

## **Native Grant** **Final Report**

The main goal of this project was to research, select and develop resources that would introduce our student population to the themes common in Native literature. Throughout the last 6 months, we have spent our time reading several novels and choosing the ones that would be age appropriate for the junior high school students. Besides creating novel units, we've also put together a curated list of general resources pertaining to Native literature and cultures, including documentaries, movies, interviews, podcasts, websites that could be useful to anyone who wishes to include them, at their discretion, while using the novel-specific units we have created for 5 different novels (5 different academic levels within the 2 grade levels).

Our discussions began with the sharing of our thoughts, feelings and opinions about certain novels we were reading on our own time. We shared the possible themes that derived from each book and the possible grade levels that we could integrate them in. We also discussed the novels we thought would not be suitable for our end goal: Bringing awareness to our student population about Native Cultures and the several issues they have experienced throughout the years. We continuously added different resources, videos, documentaries, discussion questions, activity ideas, project ideas, picture books and possible field trips that could enrich the students' experience throughout the unit.

The biggest challenge we experienced was time constraint; we found ourselves constantly tying up loose ends during our personal time because the amount of days that were granted to do this project would have never been enough, considering how much we wanted to accomplish. We had to read the novels and create novel-specific activities that would be useful in a classroom, that would meet our students' needs, before our group meetings; and when we did meet, we used our time together compiling all our resources into one folder and helping each other further develop our ideas and units to meet the end goal.

We believe we have accomplished a great deal in the past six months and have not only met the requirements of the end goal of this project, but have exceeded them. Instead of creating one unit for our department, we have created five complete units providing the English department a variety of new novels to choose to work with, with easy to follow units, activities, journal entry questions, discussion questions, documentaries, movies, etc. These units can be shared with any educational institution that wishes to introduce matters of Native literature to

their participants. Some of the activities can even be carried out in classes of different subject areas, such as Art GHC, ERC and French. Since the unit was created through google drive and is a live document, the unit was shared with our department through within our school. The link to access the entire unit can also be shared with anyone outside of our school, as it is done with you, should they be interested. All they would need to do is copy and paste the link into a new window and that will give them access to all documents.

This project has not only enriched our knowledge, but has provided us with the opportunity to work together and share our findings with one another. This has helped us gain a new-found respect for our colleagues as well. Mrs. Sanchez-Soares has already implemented and completed the unit of “Marrow Thieves” with her classes; she reports that the experience was an interesting and fulfilling one. The students enjoyed the content and participated with ample questions and discussions. Mrs. Milea and I have begun implementing “Indian Horse” and have already had deep and meaningful conversations with our students about identity, hardship, control, substance abuse and change. The students’ excitement to want to read the book is very rewarding and gratifying.

The beauty of these units is that they can be done in a short amount of time, by implementing simple discussion questions, journal entries and minor activities to check for student understanding, or it could be a longer journey of exploration, research-based learning and even self-discovery. Our hope is not only to help students gain historical knowledge about Native cultures but to expand their understanding of the facts, gain insight, expand their horizons, abolish prejudice and racism, break down stereotypes, give their lives a new sense of purpose and direction. We want to inspire them into the realizations of finding their truths and telling their stories, whilst giving Natives a rightful and safe place where their voices can be heard.

Sincerely,

Aline Khozozian  
Gianina Milea  
Kimberley Sanchez-Soares