



Native American Education: Past, Present, and Future Assimilation



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Grade Level	9th – 11th Grade	Time Frame	120 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	2 periods
Course	Oklahoma History, U.S. History		

Essential Question

Why did the U.S. government use assimilation to educate native children? How did assimilation in education affect Native people?

Summary

In this lesson, students will review, analyze, and evaluate the history of Native American education, focusing on boarding schools (specifically Carlisle Indian Industrial School), terminology, and their transformation over the past 150 years. Students will analyze primary sources from the past, learn about extant boarding schools, and envision the future of Native American education.

Snapshot

Engage

Students formulate a S-I-T evaluation of a clip from the miniseries *Into the West*.

Explore

Students examine the actual student records of Native children who attended Carlisle Indian Industrial School and discuss its impact on their lives.

Explain

Students read and highlight an article summarizing the history of Native American education from the past to the present. They then use the Honeycomb Harvest strategy to gauge their understanding of terms and concepts.

Extend

Students use a Choice Board to explore three different resources focusing on the past, present, and future of Native American education.

Evaluate

Students re-evaluate the essential questions and determine what the future of Native American education will look like.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.5.1B: effects of the federal policy of assimilation including Indian boarding schools (1880s-1940s)

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

USH.1.3C: Examine the rationale behind federal policies toward American Indians including the establishment of reservations, attempts at assimilation, the end of the Indian Wars at Wounded Knee, and the impact of the Dawes Act on tribal sovereignty and land ownership.

Attachments

- [Choice Board--Native American Education - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Choice Board--Native American Education - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Choice Board--Native American Education.docx](#)
- [Choice Board--Native American Education.pdf](#)
- [History of Native American Education - A Snapshot - Spanish.docx](#)
- [History of Native American Education - A Snapshot - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [History of Native American Education - A Snapshot.docx](#)
- [History of Native American Education - A Snapshot.pdf](#)
- [Honeycomb Harvest-Native American Education - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Honeycomb Harvest-Native American Education - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Honeycomb Harvest-Native American Education.docx](#)
- [Honeycomb Harvest-Native American Education.pdf](#)
- [Lesson-Slides-Native American Education.pptx](#)
- [Native American Education Note Catcher-Teacher's Guide.docx](#)
- [Native American Education Note Catcher-Teacher's Guide.pdf](#)
- [Native American Education-Note Catcher-Carlisle School - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Native American Education-Note Catcher-Carlisle School - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Native American Education-Note Catcher-Carlisle School.docx](#)
- [Native American Education-Note Catcher-Carlisle School.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Native American Education Note Catcher (attached; one per student)
- "History of Native American Education - A Snapshot" reading (attached; one per student)
- Honeycomb Harvest handout (attached; one per student or small group)
- [Choice Board](#)
- Teacher's Guide (attached)
- Computers with internet capabilities
- Pens/pencils
- Blank paper

15 minutes

Engage

Welcome students and briefly introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Display **slide 2** and take a minute to explain the lesson. Display **slide 3** and explain the [S-I-T \(Surprising, Interesting, Troubling\)](#) strategy to the students. On **slide 4**, play the embedded YouTube video of the clip from TNT's [Into the West](#). In this clip, the first Native students arrive at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first off-reservation boarding school. While students are watching the clip, have them identify something **Surprising**, something **Interesting**, and something **Troubling**.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=yfRHqWCz3Zw>

Sample Responses

- **S** - I found it surprising that students received their English name by randomly pointing to one on a chalkboard.
- **I** - I found it interesting that not all teachers were okay with this method of assimilation/schooling.
- **T** - I found it troubling that the kids seemed lost and confused by all the new changes and harsh, brusque behavior from the staff at the school.

When everyone has finished writing their responses on a piece of scratch paper, ask students to share their responses with a partner. After 3 minutes, ask groups to share their discussions with the class.

Display **slides 5-6**. Quickly review the essential questions and the learning objectives. For the next 3 minutes, ask students to identify examples of instances in the clip when the students were forced to reject their tribal culture. You do not need to introduce students to the term "assimilation," as they will learn it in the reading during the Explain.

30 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

Students will use the [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center website](#) to research the students who are mentioned in the Note Catcher. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the search engine by reading the instructions on the Note Catcher and trying to look up the records of at least one Carlisle student.

There are 10 different pages in the document to allow for research into a variety of tribes and students, so 10 classroom students will be searching 20 different Carlisle students from a variety of Oklahoma-based tribes. If the class has 11-20 students, make 2 copies of the entire document or 3 copies if there are 21-30 students.

Display **slide 7**. Pass out the attached **Carlisle Indian School Resource Center Note Catcher**. Tell students that they will need a computer with internet access to complete this activity. As a class, complete questions #1 and #2 together. Then read the directions below to them.

Students will use the internet and the [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center](#) site to complete the guided Note Catcher. Using this site, students can look through the student records of those who attended Carlisle from 1879-1918. Students can search using tribes, names, or dates. Documents found in their records include the following: Student Information Card, Behavioral Reports, Report after Leaving, Letters, financial information, postcards, pictures, etc. While reading through the students' documents, students will jot down in their notes about what impact (positive or negative) the school had on the students.

After 25 minutes, ask some students to share what information they have found about the native students from the past and the impact Carlisle had on their lives. In order to check the students' responses for accuracy, feel free to consult the attached **Teacher's Guide**, which includes sample responses pertaining to each Carlisle student.

30 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 8**. Pass out the attached "**History of Native Education - A Snapshot**" reading. While students are reading, they should use the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy and highlight any vocabulary that is unfamiliar to them and any interesting information. When everyone is finished, have Elbow Partners discuss what they have highlighted. Students should devote 10 minutes to reading and 5 minutes to discussion.

Teacher's Note: Honeycomb Harvest

For the following Honeycomb Harvest activity, you will want to make sure to print out at least one copy of the attached **Honeycomb Harvest handout** for each group and cut out the honeycomb cards prior to the start of class.

Display **slide 9**. Discuss the [Honeycomb Harvest](#) strategy. Provide sets of the Honeycomb Harvest cards to each student or small group of students. Give students about 3 minutes to arrange the honeycombs to best represent their understanding of the relationship among the terms and concepts relating to native education.

Sample Responses

Consider showing an example to help students get started. For example, you could say that the "boarding schools" and "off-reservation," "reservation," and "missionary" honeycombs could touch since the latter three are types of boarding schools. There is no wrong answer as long as a student can justify their choices.

When the students have created their honeycomb shape, have each individual share their reasoning with a small group. If small groups complete their harvests together, ask that they rotate to another group to see other arrangements to compare and contrast. Emphasize that it is likely that students will also produce a variety of arrangements. Spend about 12 minutes on discussions.

30 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Choice Board

Students will need internet access and laptops to complete this activity. Before the activity, check that the link is working: <https://bit.ly/3qxPblz>

Then check that all the links on the Choice Board are working.

Explain the [Choice Board](#) strategy. On **slide 10**, provide the link to the online [Choice Board](#). The Choice Board will have three columns titled: "Past," "Present," and "Future." Under each title are five sources relating to native education from the past and present, along with implications for the future. Students are to choose one link from each column to view/read/peruse. While they are engaging with the source, they are to keep in mind the overall guiding question: *"How does this type of education affect native students of that time (Past, Present, or Future)?"* Give students 30 minutes (or 10 minutes for each source) to explore their chosen sites.

15 minutes

Evaluate

After 30 minutes, move to **slide 11**. Have the whole class share out their favorite sites and discuss how the information from those sites affected native students' education. You can use the two guiding questions: *How has assimilation affected education in today's Native communities? What does the future of Native education look like?*

After students have answered those, refer back to the essential questions: *Why did the U.S. government use assimilation to educate native children? How did assimilation in education affect native people?* Ask a few students to provide answers to these questions.

Possible Student Responses

Some students may say that today's schools are more inclusive of native traditions and culture and are less reliant on assimilation. Others may talk about the few boarding schools still in operation today and the fact that more tribes are taking control of educating their citizens through tribally-controlled boarding schools or charter schools.

Resources

- Carynfmiller. (2011, September 17). Into the west-Carlisle Indian School [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfRHqWCz3Zw&t=528s>
- Dickinson College. (n.d.). Carlisle Indian School digital resource center. <https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>
- K20 Center. (2020, September 16). Choice Boards. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/926>
- K20 Center. (2020, September 16). Honeycomb Harvest. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/61>
- K20 Center. (2021, February 12). S-I-T (Surprising, Interesting, Troubling). Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/926>
- K20 Center. (2020, September 16). Why-Lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>