



Recommended Classroom Practices During Halloween, Thanksgiving, Native American Heritage Month

Extensive research has consistently shown that school curricula and learning environments are essential to the creation of students' understandings of themselves and others. This is especially true in terms of the way school curricula and resources represent Indigenous peoples, which often creates a narrow and unhealthy understanding about American Indians in the general public. As leaders of KANAE, in an effort to combat stereotypes and create a healthier learning environment for ALL students, **we strongly recommend that educators avoid** the following:

- Activities that encourage non-Indians to mimic or play Indian in any manner (i.e. Halloween costumes, Thanksgiving pageantry, creating fake Indian "crafts," making fake Indian sounds, etc.);
- Activities that mock Indians through song and dance in the name of fun ("10 Little Indians," "We are the Red Men," tomahawk chop, fake headdresses, paper bag "Indian vests," etc.);
- Activities and/or lessons that teach incomplete or false histories about American Indians and their historical relationships with non-Natives (Thanksgiving pageants, "reenactments" of Thanksgiving feasts, narratives of "discovery," etc.);
- Activities that use only past-tense language which teach myths of a "vanishing Indian" and/or of Native Nations as having primitive, less technologically advanced cultures that imply inferior intellect and ingenuity. Also avoid activities that frame Native people and cultures as static and unchanging, or lessons that forward oversimplified Native-settler relations;
- Activities that support and/or encourage use of American Indian mascots and accompanying imagery;
- Activities that reinforce over-romanticized Indian stereotypes.

While the above activities are discouraged, **we strongly encourage** the following actions when working to improve and update school learning environments about, for, and with American Indians:

- Choose curricular materials and classroom media that is up-to-date, in-line with current research, and avoids the stereotypes mentioned above;
- Seek feedback and/or resources from American Indian educators who are knowledgeable and experienced about research related to American Indians and education;
- Prioritize materials and presenters who are affiliated with American Indian communities, and use materials developed by or recommended by Native Nations, leaders, or institutions as often as possible;
- Prioritize lessons, imagery, and narratives that recognize tribal sovereignty and governance;
- Prioritize lessons, imagery, and narratives that teach the complex modern existence of Native peoples, Nations, and communities;
- Retire the use of American Indian mascots and imagery.

We thank the educators and leaders who are examining their practices and applaud ongoing efforts to advocate for these research-based changes. We are also encouraged by the ongoing developments from the Kansas Advisory Council for Indigenous Education – Working Group, which is collaboratively working with educational institutions and tribal leaders to improve learning for, about, and with Native Nations and peoples in Kansas. Below is a list of resources that can be used to help better understand these issues, as well as help identify more appropriate resources for educators as they search for ways to create more healthy learning environments. **We invite school leaders and teachers to reach out to KANAE for potential professional development opportunities** (see: <https://coe.k-state.edu/collaborations/partnerships/kanae/>)

Resources for Educators

Don't forget to visit the websites of the Native Nations relevant to your current and historic geography!

American Indians in Children's Literature

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

KANAE Land Acknowledgement Toolkit

<https://coe.ksu.edu/collaborations/partnerships/kanae/documents/KANAE%20Land%20Acknowledgement%20Toolkit.pdf>

IllumiNative (and Native Now): A nonprofit initiative designed to increase the visibility of - and challenge the negative narrative about - Native Nations and peoples in American society.

<https://illuminatives.org/>

<https://illuminatives.org/nativenow/>

Reclaiming Native Truth: A Project to Dispel Myths and Misconceptions

<https://rnt.firstnations.org/>

National Museum of the American Indian/Smithsonian

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/?fbclid=IwAR3ZYEqEB35U0NnLZ79NYhA08I6vPQdOhEa-1FzCim5ADhU9gF0Uvh6uR0>

Native American Heritage Month

<https://www.nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/>

We Can Do Better: Rethinking Native Stories in Classrooms

https://www2.ncte.org/blog/2018/11/can-better-rethinking-native-stories-classrooms/?fbclid=IwAR1TlekWISim23voFzGPa_8nHp2_vPRuyJVbuKvOW0g-BmvWCUDhKAurHVk

A Racial Justice Guide to Thanksgiving for Educators and Families

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GslXaUMGplGREqvm9b_Vt-xyzCWrg0nCyKtEVTiug/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR17hPv4R44McHzeGxlewwzkGXngrfK70rAWXL4b3_R2_4rbePcAc3gdXzE

Teaching Thanksgiving in a Socially Responsible Way

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-thanksgiving-in-a-socially-responsible-way>

Decolonizing Thanksgiving: A Toolkit for Combatting Racism in Schools

<https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/decolonizing-thanksgiving-a-toolkit-for-combatting-racism-in-schools-5d4e3023a2f8>

Kansas Land Treaties

<https://www.k-state.edu/chapman/kansaslandtreaties/>

American Indian Library Association

<https://ailanet.org/>

Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots

http://www.indianmascots.com/fryberg--web-psychological_.pdf

National Indian Education Association Resolution – Elimination of Race-Based Indian Logos, Mascots, and Names

<http://www.niea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/promoting-healthy-lifestyles-and-Well-Being%20for-native-students/2009-05.pdf>

APA Resolution Recommending the Immediate Retirement of American Indian Mascots, Symbols, Images, and Personalities by Schools, Colleges, Universities, Athletic Teams, and Organizations

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/mascots.pdf>

Toward Responsibility: Social Studies Education that Respects and Affirms Indigenous Peoples and Nations (A Position Statement of National Council for the Social Studies)

<https://www.socialstudies.org/positions/indigenous-peoples-and-nations>

Teaching Slavery Through Children's Literature (including critical understanding of Indigenous enslavement affiliated with Thanksgiving lessons, and an interview with Dr. Debbie Reese of the American Indians in Children's Literature Blog)

<https://www.tolerance.org/podcasts/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/teaching-slavery-through-childrens-literature-part-2>