

Title of Session: AIS: Native American Heritage Month

Moderator: Christine Rose

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ChristinR2: How are you BJ? Hello Melissa, have you taken a class with me before?

MelissaRi: Hello. No I have not. This is only my second time with Tapped In. The first was just the tips and tricks.

ChristinR2: Thank BJ

ChristinR2: Oh, good! Well, its a very cool site, isn't it?

MelissaRi: Yes it is!

ChristinR2: I almost feel like I am in a real building!

MelissaRi: There seem to be a lot of really good resources and chats here.

ChristinR2: A lot of people have joined the group recently, I really hope people show up.

BJ: Welcome to today's AIS discussion, Melissa.

BJ: Let's start with introductions, please

MelissaRi: Thank you

ChristinR2: Yes, welcome to you both!

MelissaRi: My name is Melissa and I am currently student teaching in a 4th grade classroom.

ChristinR2: Well, my name is Christine Rose, and I have been working in American Indian education for the last six almost seven years now.

MelissaRi: Wow so you have a lot of experience in this subject!

BJ: Melissa, I actually met Christine f2f!

BJ . o O (and I can't say that very often about Tapped in members)

ChristinR2: Melissa, 4th grade is such an awesome grade. Do you get into a lot Native Am subjects in that grade? Many schools do a big unit.

MelissaRi: How cool!

ChristinR2: Well, it was a less than auspicious situation, LOL

MelissaRi: Well that is the reason I am in this chat. In two weeks my teacher would like me to teach about Texas Indians and I really don't know where to start. So I thought I could come to this chat and get some ideas.

ChristinR2: Where are you located, M?

MelissaRi: Houston, TX

BJ smiles. Perfect, Melissa

ChristinR2: Oh, I have GREAT Texas resources!

MelissaRi: YEAH!

MelissaRi smiles

MelissaRi: That is so good to hear!

ChristinR2: Yes, I actually know a lot of Native people in Texas and there is a wonderful museum there.

ChristinR2: In Houston!

MelissaRi: Good to know. I will pass that along to the team of teachers I am working with.

ChristinR2: I know it sounds grim, but it's called the American Indian Genocide Museum, but don't let the title scare you, they do terrific educational programs for kids there.

BJ . o O (maybe a virtual field trip for you, Melissa)

ChristinR2: Better to go to the real thing, but their site is linked to this group. I will give you the url in a little bit.

MelissaRi: Thanks for sharing!

ChristinR2: We usually do take a virtual field trip there. :-)

MelissaRi: sounds great

ChristinR2: Ok, what the heck. Let's just get started and see what happens.

MelissaRi: ok

ChristinR2: Melissa, have you ever taught about Indians in the past?

MelissaRi: I am sorry to say that I have not. This is a brand new subject for me.

ChristinR2: That is actually a pun on what I will say next, because the next question is Have you ever taught about Indians in the present?

BJ winks....that is bad, Christine!

ChristinR2: Probably not, but it is a common mistake that teachers make by always portraying Indians only in the past and in a historical sense.

ChristinR2: LOL It was unintentional, BJ...LOL

MelissaRi: That is true and I have never thought about it like that before.

ChristinR2: Most people don't.

ChristinR2: Okay, let's take a field trip. :-)

ChristinR2: This will help you a lot and give you a lot of info. 4th grade is my specialty.

MelissaRi smiles

ChristinR2: go to www.racismagainstindians.org and we will take a trip through Indian Country both in the past and the present.

ChristinR2: Melissa, when you get to the site, on the Home Page you will see a section called The Native American Perspective

ChristinR2: Click on that

ChristinR2: That's Understanding the Native Perspective

MelissaRi: Ok I am there

ChristinR2: Okay, are you at the perspectives page?

MelissaRi: yes

ChristinR2: Okay, click on Did you know?

MelissaRi: ok

ChristinR2: There are some fun facts there. The purpose of our site is to change the perspective of Indians solely as stereotypes.

ChristinR2: If I were to ask you, What do you know about Indians, what would you say?

MelissaRi: There are some really interesting facts here

ChristinR2: Oh, we are just getting started. :-)

ChristinR2: Let me know when you are ready to move on

MelissaRi: ok any time you are ready

ChristinR2: Okay, I had asked, What do you know about Indians? Not a trick question and nothing is fine. LOL

MelissaRi: Well I don't really know much about them. Just that I love the story The Legend of The Bluebonnet - which is about Indians

MelissaRi: and what they taught us in school about Thanksgiving

MelissaRi: I wish I could say that I knew more but I don't.

ChristinR2: If you want to click on the Genocide Museum website, we can look at what most people know about Indians. I will get you a wonderful lesson plan on teaching about Indians and Thanksgiving.

ChristinR2: You and the rest of the country, Melissa. :-)

ChristinR2: As you scroll down, you can see a lot of what the country has always put forth about Indians.

MelissaRi: My goodness! Some of this just is not very nice!!!

MelissaRi: Where would I find that lesson plan again?

ChristinR2: Now the reason for those images, which do become increasingly grotesque, and which are still in use, is because the Indians occupy a unique place in history.

ChristinR2: You will receive a transcript of this after the chat. And you can always contact me. I am knee deep in lesson plans.

MelissaRi: ok sounds good

ChristinR2: The reason the images are not so nice is because in order for this country to develop as it has, Indians had to be portrayed as bad guys.

ChristinR2: You certainly can't kill good guys, so they were always portrayed as the enemy at best and as worthless people who could be eliminated at worst.

BJ . o O (Debbie has lots of resources on her blog)

ChristinR2: This is WHY Native American Heritage Month is so important.

ChristinR2: That image has never been eradicated and it's time, all these hundreds of years later, to do that.

MelissaRi: I agree with you there. That is why I would like to learn more about it.

ChristinR2: SO on a lighter note, let's look at some other information

MelissaRi: ok

ChristinR2: Lets go back to the racismagainstindians.org site...you can probably just use your back button

ChristinR2: In this section, you will find all kinds of cool things. For instance, the Native influence on the development of the Constitution!

ChristinR2: That the suffragettes were influenced by the Oneida women, who ran the tribe, pretty much!

ChristinR2: There is nothing wrong with celebrating Native heroes from the past, in fact it's great!

MelissaRi: I agree

ChristinR2: Scroll down on that page and you will see Important leaders from the past.

ChristinR2: The Other Side of the Coin is an interesting section because there are all kinds of things in there written by Native people about how they feel about history. It's all very readable and interesting.

ChristinR2: When you are done having a look, I want to introduce another VERY Important topic.

MelissaRi: Wow The Other Side of the Coin has some great readings. Do you think some of them would be good to use in the classroom?

ChristinR2: Absolutely.

ChristinR2: I will be providing you with SO much stuff. :-)

MelissaRi: AWESOME!

ChristinR2: let me know when you are ready to move on.

MelissaRi: I am ready

MelissaRi: I added this page to my favorites for later use ...

ChristinR2: Okay. I was hoping to cut and paste, I will have to type it. But think about it as it comes up, because we will talk about it.

BJ . o O (a reminder that all urls will also be in your transcript)

ChristinR2: "Cultural property includes not only land and other tangible property but ideas tradition, and other non tangibles

ChristinR2: Cultural property belongs to the cultural group, rather than to an individual.

MelissaRi: interesting

ChristinR2: As an individual has the right to control his or her property, the cultural group has the right to control the use of it as property.

ChristinR2: Not all people recognize cultural property.

MelissaRi: To be honest I have not ever heard of cultural property before.

ChristinR2: As a result some individuals use other another groups cultural properties without permission, often that use is offensive to the cultural group

ChristinR2: because property is used in a way that distorts or is disrespectful to the groups beliefs.

MelissaRi: Oh that makes sense why it would be considered offensive

ChristinR2: That's because we as a culture do not honor it.

ChristinR2: But other cultures do.

ChristinR2: Indians do.

ChristinR2: In fact, I have heard of people who will not sing another tribes songs unless they are given permission.

ChristinR2: That is common.

MelissaRi: That is interesting

ChristinR2: Now, with that in mind, can you think of school projects that may be misusing cultural property?

ChristinR2: For instance, feathers are as sacred as a cross might be to Catholics.

MelissaRi: Not really sure ...

MelissaRi frowns

MelissaRi: OH!

ChristinR2: Names are given so that they can cross into heaven when they die...not all tribes, traditions vary.

MelissaRi: It is starting to make sense now

ChristinR2: So when teachers assign projects like, Lets choose an Indian name...it is very unpleasant to American Indians

MelissaRi: It isn't right to call them "nick names", so what is the proper term for their names? Is it just like our first names?

ChristinR2: So the best way to choose a project...

ChristinR2: People like to be affiliated with their tribes.

ChristinR2: Most have Christianized first names...but out in the Dakotas, my goodness, some last names are a full sentence long!

ChristinR2: The names are taken very seriously, and may reflect an important aspect about a person's family history.

MelissaRi: Wow I had no idea the importance behind the names.

ChristinR2: So the best way to choose a project?

ChristinR2: Invite an Native person local to your area to come to speak to your class.

ChristinR2: I can help you with that. There are a lot of good speakers in Houston.

MelissaRi: Awesome!

ChristinR2: I also would like to post to the group a LONG list of wonderful class projects that are tribally approved.

ChristinR2: You will find that Am Indians LOVE to be asked about their ways.

MelissaRi: That sounds great!

ChristinR2: They would so much rather tell their story than have it distorted by history books...which basically ignore the Native perspective.

MelissaRi: I am really starting to understand why they would rather tell their own story

ChristinR2: Melissa, if you send me your email address, I will send you a wonderful sheet of ideas and websites that I have. We have about 10 minutes left..there is one more thing I would like to share with you.

ChristinR2: Is Little House on The Prairie part of your curriculum?

MelissaRi: Not that I know of but this is only my second week ... so I am still finding out the curriculum.

BJ: I just read that on Debbie's blog, Christine!

ChristinR2: Well, it is a classic that is used in almost every school.

ChristinR2: In that book, it says, The only good Indian is a dead Indian.

MelissaRi: Oh my!

ChristinR2: This is in almost every kids novel about Indians.

ChristinR2: The list is endless.

ChristinR2: I have posted on the group files here some excerpts from LHOTP.

MelissaRi: That is sad to hear. I can not believe I was so unaware of all of this.

ChristinR2: But BJ mentioned Debbie Reeses blog, which is HUGELY important.

ChristinR2: I know that her website is posted to the group files, as is Oyate.org another excellent source of wonderful material.

ChristinR2: Do you have any questions, Melissa?

MelissaRi: No questions. Just really appreciate you help with this subject!!!

BJ: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2007/10/thanksgiving-lesson-plans.html>

ChristinR2: Well, when the class is over, later tonight or tomorrow, I will send you everything you will need including contacts in Houston.

ChristinR2: Yes, that is the classic Thanksgiving Lesson Plan, really good.

MelissaRi: Thank you so much! This really helps a lot when I will teach about Indians in a few weeks.

MelissaRi: My teacher is going to be so proud I am coming back with so much great information!

ChristinR2: OH!

BJ: spread the word, Melissa! Christine is doing this discussion for the next three weeks on Thursday

MelissaRi: I sure will! I will tell my classmates when I see them on Friday!

ChristinR2: Wonderful! We want you to look good...you might want to ask the PTA if they want to do a whole assembly with a Native speaker...have the speaker talk to the entire school. You would be amazed how much kids really love the subject...and can handle the truth.

ChristinR2: I taught my local history to fourth graders for years and they were incredibly compassionate.

MelissaRi: That sounds like a GREAT activity and our PTA is always willing to help out

MelissaRi: I hope my fourth grade class will be just as compassionate as your class was.

ChristinR2: It's all in how its taught.

ChristinR2: As History...with no one today as the bad guy, we are all just trying to make sure it never happens again

MelissaRi: I will try and do my best!

ChristinR2: and to not believe the stories about how horrible Indians were.

MelissaRi smiles

ChristinR2: It was a war, people are people, we all have families...and we all need to care about each other.

MelissaRi: VERY TRUE!!!

ChristinR2: That's the message I will leave you with. :-)

MelissaRi: Thank you so much! You have really helped me out!!!

ChristinR2: I look forward to hearing how it all goes. I am sure you will be a huge hit.

MelissaRi: It was nice to meet you and you are wonderful for helping me with the resources and speakers.

MelissaRi: Thanks!

ChristinR2: And feel free to contact me at ROSEPETL5@AOL.COM anytime.

BJ waves goodnight to Melissa and Christine.

MelissaRi: Hope you have a great rest of your day!

MelissaRi: Bye everyone!

BJ hugs Christine...this was a great discussion

ChristinR2: Night all!

ChristinR2: Thanks BJ.