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Lenape Culture and Customs

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Core Curriculum Content Standards: 2.5.A & D; 3.3.A; 3.4.A; 5.10.B; 6.1.A; 6.4.A, B, C & D; 6.6.E

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session considers the Lenni Lenape, the original inhabitants of New Jersey. Students will examine the daily life style of the Lenape, including customs, mores, legends, anthropological investigations and dealings with the European settlers. Special consideration is given to the Lenapes' interactions with their natural environment. Lenape and other Native American Indian artifacts are available for examination and interpretation, via a hands-on problem-solving activity. Several Eastern Woodland games are available and students will have the opportunity to play at least one.

OBJECTIVES

1. To acquaint students with Native American Indian cultures, in particular the Lenape.
2. Students will enumerate the cultural differences between the Lenape and the European cultures at the time of contact.
3. Students will describe the unique aspects of the Lenape lifestyle.
4. Students will accurately identify artifacts of the Lenape and determine their functions.
5. Students will review the Lenape use of natural resources.
6. Students will play games representative of Eastern Woodland peoples.

MATERIALS

Teaching materials for this class are stored in the SOC Library. They will be put out when the first class is taught, either by an SOC staff member or a trained visiting teacher.

Materials include:

- library diorama*
- deer hide
- face paints
- equipment for Eastern Woodland games
- wooden box with compartments holding Lenape artifacts
- artifacts and simulations reflecting modern technology needed for survival

**The diorama is reflective of Lenni Lenape culture and lifestyle, in contrast to the early European settlers' lifestyle.*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The history of the United States is laden with a rich diversity of cultures. This statement may bring nods of agreement, but too often, in the minds of many readers, the mention of cultural diversity abolishes the Native American Indians and their many contributions to modern American life. Too often, a lumping together of all Native American groups under the stereotypical image of "Indian," precludes the objective scholarship that more fully and truthfully presents the contributions of this diversity of cultural groups. An ignorance of and/or a lack of respect for cultural distinctiveness blinds students to the perspectives of other peoples. The social sciences must be studied from multiple perspectives. Studies of the history of North America must consider both the European and African settlers, as well as the indigenous peoples who have been living on this land for thousands of years. Beginning in their earliest

school grades, students must recognize that the earth is humankind's common home, that there is only one human race.

TEACHER PREPARATION

The teacher should review the attached *Appendix A* – a historical outline, prepared by SOC Teaching Fellow Eileen Doocey, which will help provide the teacher with factual detail and the historical highlights of the evolution and development of the Lenape ontology: *Pre-Columbian, Contact, Assimilation, and Consolidation* Periods.

The teacher should also consider 2 other appendices: *Appendix B – What Not To Teach*, a teaching tool that acquaints the teacher with common misconceptions and stereotypes about Indians; and *Appendix C – Indian Games*, which explains the historical importance and playing procedures of some traditional Lenape games, which have been modified for SOC participants.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

If possible, prior to this session, review with students the key points of Native American settlement of North America, the concept of the “Land Bridge” at the Bering Strait, and the time frame of earliest migration from Asia. A review of the following vocabulary terms will also be helpful:

acculturation, adapt, archaeology, basics for survival, culture, ethic, impact, “Indian,” Native American, non-renewable natural resource, renewable natural resource, race, tribe.

PROCEDURES

1. Gather the students together and ask them to describe what they know about the Land Bridge and the pre-Columbian settlement of North America by Native American Indian peoples. Ask them to name the native American inhabitants of New Jersey. (*Lenni Lenape*) How long ago did the Lenape settle in New Jersey? (*11,000 years ago*) How long ago did Europeans and Africans, from which many of us are descended, settle in New Jersey? (*less than 400 years ago*)
2. Ask students if they know where the word “Indian” comes from? (*from Christopher Columbus, who was attempting to reach the East Indies and thought that he had, when he landed on San Salvador in the West Indies in 1492*)
3. Ask students to list the basics for survival. Tell them that all living beings need them, no matter when or where they lived. We will be investigating how Native American Indians of New Jersey lived just prior to European settlement.
4. Ask students to name some common kitchen tools of today (*e.g. items such as knives, pots and pans, spoons*). List them on the left side of the chalkboard. Ask them to name common tools used today in repairing a home. (*e.g. nails, hammer, screwdriver, hack saw*) Also list them on the left side of the chalkboard. What is the material common to many of our contemporary tools? (*metal*) Distinguish between tools and machines. (*machines require ancillary power sources, such as electricity generated by fossil fuels*)
5. Ask students to describe, using single verbs, the functions performed with these various tools. Encourage them to group various tools according to function. (*e.g. nails and screws hold wood together, just as pots and pans hold food together for cooking and baking*) List these verbs in the center of the chalkboard.
6. The Lenape did not have knowledge of metalworking, yet they prepared food and built homes, too. What natural items were available to them 400 years ago, which performed the same functions as our tools do today? (*refer to the center list on chalkboard*) As students answer, write the items on the right side of the chalkboard. (*e.g. rocks, shells, wood, sand, bones, antlers*) Draw connecting lines.
7. Play the technology matching game. From the wooden box, take out the Lenape artifacts and place them on one side of a library table. On the other side of the same table, place the modern counterpart or simulator. Ask students as a group to match the implements of both technologies. Allow 15 minutes for this activity.
8. Look over the students' matches. Point out the correct matches. Ask them to explain their rationale for the incorrect matches. Also ask them to closely examine the artifacts that were incorrectly matched to determine their actual functions. For example, have them try to identify the stone hoe for what it is by examining its shape.

9. After students have identified the hoe, discuss Lenape agricultural practices. Since their agricultural tools were stone and hand operated, gardens and consequently food production, were limited and small scale. Also, Lenape did not feel that they owned land, as we do. Farming was traditionally considered females' work. Women grew the "three sisters" - corn, squash and beans. *(Tell legend of how the Lenape got these plants to cultivate.)* Discuss with students how we get our food today. *(agribusiness and large scale production; using non-renewable fossil fuels for farming operations; transportation of crops and manufactured food products; using pesticides and chemical fertilizers)*
10. Refer to the diorama in the SOC library. Ask students to determine which of these Lenape figures is performing agricultural tasks. Also ask them to compare Lenape style with the style of the early European settlers shown in the rest of the diorama. e.g. 1. Note the handle attached to the Lenape hoe. It is made out of wood. 2. Look at crop planting style – Lenape have irregular plantings compared to plant-row symmetry of the European plots. Ask students to determine what the other figures in the diorama are doing. Once they have identified the other tasks being performed, return to the matching game and have them reconsider their previous matching choices.
11. Unroll the deer hide. Have students touch both the suede and hair sides of it. Ask them to express their impressions of its texture and other properties. Discuss the process of tanning and ask students to identify the flint knives and fleshing tool that Indians used in this process to make clothing out of animal skins. Ask them to find evidence of the tanning process in the diorama. Ask students why Lenape did not wear woven clothes as we do. *(They did not have domestic animals, such as sheep, which produce wool. They did not have knowledge of flax or cotton. They had no textile industry as we know it.)* Ask students if they know where polyester, a constituent of many of our textiles, comes from. *(From petroleum, where all plastics originate, which is a non-renewable natural resource)* Discuss what is involved in the production of our textiles.
12. Return to the diorama and examine the Lenape dwelling, noting the fragile nature of the wigwam. Compare the wigwam to the tipi, pictured in several photographs on walls of the library. What are the differences? *(The wigwam is more permanent and not portable, since the Lenape were agricultural and not as nomadic as many of the Plains tribes were.)* What are the similarities? *(Both are entirely handmade, by the women who owned them, and made from materials close to their natural state, e.g. relatively unprocessed.)* Compare them and their construction processes to the diorama's log cabin. Have students identify those tools needed to construct each. Ask students to describe other types of human dwellings. Invite them to list the materials used to construct their own homes.
14. Divide students into two teams and go outside to play Indian games. Playing rules for *Hoop and Pole* and/or *Double Ball* are given on the *Indian Games* sheet. *(Background information on games: games were not for children to play. Adults would play them to hone skills needed for performing chores. Children would be judged as an adult, both by peer evaluation, as well as by their demonstrated abilities in handling the equipment.)*

WRAP-UP INTERPRETATION

Ask students to enumerate the cultural advantages that Europeans settlers had over the Lenape. *(metal tools, domestic animals, textiles, written language, and the wheel)*

There were many Native American Indian groups living in the Americas, and each had a well-defined culture. Ask students to cite cultural differences between the Lenape and other Native American groups they may have studied in school. Ask if they have previously studied the Lenape. The Lenape were one of the first groups to have contacts with European settlers, and thus were acculturated fairly quickly. Show students the portraits of the two Lenape chieftains, Lappawinsoe and Tishcohan and ask them to identify items that show that both men had contact with the settlers. *(long hair, woven blankets, facial hair, glass beads)* Explain acculturation.

Ask students to list instances of the Lenape living in harmony with the natural environment. *(Since they had less population than we do, their impacts on the natural environment were less severe.)* They also had more simple and appropriate technologies. *(Compare the impact of making and using one our 20th century tools to their comparative tool.)*

Go back outside to Piney Point and read to the students the “White Buffalo Calf Woman” legend from *Keepers of the Earth* by M. Caduto and J. Bruchac (copy with teaching materials). Do the *Gifts to the Earth* activity as a conclusion.

VARIATIONS

Explain the Lenape tradition for naming their children. Ask students how they got their own first names. Tell students what their first names mean. (Refer to *Name Your Baby* in the wooden supply box.)

Refer to *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore* by J. Salomon and have the students paint each other’s faces. (Grease paints and cold cream are in the in the back closet of the library.)

Weather permitting, set up a simulation of an archaeological dig on the beach by Lenape Lodge. (This is difficult to do when the ground is frozen.) Be sure to keep track of all your artifacts.

FOLLOW-UP

Have students research other Native American cultures, particularly a culture inhabiting a different geographical section of the United States. Pay attention to aspects of the life styles that are determined/dictated by the ambient natural resources and environmental conditions of the study area.

GLOBAL EXTENSIONS

Back in the classroom, have students research the present indigenous peoples of other continents. Pay particular attention to their dependence on local natural resources and to environmental consequences of their actions.

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Periodicals:

Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey. Humanities Building, Room 104, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

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(Revised/combined/2005/Annette Sambolin)

APPENDIX A NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCTION

On April 10, 1981, Nora Thompson Dean (author of *Touching Leaves*) came from Anadarka, Oklahoma, to receive the keys to New York City. At that time, Mrs. Dean was one of the two full blooded Lenni Lenape still living on this continent. In 1609, Henry Hudson set foot on the island of Manhattan and greeted several of an estimated 10,000 Lenni Lenape. The purpose of this session is to illuminate the history and culture of a people who have inhabited the areas of eastern Pennsylvania, southeastern New York, New Jersey and Delaware for, according to archaeological records, the past 11,000 years.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

- I. Historic Delaware culture, 1000 A.D., derived from late prehistoric cultures of the New York - New Jersey areas. Characterized by: a. agriculture; b. shellfish collecting; c. dwellings and family life; d. religion; e. ceramics and other non-metallic artifacts; f. physical appearance: 1. use of paints; 2. clothing materials and construction; g. medicine: 1. herbs; 2. shamans; h. spoken language; i. legends.
- II. Contact Period: 1524 – 1690. Characterized by: a. direct acculturation of European traits; b. new sort of warfare; c. altered economy; d. extensive depopulation.
- III. Consolidation Period: 1690 – 1750. *Characterized by:* reorganization and consolidation as a result of depopulation. *Outcomes:* 1. migration; 2. concentration; 3. subjugation by Iroquois; 4. unification action in dealing with other Indians and Europeans.
- IV. Nativistic Period: 1750 – 1814. *Characterized by:* a. forged into tribe and defined the Six Nations and Europeans; b. militarism (known for prowess); c. secondary acculturation modification - Indians tended to find self-identity and became warriors.
- V. Decadent Period 1814 – 1867. Characterized by: a. military defeat; b. loss of independence; c. dominated by the U.S.; d. dispersal, desertion and disintegration; e. pressure to become “civilized;” f. abandonment of aboriginal gardening techniques; g. scouting for the U.S. army; h. trade with the Plains Indians; i. trappers for the U.S. and for fur companies; j. shared motives of white traders, fighters and exploiters.
- VI. Assimilations: 1867 – present. *Characterized by:* a. technology; b. social structure; c. religion; d. language.
- VII. Pan-Indianism: contemporary movement among Indians to restore the integrity of their culture. *Characterized by:* a. pride in Indian ancestry; b. adoption of inter-tribal practices in religion and other celebrations; c. retention of Indian identity by inter-marriage within tribe, which was formerly thought of as incest.

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1974-75