Project Title: Bursting Racial Stereotypes Past and Present: The Impact of viewing Native Americans through a distorted lens.

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Essential question(s) for the unit and/or lesson:

1. What is revealed about race relations between Native American and European American settlers?

2. What are some of the generalizations and stereotypes made about Native Americans and have they changed much, if at all today? Why do you think that is?

3. Are these stereotypes racist and if so, why is it important to be aware such misrepresentation of a culture?

4. Are the stereotypes told from the perspective of a dominant group of people, if so what are they attempting to accomplish?

5. What is the impact of such portrayals and depictions on today’s Native Americans?

6. What role did Native Americans play in their own stereotypical portrayals?

7. How have Native Americans recovered from the negative stereotypes and threats of historical annihilation?

Learning objectives (skills, content and attitudes) for the lesson:

- Students will use Library Media resources (print/non-print) to analyze a primary source document and images from the early 1600s – 1800s as well as political cartoons/comics from the 1900s through the 2000s in order to identify, compare and contrast, generalizations from both time periods.
- Students will understand that today’s popular misconceptions and mistreatment of Native Americans is directly attributed to early New England propaganda.
- Students will learn the meaning of the word stereotypes, why stereotypes have been used against varies ethnic groups?
- Students will understand how stereotypes have historically impacted negatively Native Americans, and other groups.
- Students will understand the mediums in which stereotypes have been portrayed media, film, literature, comedy etc.
- Students will learn about the currents issues impacting Native Americans today.
- Students will gain understanding of the social, political and economic impact of these historical stereotypes.
- Students will learn to apply empathy throughout all of their classroom experiences.

**Overview of Lesson:**

- the context of the lesson within a broader unit of study
- a summary of the learning activities

In preparation for the reading of the Native American themed novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, students will explore historical stereotypes about Native Americans.

**Mini-Lesson:** (Class Opener/Do Now) Open the class with a motivator. Show the video: Steve Stossel’s Video Report “The Power of Stereotypes,” [http://vimeo.com/42091827](http://vimeo.com/42091827), which includes original footage from the teacher Jane Elliott that decided to show her third graders what it was like to live with discrimination, so she divided her classes by eye color. ABC News was there to film one of her tests and it’s stunning results.

Write Brainstorming Activity on the board: Ask students to take a few minutes to think about what you think the word stereotype means? Write down 5 things that come to mind. (Examples may be bias, dissing, judgmental, bullying, racial profiling, racism, discrimination, preconceived notions, derogatory, demeaning, depictions, caricatures, bias etc.) Write responses on board. Define the term stereotype.

Review the vocabulary words on the side board. Explain the differences in individual and group stereotypes.

Class discussion: What have been some of the historical perspectives or misrepresentations of Native Americans? Who are Native Americans?

**Group Work:**

Students will be placed into groups of four. Each group will view various Images of Native Americans (photos, caricatures, comics etc.) (See PowerPoint for Examples) The will receive a large white board paper entitled “What is your Initial Impression? Is the Image a Stereotype? Why or Why Not?” Students will write down their initial responses to all the images. Then share out as a group. Class Discussion: Ask students what is the legacy or impact of the usage of such stereotypes? Possible response may be Ex: Fear, low self-esteem, hatred, anger, under-education, inferiority complex, self-hatred, abandonment, imprisonment, high crime rates, substance abuse, unemployment, discriminatory legislation (ex: NYC Stop & Frisk, Stand Your Ground,) Outsider Manipulation, loss of hope.

**Direct Instruction: Guided Practice:**

Each group will then be assigned two primary documents (See PowerPoint for Examples) to read. Instruct students to pay particular attention to the language used to describe the Native Americans, and to the aspects of their culture and appearance. Students will use yellow highlighters to highlight all of the negative stereotypes that occur. After students have read the primary documents we will list all of the “negative stereotypes on the board”. Or I may have students use the Document Analysis Worksheet issued by the National Archives [http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/).

As a class they will discuss their reactions to the following questions.

1) Does the author describe Native Americans in a favorable way?
2) What are some descriptive words the author uses that you think a Native American would object to?
3) What does the author believe that audiences want to see when it comes to Native Americans?
4) Would you want to see a movie based on the short passages you just read? Why or why not?
5) Should professional and non-professional teams be allowed to use Native American references as there mascots?
Independent Practice: Using the library computer area as well as the online databases students will research articles about the impact of racial stereotyping on Native American Communities throughout the United States. Students will take notes on the Note taking Worksheet. Students will share their individual conclusions.

Sharing /Reflection/ Student Practice/Application: Ask students to share how they felt about the lesson. What did they learn? Were there times during the lesson when they felt angry, sad, ashamed or even embarrassed? Each student will be given a balloon; on this balloon they will write the 3 most troubling stereotypes they have experienced during the lesson or stereotypes that bother them in particular. We will share out as a group what stereotypes we chose and I will begin to burst the balloons in a plastic garbage bag. Bursting the balloons is symbolic in ending the usage of stereotypes. The balloons serve as a conduit in this lesson in which students will become empowered to give me balloons to “burst” for them. By bursting the stereotypes that have historically labeled individuals or groups, ultimately we the stereotype will have no power.

Assessments: Collect all writing samples (note sheets) from students, count as classwork credit. Student participation goes towards participation credit.

Adaptations: Technology (videos), art and hands on items with many visuals have been included to accommodate different learning styles.

Technology Integration: Use of on-line database, the internet, film clips, videos and DVD.

Homework: Students must log onto Indian Country Now and find an individual current events article to read and share out in group circle. Reflection on what was learned today. Write a short 1 page essay about a time when a stereotype has caused you to have the wrong impression about someone, or caused someone to have the wrong impression about you. Does perception matter?

Summary/closure: Wrap up with Show the YouTube Clip: New Video by Native American Students Shatters Stereotypes NEA Today (National Education Association) http://neatoday.org/2012/03/05/new-video-by-native-american-students-shatters-stereotypes/ Ask class what they will do to end stereotyping within themselves? Response Examples may be: Make conscious efforts not to use them and encourage others around you not. Anti-bullying, not reinforce racial stereotypes or historically offensive words.

Extensions/Follow up:
Day 2 How have Native Americans recovered from the negative stereotypes and threats of historical annihilation?
Part 1. Students will begin to research information about the Spokane Indian Reservation in Spokane, Washington, as well as and watch the Time Interview of Sherman Alexie http://www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,1908400416001_2127147,00.html. Using the note taking sheet students should include background information about the tribe, and current information about what types of self-preservation of tribal customs, traditions and/or religions.

Part 2. Students will look for one online article about the impact of stereotyping on Native American communities throughout the U.S. Students will continue to apply empathy towards the other histories they will learn throughout the school year.
Part 3. This segment allows for students to researching the perspectives that has allowed for empowerment of various Native American Tribes Ex. Rewriting history and stories to change the incomplete, incorrect distorted images of the past. Positive views of Native Americans in the past using the document “Thomas Morton, Description of the Indians in New England (1637) [Thomas Morton was one of the founders of the settlement at Mount Wollaston (present day Quincy, MA, south of Boston), a renegade group of colonists who became the object of the ire and punishments of the Puritan colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay or any other articles they may find.

Part 4. Students will find various facts about Native American throughout history that have contributed to their individual tribes and the United States.

Part 5. What are Native Americans doing today positively within their communities as well as outside? Part 6.*Possibly include a trip to the Museum of Natural History in New York City.

**Historical background (brief content context for fellow teachers):**

Stereotypes are used on a daily basis. Racial stereotypes aimed at Native Americans began early in United States History in order to justify enslavement, sovereignty, land removal, tribal abuses, and rhetoric. Books, photographs, films, newspapers, dime store novels, recordings, videos, radio shows and television have all used Indians, usually as foils for the so called heroic settler’s beliefs that America was ordained and destined to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans (Manifest Destiny) or (Doctrine of Discovery). Hundreds of years and thousands of stories later, very few depictions have come close to their reality. Perhaps if we better understand how these stereotypes came to be and how they affect the individuals and groups, we might think twice before using them ourselves. With this lesson students may learn to remove these stereotypes from our thought processes. Students will be given balloons. On these balloons students will write any of the stereotypes they have read or any stereotypes that have historically labeled individuals or groups. The balloons serve as a conduit in this lesson in which students will face these distorted images and become motivated enough to give the teacher and librarian the balloons to “burst” for them. By bursting the balloons students will feel empowered, ultimately no longer giving the stereotypes power.

**Primary sources used in the lesson (with citations):**

**Images**


Documents


Annotated bibliography of secondary sources used in the lesson or for historical context:

This source provides a framework for improving the study of race and racism's influence on psychological health and illness on oppressed peoples. In theory it explains how racism determines lifestyles and life chances. It also clarifies the individual and institutional nature of racism.

The two-volume American Indians and Popular Culture seeks to help readers understand American Indians by analyzing their relationships with the popular culture of the United States and Canada. Volume 1 covers media, sports, and politics, while Volume 2 covers literature, arts, and resistance. Both volumes focus on stereotypes, detailing how they were created and why they are still allowed to exist.

This article discusses a report that refutes the perceived public notion in the U.S. of all Asian-Americans as high academic achievers. It was good to look at another perspective to compare possible experiences of Native American, Latino Americans and African American suggests. The study suggests that this image may negatively impact ethnic and racial tensions. It concludes that the majority of Asian-American students attend two or four-year public schools.

This article suggests that racial stereotyping can influence negative behaviors such as alcohol and substance addiction. This article also suggests that many treatment centers turn people away and are unaware of their own biases.