

Bethany Lutheran College

Seminar Paper

Rachael Heidorn

Native American Culture and Governance HIST 403

Professor Brian Hopp

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Six weeks is not a lot of time to take any class, but in six weeks I learned more than I could imagine about Native Americans and their culture. I learned about how diverse they were, even when they were living just miles apart. I learned about the many wars that were fought between themselves and European settlers. I learned about all the new technologies that they picked up on from the settlers. Also, doing a paper on Native American learning styles showed me how the Native Americans use their own culture-based curriculum to teach. I will use what I have learned in this class to help me in my own classroom when teaching.

Native Americans or Indians were either hunters or farmers. Some tribes like the Dakota had hunting as their main source of food but would also farm a little where as other tribes like the Ojibwe used farming as their main source of food with some hunting. It was all based on how the tribe was raised and what they liked to do. The Dakota simply loved to hunt. They thrived on going out, stalking an animal, killing the animal, and providing for the whole tribe. Hunting tribes tended to move around a lot to follow herds of animals. The farmers didn't have to move as much because they did not rely only on animals to keep them alive.

Tribes were always fighting with each other. The Dakota and Ojibwe were constantly going to war over land to hunt and trap on and simply because they hated each other. Once the European settlers came over to North America the settlers saw this hatred and started to become allies with certain tribes. The

settlers used the Indians to do a lot of the fighting for them. The settlers wanted to conquer as much land as possible and in order to do that they had to force the land away from the Indians. They did that by going to war. The settlers used the allies they had acquired to help them fight and sometimes with no allies. In the end all Indian's had to comply with the European settlers and give them their land.

Indian technology was behind the Europeans. The Indians were using rocks and animal bones for all the daily needs which worked perfectly fine. Professor Hopp brought in tons of artifacts and explained exactly how the Indians would have used them. The arrowheads were weapons to kill animals or enemies. The scrapers were used to clean the animal skin. It would scrap off all the fur in one scrape. The Europeans introduced the horse to the Indians and that detail changed the Indians whole lifestyle. Hunting was made much easier once they got used to horses. They could ride the horse to find animals instead of walking. This allowed them to go a much farther distance in less time. The horse also was good for wartime. It was much harder to kill a man on a horse then on the ground.

I learned that Native Americans learn best when their culture is the main focus. They learn in small groups where no one is outshining anyone. The small groups root them back to their ancestors sitting by the campfire in a group teaching each other everything they know. It was usually the older generations teaching the younger generations. To the Indians, the old were wise and the most important

people in the tribe. They do not like to look more superior and try to stay humble when in the classroom. If a teacher expected class participation, they might not get anything in return from a Native American student.

When I have my own classroom I will have the basic knowledge I need to teach my children about the Native Americans. Elementary classrooms usually talk about Thanksgiving and that is great but I will be able to talk a little more about it other than the Indians gave the Settlers some food. I will be able to talk about how for a while everyone did get along but that it did not last for very long. I will not go into the gory details but I think it is important to know a little history about our nations past. I will also be able to tell them a little about the neighboring reservations. I hardly knew anything about them and now I know that they are all different based on their tribe's ancestry.

Overall, a lot of information was learned in a very little time. This class has taught me about diversity, war, technologies and learning styles of Native Americans. Six weeks is a short amount of time but enough time to learn a lot about Native Americans. I do wish to know more and this class has really sparked my interest. I hope to gain more and more information as I go in my elementary education studies and even when I am a teacher. I have been told that you learn the most in your first year of teaching. In my future classroom I will be excited to tell my students all about the Indians and hope they are interested too.

Great essay, well written & composed

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