

Boarding School vs. Day School Experiences

Overview

- This lesson provides brief background information about the implementation of day and boarding school systems for educating Indian children through the western medium of instruction.

Objectives

- To understand the experiences of Hopi children in day and boarding schools.
- To encourage students to compare and contrast day and boarding school experiences.
- To introduce students to some of the games that Native-American children played in schools, and help them compare and contrast those with present day games.
- To teach students to sequence events chronologically.

Grade Level/ Subject Area

- 5-6
- Arizona/Hopi History
- U.S. History

Materials

- Student Activity Sheet, readings, crayons, markers, paper, photographs

Time-Frame

- 3-5 days

Theme

- Then and Now: Students will be able to identify and understand changes over time.

Background

In the 1880s, with the intention of implementing assimilation policies, the government of the United States established numerous day as well as boarding schools. The idea of receiving a western education did not appeal to all Hopis. Hence, Hopis were divided into two groups – one for western education and the other, against it. One of the important Hopi leaders, Chief Yukeoma believed that Hopi children should not be sent to school. Government forces were sent to capture children and bring them to day and boarding schools. Hopis who shared Yukeoma's beliefs and hid their children, were called "hostiles," opposed to those who willingly sent their children to schools and were called "friendlies" by the government. Despite the fact that hostiles refused western education, many reluctant children were also taken away from their parents to be enrolled in day and boarding schools.

Both day and boarding schools aimed to teach English to Hopi children, and equip them with necessary vocational skills so that they would be completely assimilated into middle-class white American culture. In boarding as well as day schools, children were compelled to wear Anglo-American clothes, eat Anglo-American food, and speak in English. Those children who ran away from the boarding schools were captured, brought back and punished. There were also differences in students' experiences. Some students had a positive experience, whereas others had a negative experience.

Pre-activity

1. Students can talk to relatives/family members and ask them about their experiences in day as well as boarding schools. Allow a few days for this "homework" to be completed so that students may talk to different family members or neighbors.
2. Homework Assessment: Make a list of how their school then, was different from your school now.

Pre-Reading Opening

1. What do you know about boarding and day schools?
2. Share accounts of what they learned from family members. Write on the board "Then" and "Now" columns so students can see the comparison.
3. Introduce the [Vocabulary Chart](#).

Reading Activities

1. Read the following boarding and day school autobiographical excerpts. Reading can be done out loud by the students, taking turns.
2. Use the [Vocabulary Chart](#) to keep track of words that may be unfamiliar. This chart may be kept as a running list, and students will write in their own unfamiliar words (students answers will not match).
3. As they read, encourage students to imagine life as the person in the excerpt.
4. Post reading discussion: Ask students to describe how they would feel and react if they were the people in the excerpts.
5. Review the Vocabulary Chart by discussing 5 – 8 (previously) unfamiliar words. Allow the students to list and discuss their own definitions based on the context clues in the reading. Write the correct definition next to the word on the board.

6. Review the activity sheet questions. Have students answer them either orally or in writing.

Post Reading Art Activity

Students will illustrate one story of their choosing.

Incorporate Student Art and Archival Photographs

Cooperative Learning Closing Activity:

1. Divide the class into small groups.
2. Hand out 2-3 Boarding School Photographs to each group.
3. Review various photographs: For example: “[Main Entrance to Phoenix Indian School](#).” How is this school different from buildings at Hopi? What might a new student arriving there think?
4. Ask students to describe the activities of schoolchildren that they see in the photographs. For example: “[Keams Canyon Boarding School: Fruit and Vegetables canned by students](#).” How similar and different are those students’ activities compared to present day school pastimes?
5. Share their drawings and compare to the photographs given each group.
6. Encourage students to discuss Hopi children’s experiences in boarding and day schools using specific excerpts given in the student activity sheet and by what is seen in the photographs.
7. **Additional Photographs and Questions for this activity are listed below:**
 - [Alfred's 6th grade class](#)
 - [Sewing class Keams Canyon](#)
 - [Hopi Beginners](#)
 - [Keams Canyon Boarding School 4/22/1945](#)
 - [4th, 5th, 6th, 7th grade classes](#)
 - [Shungopovi Day school children, Second Mesa](#)
 - [Children coming to school](#)
 - [Shungopovi Day school students at top of trail](#)
 - [Mocassin making project, advanced grades](#)
 - [Day students playing basketball](#)
 - [Beginners class](#)
 - [Beginners class - Ladd](#)
 - [Unknown](#)

- [Art exhibit](#)
- [School art exhibit](#)

For example:

Were the BIA boarding and day school programs valuable for Hopi children? What were the pros and cons of attending day and boarding schools? Show a photograph that supports your answer.

What differences do you see between the Day schools and Boarding schools?

What classroom activities do boys and girls do?

Closing Assessment: Students will write a short report on whether they would like to attend boarding or day schools and the reasons for their preference.

_____Boarding and Day School Readings and Questions

Keams Canyon Boarding School

Helen Sekaquaptewa:

It was dark when we reached the Keams Canyon boarding school and were unloaded and taken into the big dormitory, lighted with electricity. I had never seen so much light at night. I was all mixed up and thought it was daytime because it was so light. Pretty soon they gave us hardtack and syrup to eat. There were not enough beds, so they put mattresses on the floor and I saw where the light came from before the matron turned out the lights.

For the next few days we were curious about our new surroundings. We thought it was wonderful and didn't think much about home, but after a while, when we got used to the school, we got real homesick. Three little girls slept in a double bed. Evenings we would gather in a corner and cry softly so the matron would not hear and scold or spank us. I would try to be a comforter and, but in a little while I would be crying too. I can still hear then plaintive little voices saying, "I want to go home. I want my mother." We didn't understand a word of English and didn't know what to say or do.

Our native clothing was taken away from us and kept in boxes until our people came to take them. We were issued the regular school clothes. Each girl had two every-day dresses, three petticoats, two pairs of underwear, two pairs of stockings, one pair shoes, one Sunday dress, and two white muslin aprons to be worn over the dresses, except on Sunday. The dresses were of striped bed ticking, with gathered skirts and long sleeves. Some of the Friendly girls and those from other villages used to call us Hostiles and tease us until we would cry. At night when the doors were closed and locked little girls were supposed to be in bed for the night, our tormentors would take our native clothes from the boxes and put them on and dance around making fun of us.

Phoenix Indian School

Helen Sekaquaptewa:

We went to school half a day and worked half a day. The home economics department had a big production room where all girls' clothing and shirts for the boys were made, and we did a lot of sewing there. Besides this sewing the girls were assigned to laundry and home-cleaning details. The boys were put on janitor work, caring for the premises and learning shop skills. The school had a dairy . . . the boys took care of the cows and did the milking, and the girls learned to care for the milk.

- from *Me and Mine: the Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* as told to Louise Udall.
Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press. 1969. pp. 92-92 & 135.

Polingaysi Qoyawayma:

Arriving in Riverside in a stupor of weariness, the nervous and frightened strangers were taken to dormitories. Polingaysi, the youngest and smallest, was assigned to a place in one of the dormitories for girls and told to remove her clothing and take a shower . . . That night for the first time, Polingaysi slept in a real bed . . . Her bed was one of many, ranged the length of the room. In each bed there was a girl, a stranger, and one of them was a Hopi from Polingaysi's homeland. Eyes watched her get into bed and lay her freshly washed head on the white pillow, but no one spoke a word of welcome and no one smiled . . . She had no sooner pulled up the covers than helpless tears began to flow. She tried to blink them back, but they kept coming, gushing like a spring from beneath her closed eyelids. Finally she dived under her pillow and wept, all but suffocating before her tears were spent.

. . . [T] here were other experiences in store for her. She had to do her share of the work at the Institute, which included scrubbing floors, doing dishes, making beds, and helping in various other departments as she was needed . . . The first Fall in Riverside, Polingaysi was detailed to pick tomatoes at the Institute's Arlington farm. The children went from Riverside in a big farm wagon, enjoying the trip immensely and making a picnic of it as they did their work . . . The Hopi children, including Polingaysi, seldom minded having to peel potatoes . . . [They] could eat as many sweet, raw potatoes as they could hold, while peeling the bucketfuls that went into the huge cauldrons to be cooked.

There was a classroom at the farm where Polingaysi learned a great deal about vegetables and fruits, as well as routine subjects such as spelling and arithmetic. . . Her work in the school laundry brought her into the new adventure of sewing. She began by darning her socks . . . Once the art was mastered, she went on to patching and mending, and finally to sewing new materials on the sewing machine. . . Her teachers were pleased with her ability to make her own clothes and encouraged the other girls to trust her with their materials. Soon she was making more than the small wage of three dollars per week.

- from *No Turning Back* by Polingaysi Qoyawayma as told to Vada F. Carlson.
Albuquerque: the University of New Mexico Press. 1964. pp. 57-59 & 63-64.

Day School at New Oraibi

Don Talayesva:

. . . [A] day school was opened at the foot of the mesa in New Oraibi . . . [It] was decided that I should go to school. I was willing to try it . . . [One] morning in September I . . . wrapped myself in my Navaho blanket . . . and went down the mesa barefoot and bareheaded.

I reached the school late and entered a room where boys had bathed in a tub of dirty water. Laying aside my blanket, I stepped into a tub and began scrubbing myself . . . [the teacher] scrubbed my back with soap and water, patted me on the shoulder, and said, "Bright boy." She dried me and dressed me in a shirt, underwear, and very baggy overalls. Then she cut my hair, measured me for better-fitting suit, called me Max, and told me through an interpreter to leave my blanket and go out to play with other boys. The first thing I learned in school was "nail," a hard word to remember. . . I learned little at school the first year, except "bright boy," "smart boy," "yes," and "no," "nail", and "candy."

Sherman School for Indians at Riverside, California

Don Talayesva:

I stayed in school until the spring of 1908. when a number of us boys were sent to Imperial Valley to help harvest cantaloupes. In June we came back to Sherman for the Commencement exercises, and then returned to work in the cantaloupes fields until July. Our skins turned brown . . . When we finished with the cantaloupes, our disciplinarian, Mr. Singleton, sent us to work on a dairy farm near San Bernardino. I did not like this place and stayed only two weeks. We had to get too early in the morning; I did not like to milk the cows; the boss was too strict and seemed to pick on me because I was the slowest milker.

In school, I was promoted to the sixth grade and took an active part in the debating society in our classroom. I found it hard work to stand on my feet and think, giving proof for everything I said. At first I got excited but later I liked it. . . I could talk like a gentleman, read, write, and cipher (basic arithmetic skills). I could name all the states in the Union with their capitals, repeat the names of all the books in the Bible, quote a hundred verses of Scripture, sing more than two dozen Christian hymns and patriotic songs, debate, shout football yells, swing my partners in square dances, bake bread, sew well enough to make a pair of trousers . . .

- from *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 1972. pp. 89-90, 129-130 & 134.

Edmund Nequatewa:

Then it was near Christmas. This was my first Christmas, and I really did not know what was going to happen. All the rest of the children who had been there seemed happy because they were expecting presents, like what they were given the year before. . . On Christmas Eve all the kids were yelling and pointing up to the top of the mesa . . . and there was Santa Claus . . . Everybody was excited that evening. About eight o'clock they got all the children lined up, and we marched to the school house. When we got in, there was a big Christmas tree. Everybody was seated. We sang some songs. After the Hopi children got through, then Santa Claus came in. Every child was given everything alike so that no names were on the packages. The same way with the girls . . . Just as soon as we received our presents we would open them up to see what Santa Claus had given us. There was marbles and gloves and handkerchiefs and candy and scarfs and pocketknives and both kinds of Jew's harps for the boys.

The girls got dolls, aprons, capes, handkerchiefs, and I don't know what else. After all the presents were given out, we went back to the dormitories, and everybody was afraid somebody might steal their presents, so some of us took our presents to bed.

- from Hopi Vol. 82, *Born A Chief: the Nineteenth Century Hopi Boyhood of Edmund Nequatewa As told to Alfred Whiting*, Edited by P.David Seaman. Flagstaff, Arizona: Anthropology Dept., Northern Arizona University. 1992. pp. 97-99.

Hopi Day School

Harry Nutumya:

Back in those days, we didn't have no choice of what school to attend, so it was like either you go to school there, or you didn't go to school. My experience there was kind of vivid. You know, it was kind of a long time ago. I think that the days at the Hopi Day School were times of fun and times of challenges, because from the very beginning, we were not accustomed to going to school. And so from the beginning I know it was a little hard to go to school. But as far as coming from Oraibi to Kykotsmovi it's about a good two-mile walk. Although there were buses that were coming to the village, it seemed like it was the pattern of walking to school and walking home, rather than riding the bus. The boys, that was their choice. The girls rode the buses, most of them, but most of us walked to school and walked home after school.

- from Oral History Interview conducted by Hopi Tribal Archivist Stewart Koyiyumptewa. Summer 2004.

Sherman School for Indians at Riverside, California

Harry Nutumya:

During the time the school was being—a lot of the classes were taught in dormitories in the basements, and then in other parts of the old dormitories that weren't in use. They used them as classrooms, because there was a whole new school that was being built at that time. And so there was construction going on. Again, some of the things that I remember well, I enjoyed probably most was the vocational part of it, because we had hands-on. We did classroom instruction, and then we were actually out there doing things with our projects. So that was good. A lot of things, like welding, auto mechanics—some of the basics—electrical and carpentry and drafting and things like that. But I think that a lot of us also did a little bit more in terms of taking on a project, things like that. . .

Questions

- i. Describe the boarding school experiences. Did Hopi children like their new boarding schools? Why or why not?
- ii. What were the children asked to do after they reached their schools? Were the children allowed to speak in Hopi?
- iii. What did boys and girls learn at the boarding schools? Did they learn the same or different things?

- iv. How was Christmas celebrated at boarding schools? Did the boys and girls get the same presents? How are the Christmas celebrations similar and different in comparison to the present day?
- v. In what ways were day and boarding schools experiences similar and how were they different?
- vi. Were the boarding and day school experiences good or bad? How would you make them more enjoyable?
- vii. How are your boarding/ day school experiences similar and different from these children's experiences?

Reinforcement Activity: This activity reinforces the theme of change over time. Just like games are different in the past, so are schools and children's experiences of school.

Have the students play some of the following games.

March with Rhythmic Steps: - I. March around the room once or twice. II. March with cross step. III. Cross hands with partners. Skating step to waltz time. Repeat. Cross hands with partners. IV. Slide steps. Two hops, waltz time. Repeat.

Master of the Ring: - A circle is drawn on the ground. The players stand shoulder to shoulder inside the circle, with arms folded either on chest or behind the back. The play starts on a signal, and consists in trying to push one's neighbor with shoulders out of the circle. Any player who unfolds his arms or falls down is also out of the game. The master of the ring is he who in the end vanquishes all of the others.

Throwing the Handkerchief: - The company being seated around the room in a circle, someone stationed in the center throws an unfolded handkerchief to one of the seated players.

Whoever receives it must instantly throw it to someone else, and so on, while the person in the center endeavors to catch the handkerchief in its passage from one player to another.

If he catches it as it touches somebody, that person must take his place in the center. If it is caught in the air, the player whose hands it last left enters the circle.

The handkerchief must not be knotted or twisted, but thrown loosely.

The Farmer is Coming: - One player, chosen to be farmer, is seated; the remaining players stand at distance in a circle. The leader taps some of them on the shoulder as an invitation to go to the farmer's orchard for apples with him. They leave their home ground and approach as near the farmer as they dare. The game is more interesting if they can do this and practically surround him. Suddenly the farmer claps his hands and all players must stand still while the leader calls out "the farmer is coming," the players

trying to get back to their home grounds, the farmer chasing them. He may not start, however, until the leader has given his warning. Any player caught changes places with the farmer.

Exchange: - One player is blindfolded and stands in the center. The other players sit in chairs in a circle around him. It is advisable to have the circle rather large. The players are numbered consecutively from one to the highest number playing.

The game may start with the players sitting in consecutive order, or they may change places at the outset to confuse the blinded player, although the changing of places takes place very rapidly in the course of the game. The blinded player calls out two numbers, whereupon the players bearing those numbers must exchange places, the blinded player trying meanwhile either to catch one of the players or to secure one of the chairs. Any player caught, must yield his chair to the catcher. No player may go outside of the circle of chairs, but any other tactics may be resorted to for evading capture, such as stooping, creeping, dashing suddenly, etc.

- games from *Social Plays, Games, Marches, Old Folk Dances and Rhythmic Movements*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911, pp. 31, 37, 53, 54-55 & 63.

Questions

- i. Ask children about the games they like to play and why they like them.
- ii. How similar are these games to the ones that children play at school now? Are there any differences? If so, what are they?

Evaluation/Assessment

- In response to Reading Activity the class will be able to empathize with the characters in the excerpts. Students will be able to identify feelings related to loneliness, homesickness, fear of new surroundings, the prospect of learning new lessons, vocational skills, the Christmas celebrations etc.
- In response to Reading Activity , Question 1, the class will be able to list at least two reasons to describe why Hopi children liked and disliked boarding schools, specifically
 - the prospect of earning their own money and the acquisition of new language, arithmetic, and debating skills (likes) &
 - the separation from home and loneliness (dislikes).
- In response to Reading Activity, Question 2, students should be able to clearly pinpoint that Hopi children were forced to discard their traditional clothes, have a bath, wear western clothes, and were forbidden to speak in Hopi.
- In response to Reading Activity, Question 3, the students will be able to identify the similarities (such as, acquiring spelling, reading, writing, language, and arithmetic skills)

and differences (such as, girls were trained in home-cleaning, laundry, sewing, making beds, washing dishes, and gardening work, while boys were trained in janitor work, taking care of cows, milking, harvesting cantaloupes, welding, carpentry, and electrical work). Students will be able to list at least two to three similarities and differences between what boys and girls learned at boarding schools.

- In response to Cooperative Group Activity , the students will be able to debate and discuss Hopi children’s experiences in boarding and day schools using specific excerpts given in the student activity sheet and archival photographs.
- In response to the Cooperative Group Closing Activity, based on the information they gathered from the various activities in this lesson, the students will be able to write a short report on whether they would like to attend boarding or day schools and the reasons for their preference.

References

Books

Trennert Jr, Robert A. *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935*. Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Peshkin, Alan. *Places of Memory: Whiteman’s Schools and Native American Communities*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1997.

Parker, Dorothy R. *Phoenix Indian School: the Second Half-Century*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996.

History of The Phoenix Indian School, 1963.

Detailed Information

Teacher can refer to the following books/ websites for further information:

History Matters. “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man:” Capt. Richard C. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans: - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/>

Marr, Carolyn J. “Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest.” University of Washington Libraries, Digital Collections: - <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr.html>.

Peshkin, Alan. *Places of Memory: Whiteman’s Schools and Native American Communities*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1997.

Parker, Dorothy R. *Phoenix Indian School: The Second Half-Century*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996.

Pierson, Katie. *History of The Phoenix Indian School*. Phoenix. 1963.

Qoyawayma, Polingaysi. *No Turning Back*. Albuquerque: the University of New Mexico Press. 1964.

Sekaquaptewa, Helen. *Me and Mine: the Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* as told to Louise Udall. . Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press. 1969.

Ed. Simmons, Leo W. *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.1972.

Trennert Jr, Robert A. *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935*. Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988. (Also available online through Cline Library online catalog).

This lesson correlates to the following Arizona Social Studies Standards:

Arizona Social Studies Standards

1SS-E1. Understand and apply the basic tools of historical research, including chronology and how to collect, interpret, and employ information from historical materials.

PO 1. Place key events on a timeline and apply chronological terms correctly, including B.C.E. (B.C.), C.E. (A.D.), decade, century, and generation

PO 2. Identify primary and secondary sources historians use to construct an understanding of the past, using such sources as letters, diaries, newspaper articles, archaeological evidence, maps, and government records

1SS-E8. Demonstrate and apply the basic tools of historical research, including how to construct timelines, frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research, and analyze and evaluate historical materials offering varied perspectives, with emphasis on:

PO 1. constructing various timelines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era being studied

PO 2. framing questions that can be answered by historical study and research

PO 3. describing the difference between a primary source document and a secondary source document and the relationships between them

PO 4. assessing the credibility of primary and secondary sources and drawing sound conclusions from them

PO 5. analyzing a historical source and identifying the author's main points, purpose, opinions versus facts, and what other authors say about the same topic

PO 6. examining different points of view on the same historical events and determining the context in which the statements were made, including the questions asked, the sources used, and the author's perspectives

PO 7. recognizing the difference between cause and effect and a mere sequence of historical events