakowin, with particular attention to beliefs surrounding land and water. We will then work “back” to see how those spiritualities intersected in both constructive and non-constructive ways. Dr. Peter Huff’s and Dr. Michael Taylor’s articles on the interreligious and educational phenomena during this time period will be utilized as primary reading materials. Following the deductive approach, we will finalize with thoughts from Mike Taylor’s published work (2019) regarding implications of shared cross-cultural affinity and visionary pragmatism, and both David Treuer’s (2019) seminal work, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (in particular his final chapter on “Digital Indians”), and Vine Deloria’s (1969) landmark publication, *Custer Died for Your Sins*. From these final readings we will attempt to discern future implications of what was scaffolded with past and present understandings, all in an attempt to glean via multiple perspectives for a collective meaning of DAPL and Mní Wičóni (“[water] gives me life”).

**Curriculum Designer’s Biography**

* Dr. Michael Taylor received both his Ph.D. and Master's Degree from the Marian University in Fond du Lac, WI. Degrees focused on curriculum and instruction leadership and educational leadership.
* Dissertation: *An Autoethnographic Journey to the Self* (self-study). Has since participated in several publications and more presentations.
* Holds active Wisconsin certification in administration (K–12 principal) and teaching (broad field social studies, grades 7–12). Has taught full time and sub taught extensively in Catholic and public K–12 settings. Also a Catholic School Elementary/middle school principal. Prior to being hired at the University of Mary (presently associate professor of education), he was very active as an adjunct professor at Silver Lake College, Marian University, National Louis University, and Lakeland College. Has been teaching undergraduate and graduate students since spring of 2006.
* Undergraduate degree in Government from Lawrence University, Appleton, WI.
* Born in Pontiac, MI; raised in Frankfort MI.
* Married to Kate (1st Grade teacher at Saint Ann Catholic School, Bismarck) and they have four children: Michael (Graduate student at U Mary); August (recent graduate of U Mary, Bismarck, ND); Douglas (sophomore at U Mary); and, Frances (freshman at U Mary). Family pet: our rescue beagle, "Annie."
* Aside from his passion to learn and teach, he enjoys down time with family, he’s an avid reader of fiction and non-fiction, he loves to hike and work out weekly, and he enjoys gardening, tinkering in the garage, hunting, and fishing.

**Curriculum Expressions**

This curriculum design is based upon a constructivist, integrative, autobiographical/autoethnographic approach that is culturally responsive in nature (Pinar, 1975; Vygotsky, 1978; Ladsen and Billings, 1995; Taylor, 2012; Nieto, 2013; and, Sleeter, 2017). This framework approaches learning from a holistic perspective that is centered on the elements of three themes (historical, cultural, and spiritual) that aid in discerning the implications of the Dakota Access Pipeline Protest (DAPL) as it relates to the Lakota concept of Mní Wičóni, “[Water] gives me life.” Using this model, teachers/professors and preservice college students (or possibly high school-aged learners) collaborate to craft learning environments that value multiple ways of knowing and diverse forms of literacy.

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| “We are protectors, not protesters. When you protect, you are upholding your sacred responsibility to your ancestors, your lands, and the creator.”  —Queen Sacheen, Ancestral Pride, Standing Rock |
| “Water is really sacred. Water is life. Mother Earth doesn’t need us. We need her…. We shouldn’t have to fight for our water. We should just be able to have clean drinking water.”  —Autumn Peltier, self-described Water Warrior, Canada |

**Enduring Understandings**

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have been living in the area now known as the Great Plains—more specifically North Dakota (Cannonball River) and the region cut through by the Dakota Access Pipeline. In this region, Native people have contributed and continue to contribute and adapt in significant ways, whether historically, culturally, or spiritually. One enduring understanding will involve discovering and discerning the significance of the phenomena of treaties and evolving territorial lines that envelope the DAPL protest area. Learners will utilize resources examining treaties between Native American people and the United States Government. These resources delineate the general area where the DAPL protest took place and define many of the issues leading to and continuing today regarding the sacredness of land and water. Further discovery and discernment will be applied to additional examples of Native American and U.S. Government encounters via examples such as numerous military engagements as those at Wounded Knee, Killdeer, and the Bluff Where They Dig for Paint, i.e. the University of Mary in Bismarck. The reservation system, allotments, boarding schools, and other colonizing changes will be used as examples clarifying historical trauma and an overall reluctance to embrace “good faith” negotiation by way of government hearings and the like in the establishment of DAPL.

**Essential Questions**

* What were seminal adaptations, creations, and contributions historically, culturally, and spiritually made by Native people in the affected part of the Great Plains leading up to the DAPL Protest (and possibly since)?
* What was/is the impact of European exploration, in particular, concerning trade, territorial establishment, and treaties?
* How do multiple perceptions—such as the colonizing and romanticizing views, and then even Indigenous self-reflections—impact the authentic discernment of Native people historically, culturally, and spiritually?

**Standards or Key Knowledge Objectives**

* North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (NDESPB)  
  50015.3-3b. The program requires the study of adaptation to diverse students. Candidates understand how students differ in their development and approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.
* 50015.3-3d. The program requires the study of active engagement in learning. Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior among students to foster active engagement in learning, self-motivation, and positive social interaction and to create supportive learning environments.
* 50015.5-5a. The program requires the study of practices and behaviors of developing career teachers. Candidates understand and apply practices and behaviors that are characteristic of developing career teachers.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)  
Exceptional Needs Standards  
Standard III: Diversity: Accomplished teachers of students with exceptional needs create an environment in which equitable treatment, fairness, and respect for diversity are modeled, taught, and practiced by all, and they take steps to ensure access to quality learning opportunities for all students.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)  
Content Standards for Advanced Special Educators

* Standard #3: Programs, Services & Outcomes: Special education specialists facilitate the continuous improvement of general and special education programs, supports, and services at the classroom, school, and system levels for individuals with exceptionalities.
  + 3.2 Special education specialists use understanding of cultural, social, and economic diversity and individual learner differences to inform the development and improvement of programs, supports, and services for individuals with exceptionalities.
* Standard #5: Leadership & Policy: Special education specialists provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices, and create positive and productive work environments.
  + 5.2 Special education specialists support and use linguistically and culturally responsive practices. Standard #7: Collaboration: Special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. 7.1 Special education specialists use culturally responsive practices to enhance collaboration.

Council for Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP)  
Standard 2. Clinical Partnerships and Practice: The provider ensures that effective partnerships [components 2.1 and 2.2] and high-quality clinical practice [component 2.3] are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P–12 students’ learning and development. Partners: (2.1) co-construct mutually beneficial P–12 school and community arrangements, including technology-based collaborations, for clinical preparation and share responsibility for continuous improvement of candidate preparation. Partnerships for clinical preparation can follow a range of forms, participants, and functions. They establish mutually agreeable expectations for candidate entry, preparation, and exit; ensure that theory and practice are linked; maintain coherence across clinical and academic components of preparation; and share accountability for candidate outcomes.

North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings   
1. All students should be encouraged to affirm themselves as unique individuals and they should accept and respect the differences shaping individual identities of other students.   
2. Students should learn about their group from the school curriculum and about the diverse groups in American society to have a basis of appreciation and respect for cultural diversity.   
3. Students should engage in intergroup dialogues that promote cross-cultural communication skills and reduce biases and prejudices.   
4. Students should learn to be critical thinkers able to analyze historical and contemporary issues in order to make intelligent decisions about problems and conflicts.  
5. Students should engage in activities that address social justice issues and be encouraged to develop and implement strategies to respond to such issues in their school and their community.

**Program Description**

Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and Mní Wičóni: This curriculum seeks to discover the historical, cultural and spiritual relationships and implications that met and continue to meet at the nexus of the DAPL protest in North Dakota (2016–2017). It will explore all three primary areas underpinning the nearly two-year Dakota Access Pipeline protest. An underlying question for exploration when considering teaching college students, future teachers, or high school students this phenomenon is: What are the historical, cultural, and spiritual implications of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest as viewed through multiple lenses, including the primary theme that surfaced in that period, which was Mní Wičóni, the Lakota concept for “[water] gives me life”?

Objectives: (what do I want the audience to leave knowing?):

1. Participants will be able to distinguish between the historical, cultural, and spiritual underpinnings when considering the implications of the DAPL protest.
2. Participants will be introduced to the Lakota term Mní Wičóni as a way of understanding a perspective relative to the DAPL protest.
3. Participants will explore various cross-cultural pedagogical approaches, including a newly developed theoretical approach called Shared Cross-Cultural Affinity (Taylor 2019, 2020). They will apply this theoretical approach to learning and teaching the historical, cultural, and spiritual relationships and implications when discerning multiple perspectives relating to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

**Basic Curriculum, Understandings, and Considerations**

**Lesson 1: Historical Context**

**Essential & Entry Questions**

* How did historical “tools” like maps, treaties, laws, etc. impact Native people’s lives?
* What are the similarities and differences past and present to such historical tools?
* What contributions were made by Native people in terms of Indigenous, historical and contemporary tools?
* While tracing the history of the region from Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives, and when synthesizing each perspective of history, what story does it tell and how does it inform the DAPL protest?

**Learning Objectives**

See the standards and key knowledge objectives above.

**Students will:**

* Utilize historical “tools” like maps, treaties, laws, etc., while discerning their impact on Native people’s lives.
* Compare similarities and differences, past and present, of the historical tools utilized.
* Examine contributions made by Native people in terms of Indigenous historical and contemporary tools.
* Analyze the story of history from both a Euro-American and indigenous perspective, when synthesizing each perspective of history, and determine the story told, including how it informs the DAPL protest.

**Materials**

Student access to computers or iPads

**Resources**

* DAPL area historical conflicts:<http://thefirstscout.blogspot.com/search?q=Apple+Creek>
* Recent DAPL area Boarding School book publication/review, *Stringing Rosaries,*<http://thefirstscout.blogspot.com/2020/01/stringing-rosaries-review.html>
* DAPL-area Treaties:<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties#sq3>
* First Scout, <http://thefirstscout.blogspot.com/>
* General educational and historical information:<https://statemuseum.nd.gov/education/resources>; nationalparks.org
* Economic interests in pipelines:  
  <https://www.desmogblog.com/2018/02/28/koch-seminar-network-dakota-access-keystone-xl-reins-act>
* Ruling on the legality of DAPL through August 2020.
* <https://earthjustice.org/features/faq-standing-rock-litigation?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI5Of16uW26wIVox-tBh2eNQXlEAAYASAAEgIjDvD_BwE>

**Learning Modalities**

All modalities will be taken into consideration via a combined approach of differentiated instruction within the guise of a culturally responsive pedagogical approach, all within the multicultural curriculum.

**Situated Practice**

Students should be presented with:

* a broad historical overview of Great Plains Native people through the resources noted in the resource section of this curriculum;
* a visualization of maps, treaties, territories and other visual supports highlighting the Great Plains Native people;
* an overlay of seminal map work and research from the First Scout blog (see above).
* examples and exemplars of historical timelines, modeling both Euro-American and Indigenous research.

**Overt Instruction**

Focused instruction will occur in the development of student skills in the discernment and application of historical tools/research aforementioned (in relation to and collaboration with other groups working in the areas of history and spirituality). In addition, students will receive instruction in the design and development of a timeline that could incorporate such things as dioramas of key historical events as well as the geographic/geologic sites (see First Scout log site) and Elder testimonials. Students will construct dioramas from references they receive or research about historically important places, references based in the primary documents, and contemporary expressions. Students could be exposed to area scholars and/or Elders who can offer historical testimony and add to the student’s research base for understanding the overall historical context. The visitation of area historical or cultural centers is also recommended as a means of instruction outside the traditional classroom, but also as a resource for student research.

**Curricular Framing**

It is important to understand that two historical narratives are being presented, from both Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives. Since a Euro-American historical narrative is still the dominant one in U.S. classrooms, it is critical that Indigenous perspectives of history are highlighted. This will help bring balance and supply missing dimensions to the overall human experience that shaped/shapes the future of this shared country.

**Transformed Practice**

This lesson guides the student in the conceptual understanding of multiple historical perspectives critical to accurately portraying history and finding deeper understanding of it. The historical background helps frame present and future events, such as the DAPL protest.

**Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Monitor student fluency in navigating the National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, and other web based, oral, or print resources that serve as primary sources, being sure always to keep Indigenous perspectives in the mix.
* Engage students in discussions to assess their understanding of the implications of having multiple historical accounts of the same phenomena.
* As student groups develop their projects, such as timelines, dioramas, posters, presentations, recordings of Elder testimonials, or other “in the field” activities, question their use of materials so as to convey historical accuracy, especially in terms of multiple research perspectives represented, most notably Indigenous views.

**Student Outcomes**

* Students will understand significant historical contributions by Native peoples in the Great Plains area, particularly as they inform the DAPL Protest (and beyond).
* Students will create historically accurate depictions of the Native people in the Great Plains area using a variety of web-based and other learning tools (for example, tapping into materials provided by the National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, the First Scout blog, and so on).
* Students will understand the historical research approaches used by Native people as well as those used by others to shape their historical accounts and projects.
* Students will collaborate with others in thematic groups to find common threads. Ideally, they will demonstrate the impactful and more accurate nature of a holistic research endeavor.

**Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Student-constructed historical representations (e.g. timelines, dioramas, Elder testimonies, or another student-lead representation) could be put on display and assessed.
* Student-created digital presentations of the historical context (e.g. Prezi, EdCanvas, PPT, etc.) could be shared and assessed.
* Student-curated representation of historical themes uncovered “in the field” and how they are woven together could be presented and assessed. The field site could be a local national/state park, museum and/or cultural center.

**Using Primary Sources**

Share general advice drawn from personal historical stories and accounts while collaborating with area Tribal communities, particularly with Elders and traditional cultural bearers, whether “in the field” or sought out to present in classes. Historical documents and quotes from news stories contemporaneous with the events of 2016–2017 could also be considered primary sources for student analysis. How well (or poorly) did the prevailing media cover the events at the protests? Was coverage published by Tribal communities as events were unfolding, and how did their coverage compare to the mainstream? Which sources were more likely to recognize historical, cultural, and spiritual issues as especially relevant?

**Lesson 2: Cultural Context**

**Entry Questions**

* What cultural impacts on Native people in the Great Plains area rendered the most significant?
* What are specific cultural descriptions of Native people closest to DAPL that are unique, and which are shared particularly among those Native people that make up Oceti Sakowin (Seven Councils Fire).
* How significant is Oceti Sakowin in relation to the DAPL Protest?
* Considering Native culture explored, identify culturally, what were the significant contributions made relative to the DAPL Protest movement past and present?

**Learning Objectives**

See key knowledge objectives mentioned above.

**Students will:**

* Utilize cultural “tools” like demographics, censuses, anthropological and archeological data, etc., while discerning the impact of settler colonialism on Native people’s lives.
* Compare similarities and differences of past and present impacts, in cultural tools they utilize.
* Examine contributions made by Native people in terms of Indigenous cultural tools of past and present.
* Analyze the story of culture from Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives, and when synthesizing each perspective of culture, and determining the story told, include how it informs the DAPL protest.

**Materials**

* Student access to computers or iPads.
* Native and non-Native cultures in “contact”:<https://www.ndstudies.gov/>; nationalparks.org; <https://www.nps.gov/lecl/index.htm>; <https://www.nps.gov/lecl/learn/historyculture/american-indians-and-the-lewis-and-clark-expedition.htm>
* DAPL area Native curricular/cultural guidelines & “standards”:<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/indian-education/north-dakota-native-american-essential-understandings>;<https://www.nps.gov/articles/honoring-tribal-legacies.htm>;
* First Scout, <http://thefirstscout.blogspot.com/>;
* General historical, educational information:<https://statemuseum.nd.gov/education/resources>
* DAPL videos/resources (also see attached documents): <https://vimeo.com/205766624>;<https://www.facebook.com/KFYRtv/videos/10154355835084103/>;
* Physical publications and print versions of research resources.

**Learning Modalities**

All modalities will be taken into consideration via a combined approach of differentiated instruction within the guise of a culturally responsive pedagogical approach, all within the multicultural curriculum.

**Situated Practice**

Students should be presented with:

* a broad cultural overview of Great Plains Native people through the resources noted in the resource section of this curriculum;
* visualization of census data (Euro-American and Indigenous);
* Artifacts/archeology, anthropological information, and other visual supports highlighting the Great Plains Native people;
* overlay and synthesis of data emanating from above sources along with work and research from the First Scout blog (see above);
* examples and exemplars of both Euro-American and Indigenous research explicating Native culture in the past, present, and even projecting into the future, when considering the implications of the DAPL Protest.

**Overt Instruction**

Focused instruction will occur in the development of student skills in the discernment and application of cultural tools/research aforementioned, in collaboration with other groups working in the areas of history and spirituality. In addition, students will receive instruction in the design and development of cultural artifacts/data that could incorporate i.e. dioramas of key cultural as well as specific geographic sites and locations relative to the actual DAPL Protest location (see the First Scout blog site). In addition, they will construct from the references to culturally important practices, rituals, customs, etc., and overall references found in the primary documents and expressions. Students could be exposed to area scholars and/or Elders who can offer cultural context, testimony, and suggest additional research material relating to the overall historical context, along with contemporary expressions. Usage of area historical/cultural/spiritual centers is also recommended as a way of not only providing a different setting for instruction, but also offering a resource for student research and independent learning.

**Curricular Framing**

It is important to understand that multiple cultural narratives are being presented in terms of Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives. Since a Euro-American historical narrative is still the dominant one in U.S. classrooms, it is critical that Indigenous perspectives of history are highlighted. This will help bring balance and supply missing dimensions to the overall human experience that shaped/shapes the future of this shared country.

**Transformed Practice**

This lesson guides the student in the conceptual understanding of multiple cultural perspectives critical to accurately portraying Native culture (past, present, and future) and finding a deeper understanding of it. The cultural approach helps frame present and future events, such as the DAPL protest.

**Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Monitor student fluency in navigating the National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, and other web-based, oral, and print resources that serve as primary sources about cultures, being sure to include Indigenous considerations.
* Engage students in discussions concerning the implications of multiple cultural accounts of the same phenomena.
* As student groups develop their cultural projects (such as artifacts, dioramas, posters, presentations, recordings of Elders and other “in the field” activities, etc.), question their use of materials to convey culture accurately in terms of multiple research perspectives represented, most notably Indigenous.

**Student Outcomes**

* Students will understand the significant cultural contributions by Native peoples in the Great Plains area, particularly as they inform the DAPL Protest (and beyond).
* Students will create culturally accurate depictions of the Native people in the Great Plains area using a variety of web-based and other learning tools (e.g. National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, First Scout blog, etc.).
* Students will understand cultural research approaches used by Native people as well as those used by non-Natives to determine their cultural accounts.
* Students will collaborate with other thematic groups (working on the historical context or the spiritual dimensions) to find common threads in an effort to demonstrate the impactful and accurate nature of a holistic research endeavor.

**Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Student-constructed representations of culture (e.g. timelines, dioramas, Elder testimonies, etc.) could be put on display and assessed.
* Student digital presentations of the cultural context (e.g. Prezi, EdCanvas, PPT, etc.) could be shared and assessed.
* Student-curated representations of cultural themes uncovered “in the field,” and considering how they are woven together, could be presented and assessed. The field site could be a local national/state park, museum and/or cultural center.

**Using Primary Sources**

Share general advice drawn from personal cultural stories and accounts while collaborating with area Tribal communities, particularly with Elders and traditional cultural bearers often sought out “in the field” or invited to present in classes.

**Lesson 3: Spiritual Context**

**Entry Questions**

* What are key spiritual foundations to Native people in the Great Plains area?
* Given the Lakota expression Mní Wičóni (“[water] gives me life”), what significance does the word hold to Lakota people, including the fundamental aspects of the DAPL protest?
* What role did the ecumenical movement serve during the DAPL protest? Considering specific spiritual leaders like Black Elk, and accounts such as those by White Buffalo Calf Women, how do these spiritual models inform Native spirituality and assist with understanding movements like the DAPL protest?
* Consider your own religious/spiritual practices. Considering where such practices align and may be unique; what purpose does such an exercise play in an understanding of Native spirituality?

**Learning Objectives**

See key knowledge objectives, above.

**Students will:**

* Utilize learning “tools” amplifying spiritual contextual examples (e.g. ritual, ceremony, narrative accounts, Euro-American influence, etc.) while discerning the impact on Native people’s life.
* Compare similarities and differences, past and present, of spiritual practices under study.
* Examine contributions made by Native people in terms of Indigenous spiritual practice.
* Analyze the story of spiritual practice from Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives. When synthesizing each perspective, determine the story told, including how it informs the DAPL protest, particularly as it relates to the concept of Mní Wičóni (“[water] gives me life”) and Euro-American ecumenism expressed at the camp (and beyond). Clashes in worldview often arise. Commonalities and distinctions are important to pursue.

**Materials**

Student access to computers or iPads.

Ecumenical & Educational “Zeal” at the DAPL Protest Camp:<https://www.se.edu/native-american/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/09/A-NAS-2017-Proceedings-Huff.pdf>;<https://www.se.edu/native-american/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/09/A-NAS-2017-Proceedings-Taylor.pdf>

Videos (and please see other attached documentation for more background):<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW8qYSVECNc>;<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzxi8xwli2k>;<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb8ZGQ9GUng>;<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx8BCs4NzOQ>;<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4eGkCnDBHE>

General spiritual, educational background/resources:<https://statemuseum.nd.gov/education/resources>:<https://www.ndstudies.gov/>;

**Learning Modalities**

All modalities will be taken into consideration via a combined approach of differentiated instruction within the guise of a culturally responsive pedagogical approach, all within the multicultural curriculum.

**Situated Practice**

Students should be presented with:

* a broad spiritual overview of Great Plains Native people through the resources noted in the resource section of this curriculum;
* a visualization of i.e. spiritual practice (from both Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives), narratives, oral accounts/demonstrations, and other visual supports highlighting the Great Plains Native people;
* an overlay and a synthesis of data emanating from the above sources along with work and research from the First Scout blog (see above);
* examples and exemplars of Euro-American and Indigenous research explicating Native spirituality in this context—past, present and even future—when considering the implications of the DAPL protest (including the concept of Mní Wičóni and ecumenism);
* Native students should not be leaned upon to provide their own personal perspectives on any of this, for there could be content in the spiritual area that could be traumatic for them.

**Overt Instruction**

Focused instruction will occur in the development of student skills in the discernment and application of the spiritual context (in relation to and in collaboration with other groups working in the thematic areas of historical context and cultural data and research aforementioned. In addition, students will receive instruction in the design and development of spiritual practices past and present that could incorporate, for example, demonstrations of ritual and ceremony, and expressions of spirituality in dioramas, and providing foundational understanding and context for like practices at the DAPL protest sites. In addition, students will construct projects from the references to spiritually important practices, rituals, customs, etc., and general references drawn from primary documents and first-hand testimonies or observed expressions. Students could be exposed to area clergy, scholars, and/or Elders who can offer spiritual context, testimony, and additional research sources for the overall historical context. The usage of historical/cultural/spiritual centers is also recommended as a way of not only instructing outside the usual confines of the classroom, but also to providing additional resources for student research and learning.

**Curriculum Framing**

It is important to understand that multiple spiritual narratives are being presented in terms of Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives. Since a Euro-American spiritual (or Christian) narrative is still the dominant one in U.S. classrooms, it is critical that Indigenous perspectives on spirituality are highlighted. This will help bring balance and supply missing dimensions to the overall human experience that shaped the future of this shared country.

**Transformed Practice**

This lesson guides the student in the conceptual understanding of multiple spiritual perspectives critical to accurately portraying Native culture (past, present and future), and this portrayal’s relationship to present and future historical events like the DAPL Protest (highlighted by both Mní Wičóni and ecumenism).

**Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Monitor student fluency in navigating the National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, and other web-based, print, and oral resources that serve as primary sources, being sure to include Indigenous considerations.
* Engage students in discussions concerning the implications of multiple spiritual accounts of the same phenomena..
* As student groups develop their spiritual contextual projects, such as timelines, dioramas, posters, presentations, recordings of Elder/clergy testimonials, or other “in the field” activities, question their use of materials so as to convey spiritual accuracy, especially in terms of multiple research perspectives represented, most notably Indigenous views.

**Student Outcomes**

* Students will understand the significant spiritual contributions by Native peoples in the Great Plains area, particularly as they inform the DAPL Protest (and beyond).
* Students will create culturally accurate depictions of the Native people in the Great Plains area using a variety of web based and other learning materials (e.g. from the National Park Service, North Dakota Heritage Center, First Scout blog, etc.), making every effort to represent ALL perspectives.
* Students will understand research approaches used by Native people as well as those used by non-Natives to shape their spiritual, contextual accounts and projects.
* Students will collaborate with other thematic groups to find common threads. Ideally, they will demonstrate the impactful and more accurate nature of a holistic research endeavor.

**Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

* Student-constructed spiritual representations, for example, rituals/practices, demonstrations, clergy/Elder sharing, dioramas or like presentation formats with peers and guests in attendance.
* Teachers should be on guard to ensure all students have a comfort level with this part of the unit. If Native students in the classroom will feel traumatized or offended by misrepresentations of spiritual practices and beliefs by non-Native students, a discussion around the very nature of the assignment could be as much of a lesson as the actual completion of such dioramas and presentations.
* Student digital presentations of the spiritual context, using, for example, Prezi, EdCanvas, PPT, YouTube video, Zoom, etc.
* Representations of understandings derived “in the field” and in collaboration with other thematic groups (history, culture) demonstrating how each theme is woven together. A field site could be a local/national/state park, museum and/or cultural center.

**Using Primary Sources**

Share general advice drawn from personal spiritual stories and accounts while collaborating with area Tribal communities, particularly with Elders and traditional cultural bearers often encountered “in the field” or sought out to present in classes.

**Summative Assessment Options**

* For a final project, students would make a synthesis of all three primary areas: historical, cultural, and spiritual to share among peers and guests via a number of ways that facilitate learning (e.g. EdCanvas, Prezi, PowerPoint, etc.). Key to the project is that it be research-based and students be afforded an opportunity for revision and adaptation along the way, with rich, constructive feedback from peers, guests, and teachers/professors.
* Students (working as cooperative groups and facilitated by elements Project Based Learning PBL) could submit dioramas, posters, recorded testimonials, and other types of presentations, in a format conducive to sharing widely with peers and guests during the course of a day or days. Evaluation guidelines can be generated to allow peers, guests, and teachers/professors to assess the final projects during that period. Regardless of the nature of the project, self-assessment should also be present in the mix of assessments.
* As part of the self-assessment process, students will keep a comprehensive journal chronicling their research journey. The journal will be two fold – double entry style, documenting all research cited and reflected upon, and a more daily journal chronicling the narrative process of the research venture. Each dimensions of the journal will play a key role in documenting specific research underpinning the project, AND allowing reference when finalizing a comprehensive self-assessment at the project’s end.

**Extending the Unit**

Water Protection: Suggested ways of extending this unit include the incorporation of additional historical examples of Tribal Nations’ efforts to defend waters essential for life.

1. Garrison Dam on the Missouri River, North Dakota; scientific and social points of view: <https://nmnh.typepad.com/rogers_archaeology_lab/2017/10/garrison-dam.html>
2. Columbia River dams, history and purpose:  
   <https://www.nwcouncil.org/reports/columbia-river-history/damshistory#:~:text=Construction%20began%20at%20Grand%20Coulee,the%20Kootenai%2C%20both%20in%201975.>

Sacred Lands: Another potential extension of this unit could include another contemporary protest, such as the one seen at Mt. Rushmore in 2020 and its antecedent in 1970.

1. <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/07/03/native-americans-mount-rushmore-protest>

**Appendices**

Please see the additional documents on this website, along with the references below.

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