Youth Engagement
The S.T.A.R. School Style

A cultural and place-based method to engaging students using K’e (Diné Kinship) and Sustainability
But first!

About The S.T.A.R. School

› Founded in 2001 by the Sorensen’s
› Completely Off-Grid, solar & wind turbine powered
› Located near the Southwest corner of the Navajo Nation with 95% Navajo enrollment.
› Focuses on self-reliance, sustainable energy sources, service-learning and the Four R’s
A CONSTANT RENEWAL

DAILY PLEDGE

Shizaad  Shít Nílí
Shizaad  bee  Yáshtí?
Shizaad  bóhoosh’áah
Shizaad  ayóó
anoolnin
Shizaad  I’lí
Three main values

› Self Identity through K’e’
  – Tribal
  – Embrace Ethnicity

› Sense of Place
  – Interrelatedness
  – A part in Nature

› Sustainability
  – Cultural
  – Tribal Continuity
  – Deeper relationships
  – Community awareness
**Engagement and/or Involvement**

› **ENGAGEMENT**
  – A mutually beneficial interaction that results in participants feeling valued for their unique contribution
  – Ideas Matter

› **INVOlVEMENT**
  – The fact or condition of being involved with or participating in something; being included in activities or conversation.
  – Participation Matters

“One cannot work without the other”

~PB’s musing #46328
Following the “standard” guidelines

- A student is given a chance to explain (teach) in class or small study group
- Spending time in partner/group activities
- Students use their sense of “place” to enhance their learning
- Students are called on randomly instead of voluntarily throughout the class
- As the educator, LOL’ing at something out loud in class (being human)
- Time for self-reflection is a must, recording your “feels”
- Movement throughout the classroom is allowed and encouraged
- Access to internet “research” with guidelines about using electronics
- Given an opportunity to state opinions, because it matters
The Four R’s

› **RESPONSIBILITY**
  – Identifying and performing tasks willingly in a self-directed way that aligns with community needs.

› **RESPECT**
  – Supporting others with positive comments to help self-identify and follow directions.

› **RELATIONSHIP**
  – Establishing K’e or Navajo Kinship through introduction of self and claiming a relative.

› **REASONING**
  – Actively helping others think through problems leading to a mutual solution.
Rule of PB’s thumb

“If students don’t have fun, they aren’t going to repeat it.”

- Make it place-based to help them realize the context of where they live.
- Help them identify in a culturally appropriate way.
- Help them realize the importance of sustainability by setting a hands-on example.
- Know what you are talking about.
Using Indigenous Food to promote Health and Community engagement
The STAR School has been successful in keeping and establishing a working relationship with North Leupp Family Farms where interaction with elders is a must, and with Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture in exchange for indigenous and local produce to be processed and served in our school cafeteria. Food Corps of Arizona is also a valuable asset as they provide additional education on farming methods.
EMBRACE INDIGENOUS VALUES

› Speak one’s indigenous language all the time if you are fluent
› Participate in traditional and cultural activities, including the preparation and provision of food
› Have a discussion about using traditional healing and prevention practices
› Identify with or participating in Indigenous practices of spirituality
› Encourage spending time at “home” or tribal land
› Non-Native students are taught to be grounded to a place
› Respond always as a relative

THESE CAN REVEAL THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF OUR NATIVE CHILDRENS INFLUENCE ON OUR SURROUNDINGS

~PB’s musings #9876
Final words......

Be human because kids can spot an alien at any moment. At the end, we are doing this for our community. We will always be a part of Nature, that's our belief.

~PB's final musings #273684006

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