Unit Overview: The Sacred Tree

Grade Level:	6
Unit Length:	15 lessons
Original Lesson Authors:	Ann Huynh and Meghan Koos
Lessons Adapted By:	Meghan Koos

Topic Overview

This unit is designed to increase Native students' resilience through examining Kumeyaay and Blackfoot history, The Sacred Tree, The Medicine Wheel, and personal stories of resilience.

Many of the lessons are designed using the book The Sacred Tree: Reflections on Native American Spirituality by Judie Bopp (Author), Michael Bopp (Author), Lee Brown (Author), Phil Lane Jr. (Author), and Patricia Morris (Illustrator). If you are facilitating this unit, you should have a copy of this book to aid you.

Unit Goals

Through learning about Kumeyaay and Blackfoot history, the medicine wheel, and sharing personal/family stories of resilience, students will increase their resilience in the following areas, which correspond with the Resiliency Scales for Children & Adolescents and the Circle of Courage:

1. **Emotional Regulation/Reactivity** *(Spirit of Mastery & Independence)*
   Students will improve their emotional regulation in the areas of sensitivity (i.e. intensity of emotional reactions), recovery (i.e. time it takes to recover from something upsetting), and impairment (i.e. behaviors resulting from being upset).

2. **Sense of Mastery** *(Spirit of Mastery & Independence)*
   Students will increase their self-efficacy skills (i.e. their belief in their capabilities and ability to get past obstacles).

3. **Sense of Relatedness** *(Spirit of Belonging)*
   Students will increase their sense of relatedness by becoming more comfortable around others, learning to trust others, and feeling like they can be more authentic with others.

Note: These unit goals were developed in response to the administration of the Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents. After administering these surveys, the authors examined the results and found common themes among group members which determined the above stated goals. Whether or not you choose to use the resiliency scales as an assessment, you should create goals that are specific and relevant to the group of students you are working with throughout this unit.

Assessment Type

In addition to group goals, the authors also worked with students to create individual goals based on the results from the resiliency scales. These goals were co-created with the students, and they included strategies to work toward the goals both inside the Native group space as well as in the classroom.

Throughout the year, the authors used the Observation of Self-Efficacy and Engagement as a data collection method to examine student progress. They incorporated data from classroom observations, individual interviews, consultation with teachers, and small group observation.

Additional Context

This unit was originally delivered to a group of six 6th graders at Campo Elementary in the 2019-2020 school year. One of the students left school halfway through the unit, so the group ended with five students.

Of the six students, five of the students identified as Kumeyaay, and one student identified as Blackfoot. As such, the authors attempted to incorporate both Kumeyaay and Blackfoot history into the curriculum.

Because of school shutdown due to COVID-19 in March 2020, the group was unable to complete the unit. You might notice that these lessons stop abruptly after lesson 16 as a result. If school had not been closed, the group would have done the following in the remaining 5-6 weeks:

- Presented personal medicine wheels to one another
- Continued exploring Kumeyaay and Blackfoot history
- Continued practicing sharing personal stories of resilience
- Closed out the year with an individualized final project that tied to their Native culture and demonstrated their gifts from each or one of the four directions