SWEETHEART DANCERS

FILM SYNOPSIS

SWEETHEART DANCERS is a story about Sean and Adrian, a Two-Spirit couple determined to rewrite the rules of Native American culture through their participation in the “Sweetheart Dance.” This celebratory contest is held at powwows across the country primarily for men and women couples, until now.

BSFI CURRICULUM

Written in Collaboration with Anne des Rosier Grant

Directed by Ben-Alex Dupris

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SWEETHEART DANCERS

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USING THIS GUIDE
This educator guide is intended to provide context and background to the film SWEETHEART DANCERS, offering a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing, and Post-Viewing activities that underscore educational benchmarks of Montana Core and National Core Content Standards. The themes of the film are outlined in the context of Montana Office of Public Instruction’s Indian Education for All Essential Understandings. This guide aims to provide a framework for teachers to encourage active engagement before, during, and after viewing the film in an effort to engage in a deep dive into the content and craft of the filmmaking process and the stories they bring to life.

SWEETHEART DANCERS

FILMMAKER SPOTLIGHT

Ben-Alex Dupris
Director

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Big Sky Film Institute acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. In addition, we honor the twelve Montana tribes that have cared for and honored the distinct and multifarious region we now refer to as Montana. We would also like to pay our respects to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians located near Highland, California, one of several clans of Serrano Indians, who are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino valley and highlands, where SWEETHEART DANCERS first debuted. We honor the path Indigenous peoples all over the world have shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come and hope this guide offers itself as an opportunity to better understand the stories of the land.

FILM SUBJECTS/INTERVIEWEES:
◊ Adrian Snyder, Sweetheart Dancer, of the Navajo and Southern Ute tribes
◊ Sean Stevens, Sweetheart Dancer, hailing from Fort Dushesne, of the Northern Ute Shoshone-Bannock and San Carlos Apache tribes
BY THE NUMBERS:

- Sean Stevens is Northern Ute, Shoshone-Bannock, and San Carlos Apache, and Adrian Snyder is Southern Ute and Navajo. Together they represent at least 6 different Native Nations.

- The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation is in southeastern Arizona. Known today as the San Carlos Apache Tribe of the San Carlos Reservation, it spans 3 Counties (Gila, Graham, and Pinal) and includes at least 8 different bands (the Aravaipa, Chiricahua, Coyote, Mimbreno, Mogollon, Pinaleno, San Carlos, and Tonto).

- Of the 574 federally recognized tribes, the Navajo Nation is the largest, with a population of over 300,000. Nearly two-thirds Navajo live on the reservation. Navajo also has the largest reservation, covering approximately 27,425 square miles, extending into Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

- Utes are the oldest residents of Colorado, at one time occupying 9 U.S. states: Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Eastern California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and Northern Arizona and New Mexico.

- A 56 million acre reservation was established in 1868 for the Southern Utes, covering western Colorado. The Southern Ute Tribe has approximately 1,400 tribal members with half the population under age 30. The Southern Ute Reservation is now situated on a 1,064 square mile (681,000 acres) reservation in southern Colorado.

- The Montana Two Spirit Society formed in 1996 through a joint effort by Pride Inc. and the Montana Gay Health Task Force to conduct an annual gathering. The gathering has grown to nearly 100 attendees from Montana and all over the U.S.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the great diversity of Indigenous cultures, communities, and individuals through Montana OPI Indian Education For All (IEFA) Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians.

- Students will gain an understanding of people who identify as Two Spirit, and the contemporary American Indian celebration known as a Pow wow.

- Students will make connections between histories, traditional life styles and perspectives, and contemporary issues surrounding Representation of Indigenous individuals and communities.

- Students will explore the concept of resilience and its importance in overcoming obstacles, as well as discover some of the benefits and skills associated with resilience.

- Students will identify the importance of telling this story within the context of a documentary film.

- Students will conduct research and collect data pertinent to current events and community.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are some traditional and contemporary ways people connect with their histories, traditions, and place?

- How do people communicate their identity?

- How do belief systems, traditions, family histories, and self-expression celebrate diversity and build community?

- What are some of the benefits of building resilience? Cultural representation and inclusion? Developing long-term relationships?

FILMMAKER STATEMENT

“This story is rooted in an incident where the first Two-Spirit couple, Sean Snyder and Adrian Stevens decided to enter a “Sweetheart” special competition at one big influential powwow. This had never been attempted before in modern tribal dance circles, and they were disqualified for not adhering to the rule of the “one man, one woman” competition. This led to a year of reflection, and thoughtful preparation for the next year where they courageously returned to the same powwow and were allowed to compete. This success story of resilience, and the action of love provided a talking point that spans decades of colonization with Indigenous communities. Prior to the Catholic boarding school era, LGBTQIA+ were accepted and respected by Native people. This story, and the spiritual renewal of our sacred Identities is one that leaves the audience with a greater understanding of our tribal lifeways. Within our hearts we are all one.” - Ben-Alex Dupris, Director
**WHAT IS A POW WOW?**

- Pow wows are celebratory gatherings where American Indians share part of their culture and tribal traditions. Pow wows have evolved over the years to what they are today. In addition to singing and dancing, other events, such as Indian Relay horse racing have been added.

- The word “Pow wow” may have originated from the Pawnee word pa-wa, meaning “to eat.” Or, it may be of Algonquin origin, pronounced as pauau, indicating an important gathering of people.

- Some Pow wows are held annually and may begin as early as March, running from June through September. Others may be held on a weekly basis, during the summer, or throughout the year.

- There are at least 31 Pow wow celebrations held in Montana throughout the year. Some are annual events. Some are reenactments, some are at Montana Colleges and Universities and in both urban and rural settings. They include gift-giving, competition dancing, singing, and drumming, and honor Chiefs, Elders, Youth, Tribal Histories, communities, culture, and veterans.

**FAST FACTS**

- San Manuel Pow wow is a three day event, both celebratory and competitive. It features a bird singing and dancing exhibition, gourd dancing, contest dancing, exhibition dancing, and intertribal dancing. The final day is a more formal closing ceremony. ([https://www.socalpowwow.com/](https://www.socalpowwow.com/))

- The Annual Ute Bear Dance is a social dance held every spring. Origin of the Bear Dance can be traced to the fifteenth century when the Spanish first arrived in Ute territory. The first thunder of spring signaled the Bear Dance.

- The Gathering of Nations Pow wow, held in April in Albuquerque, New Mexico is the world’s largest Pow wow, with over 3,000 dancers from 75 tribes across the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

- The Mahkato Wasipi Pow wow in September in Mankato, Minnesota, commemorates 38 Dakota (Santee Sioux) warriors who were hanged on December 26, 1862, the largest mass execution in US history.

- The Winnebago Homecoming Celebration in July in Winnebago, Nebraska is considered the oldest Pow wow in the US. It honors Native American veterans.

- The Spirit of the People Pow wow in Chilliwack, British Columbia, is the first Pow wow of the season. Held indoors every February for Pacific Northwest tribes, it’s about 90 minutes east of Vancouver.

- The Manitoba Ahbee Festival in May in Winnipeg, Manitoba is Canada’s largest Pow wow, with over 800 dancers, drummers, and singers from across North America. Manito ahbee is Ojibwe for “where the creator sits,” a sacred site on Turtle Island (North America).
Given the complexity of the themes SWEETHEART DANCERS explores, this film is most suitable for use with middle and high school-aged students (Grades 6-12). The film’s content, themes, and message is most clearly connected to the following areas of National Core and Montana Content Standards:

**MONTANA CONTENT STANDARDS**

**Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 8 (RL.8):**

**Key Ideas and Details**
RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

**Writing Standards, Grade 8 (W.8):**

**Text Type and Purposes**
RW.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**
RW.8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration and include sources and/or topics by and about American Indians.

**Social Studies Standards, Grades 9-12**

**Speaking and Listening Standards (SL.8):**

Comprehension and Collaboration
SL.8.1.d: Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

**Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (RH.6-8):**

Craft and Structure
RH.6-8.6: Identify aspects of a text, including those by and about American Indians, that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (WHST.6-8):**

Research to build and present knowledge
WHST.6-8.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Include texts by and about American Indians.

**MONTANA CONTENT STANDARDS (CONT.)**

**Reading Standards for Literature (RL.9-10):**

**Key Ideas and Details**
RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text, including those by and about American Indians, and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Writing (W.9-10):**

**Research to build and present knowledge**
W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts, including American Indian texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Speaking and Listening Standards (SL.9-10):**

SL.9-10.1.d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, with specific attention to culture, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

**Language Standards (L.9-10):**

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
L.9-10.6 Acquire and use accurate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**Reading Standards for Literature – (RL.11-12):**

**Key Ideas and Details**
RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including those by and about American Indians, and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Writing Standards (W.11-12):**

**Text Types and Purposes**
W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Research to build and present knowledge**
W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts, including those by and about American Indians, to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Speaking and Listening Standards (SL.11-12)

Comprehension and Collaboration
SL.11-12.1.a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, including culturally diverse contexts, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (RH.11-12)

Key Ideas and Details
RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure
RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

Dependent on the Resilience Extension Activity - these Health Education Content Standards for Grades 9-12 may be addressed and/or achieved:
35. Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks
36. Assess personal health practices and overall health status
37. Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal
40. Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health
41. Discuss ways to advocate for a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others

Common Core Literacy Standards for Language for grades 9-10 in English
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Common Core Literacy Standards for Language for grades 11-12 in Social Studies
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Common Core Literacy Standards for Reading for grades 9-10 in History/Social Studies
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Common Core Literacy Standards for Reading for grades 11-12 in History/Social Studies
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
The Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians, developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education For All Division. There are 7 essential understandings (EU’s), or guiding principles that have formed the foundation of Montana’s Indian Education For All (link to PDF above). Tribal histories, contemporary tribal members, and tribal governments continue to contribute to the evolving social and political landscape of Montana, so that contemporary Montanans gain basic knowledge regarding Montana’s tribal communities, and reach a better understanding of the important issues they face.

The following EU’s are highlighted in this guide to illustrate how they align with certain aspects of the film SWEETHEART DANCERS.

Essential Understanding 1
There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Key Concepts identified in SWEETHEART DANCERS:

- The Tribal Nations identified in SWEETHEART DANCERS are excellent examples of the diversity among tribes and the unique issues they face. Between Sean Stevens and Adrian Snyder, at least 6 different Native Nations are represented: Northern Ute, Shoshone-Bannock, San Carlos Apache, Southern Ute and Navajo (or Diné).

- Each Tribal Nation represented in SWEETHEART DANCERS is distinct from one another in their history, culture, and language. They are organized politically and state-recognized by multiple states. Many are also federally-recognized.

- As of 2018, there were 574 federally-recognized tribes and ninety-five state-recognized tribes in eighteen states that had established formal recognition programs.

- A minority of Native Americans live in land units called Indian reservations. Some southwestern U.S. tribes, such as the Yaki and Apache, have registered tribal communities in Northern Mexico. Similarly, some northern bands of Blackfoot reside in southern Alberta, Canada, in addition to their southern Bands of Blackfeet who reside in Montana within the U.S. border.
Essential Understanding 1 - Continued

- Like other governments, tribal governments have the inherent power to regulate their members and their territories. They provide important services and perform essential governmental functions for the benefit of their members. Some tribes are governed by Tribal Councils, elected by the membership.

- Some tribes strive to provide strong social welfare and educational programs. They also emphasize the importance of traditional lifeways and sponsor annual ceremonial events, such as Pow wows and the Sun Dance. Tribal members of all ages participate in Pow wows.

- The term “Indian” is a pan-ethnic term. Anyone who identifies as Indian is more likely to identify primarily as a member of one or more particular tribal groups.

- There exists no universally accepted rule for establishing an individual’s identity as Indian; however, as a general rule, an Indian is a person who has some biological Indian ancestry and is recognized as an Indian by a tribe.

- Historically, for many Indigenous communities, membership was inclusive and largely based on kinship, marriage and adoption. Criteria for establishing an individual’s identity as Indian has dramatically changed over time.

- For millennia, individual tribal groups successfully educated their children using highly effective indigenous pedagogies that imbued Indian children with all the knowledge and skills they needed to thrive in their world.

- Boarding schools and other federal policies of assimilation brought disruptions to the traditional transference of knowledge in tribal communities and have had wide-ranging and lasting impacts on American Indian individuals and communities.

- The term Gay today specifically refers to an attraction to a person of the same sex. Two Spirit embodies two genders existing within one person. A Two Spirit person may be gay, but a gay person is not necessarily Two Spirit. Two Spirit acknowledges the continuum of gender identity and expression.

- “Our parents danced, it’s something we’ve always known,” Sean Stevens (29)..... “It’s been a part of our families’ lives, and it’s one of the things that brought us together. Not only competitively, but spiritually and physically.” (PEOPLE, January 2018)

- “We are both just natural dancers,” said Stevens, who is Northern Ute, Shoshone-Bannock and San Carlos Apache. “We were raised in the pow wow world and people know our values and traditions. They watched us grow up and watched over us.” (Seminole Tribune, February 2018)
Essential Understanding 3
The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the “discovery” of North America.

Key Concepts identified in SWEETHEART DANCERS:
- Spirituality to Indigenous peoples generally refers to one aspect of an Indigenous worldview in which all things are connected. Spirituality in this context does not necessarily equate to nor denote religion.
- A tribal community’s oral traditions, ideologies, worldviews, and the principles and values associated with them, are as valid as these traditions from around the world. They should be given the same respect and relevance.
- A complex history of pre-Columbian tribal migrations and intertribal interactions, European colonization and Christianization efforts, and federal assimilation policies have contributed to the broad range of spiritual beliefs and practices held by Indigenous peoples in the Americas today.
- Despite this history, Indigenous people have retained their spiritual beliefs and traditions; tribal languages are still spoken, sacred songs are still sung, dances, rituals, and ceremonies are still performed.
- Today, tribal beliefs and spirituality range from what is considered “traditional,” or specific to the history and beliefs of a particular tribe, to pan-Indian belief like the Native American Church, to agnostic or even secular. They originated where they are found. They were not imported to this continent. They are deeply embedded in place. They are a way of life which provides people with a unique set of values and identity.
- It is not important for educators to understand all the complexities of modern day American Indian cultures; however, they should be aware of their existence and the fact they can influence much of the thinking and practice of American Indians today.

Essential Understanding 3 - Continued
Key Concepts identified in SWEETHEART DANCERS
- The Montana Two Spirit Society is “Working to Build Healthy Native & Indigenous Two Spirit Communities.” They Stand For: Health, Wellness & Spiritual Wellbeing; Honoring Traditions of Acceptance, and Cultural Connections. Their annual gathering retreat is in its 25th year (2021) and is a drug and alcohol free event (www.mttwospirit.org)
- “Seeing a Two Spirit couple dance in the couples competition put a big smile on my face, you could tell they put a lot of time and energy into their dance performance because they went the extra mile to have matching outfits, their footwork was creative and they were also the most original duo out there.” (www.powwows.com, October 2017)

Essential Understanding 6
History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

- Much of America’s history has been told from the Euro-American perspective and frequently conflicts with Indigenous histories. Only recently have Indigenous peoples begun to write about and retell history from their perspective, which involves a huge amount of political capital.
- History is a primary vehicle through which power is distributed and used; thus, the whole notion of political and national identity, and ideology plays into how the story is told, and who has been privileged to tell the story. It is critical to include the stories and experiences of individual men and women of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups.
- Teaching a subjective view of history and providing students with historical context allows students to situate and understand the experiences and perspectives of the racially and ethnically diverse groups in American society today.
BEFORE WE BEGIN...A NOTE TO TEACHERS

It is important that all students feel safe and respected when studying the themes of SWEETHEART DANCERS. The strategies below can help students and teachers support positive learning while studying the film:

• Please be mindful and pre-screen this film in advance of student viewing. This curriculum is meant to spark ideas for discussion and encourage critical thinking skills.

• Use inviting and inclusive language when discussing themes and ideas from the film. This includes respectful reflection on race and privilege, highlighting that contribution to the conversation is an option for students and not a requirement.

• Encourage students to be active listeners, meaning they are creating space for others to share their experiences and perspectives and providing encouraging response.

• Underscore that the film they are about to watch is a documentary, meaning this film follows real people and lived experiences. Be respectful of personal differences and keep an open mind.

• Remind students to challenge ideas rather than people, with language such as, “I don’t see it that way...”, or “Your comments bring up questions for me...”

• Take ownership of comments and don’t put blame on others. Reframing input as one’s own (“I think...”), avoiding accusational language such as “You should...”

• Give plenty of time for students to think and reflect on discussion topics. You’re digging into complex and sensitive subject matter!

• Preface conversation with the Land Acknowledgement on Page 2, engaging in respectful language around personal and cultural needs of students, staff or visitors that identify as Indigenous.

Terminology Note: This curriculum guide uses the phrase Two Spirit, which is contemporary pan-Indian terminology. Please keep the following concepts in mind when using the term with your students.

• Two Spirit people have been present in Native communities for countless generations, predating LGBTQ terminology (Enos, 2017). Two-Spirit is a unique cultural term relating to Native and Indigenous people. (Herrera, 2017)

• The term Two Spirit arose in the late 1980’s, early 1990’s as an umbrella term based on sexual expression, embodying both the masculine and the feminine.

• Throughout history, different Tribes have used different words in their own languages for Two Spirit. Some Tribes honored these individuals with leadership positions and held them in high esteem. They served their tribal communities as medicine people and in other ceremonial or healing roles.

• Forced colonization, Christianization, and assimilation has negatively impacted the current Two Spirit movement, as well as misinformation. These, and other traumatic events, brought about by several federal policy periods have greatly affected Indigenous people for generations.

• Identifying as Two Spirit today supports youth and adults to live their lives with more of a sense of self and belonging. Others choose not to identify with Two Spirit, as they feel it carries a lot of responsibility.

• Some Two Spirit are transgendered people, but not every transgendered person identifies as Two Spirit. Non-Natives cannot and should not use the term in reference to themselves.

As Noted by Tony Enos
(Additional Info on Handout #3)

1) Two Spirit is not a contemporary "new-age" movement.
2) There is proof of Two Spirit individuals in historical photos.
3) The terms "Gay" or "Homosexual" are not interchangeable terms for Two Spirit.
4) The Two Spirit Road is a road of long-held traditions, prayer and responsibility.
5) Two Spirit people held significant roles and have been an integral part of tribal social structures.
6) Two Spirit does not indicate "Colonized Boxed Definitions" of "L", "G", "B", "T" or "Q" - but rather acknowledges the continuum of gender identity and expression.
7) Two Spirit is a term only appropriate for Native Peoples.
8) Two Spirit People face compounded traumas on top of intergenerational trauma, internalized socio-political stigma, phobia, and lateral oppression.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1) EXPLORING DIVERSITY
   - Students will need a scratch paper and a pencil. Before viewing the trailer, list the FIRST 6-8 things students think of when the teacher says: "NATIVE AMERICAN" (Students will save their lists for later post-viewing activity)

2) FILM TRAILER - Identifying the Hook
   - Before you begin... What is the role of a film trailer?
     - One main purpose of a film trailer is to give a feel for what the full film is about, without giving away the plot.
   - WATCH the trailer for SWEETHEART DANCERS and have students identify film themes and ideas addressed in the trailer.
     - Who is being interviewed?
     - What is the conflict/issue presented? In a larger group have students discuss the effectiveness of the trailer as a hook to the story the film presents.
     - What does the title, SWEETHEART DANCERS, seem to suggest just by viewing the trailer?
   - DISCUSS film themes and character qualities introduced in the trailer. How effective was the trailer in hooking you and your students?
     - Trailer link here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0hgz0zmdY8

WATCH THE FILM!

After engaging with some of the themes explored in the pre-viewing activities, your class should now be ready to watch the film. If you've registered through Big Sky Film Institute’s NFI Film Club you should have a secure viewing link!
VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1) EXPLORING RESILIENCE

1. Teachers will need to make one copy of each: BY THE NUMBERS (#1), WHAT IS A POW WOW?, pg 5 (#2), POW WOW FAST FACTS, pg 6 (#3) and WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY TWO SPIRIT?, pg 16, (#4).

2. Place students into three random groups. Give each group ONE of the handouts/sheets from above to read and discuss.

3. Have each group complete a D.I.C.E. (reading and writing strategy) activity based on the handouts:

   → They will write what Disturbs, Interests, Confuses and Enlightens them. Students may identify words they don’t fully understand. Their reactions may be only one word. Younger students may select less than or half of the information provided on the handouts. Rotate the handouts and repeat the activity.

4. Have students reflect on what they wrote. Have a class discussion and build upon other’s ideas based on the following:

   • What did you learn? Did common themes emerge?
   • What words need further defining?
   • Do the readings reveal DIVERSITY?
   • Do they contradict, reinforce, or dispel STEREOTYPES?
   • Do the film’s subjects Adrian and Sean show RESILIENCE?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

EXPLORING REPRESENTATION

1) Teachers will have students review their previously made lists of the FIRST 6-8 things they thought of with the term NATIVE AMERICAN, and ask the students what words they would add to their lists after viewing SWEETHEART DANCERS.

2) As a class, conduct a Google IMAGE search of the following broad categories, in the order listed below (this exercise is meant to help students better identify stereotyping and generalizations):
   - “White Americans”
   - “African Americans”
   - “Asian Americans”
   - “Hispanic Americans”
   - “Native Americans”

   After each individual IMAGE search, allow a few minutes for students to look at all of the first images that come up, make observations of them, and take notes to respond to the following prompts:

   • What stands out to you in images collectively?
   • What, if any emotions are conveyed in the images?
   • What messages might you learn from the images?

3) Allow students to again review their lists from the Pre-Viewing activity. Are there additional words students would add now? Talk about whether the things they listed were REPRESENTED in the images from the last search of Native Americans. What other themes emerged from their observations and/or discussion? How might the images affect younger people and/or a person’s IDENTITY?

4) Have students choose one of the QUOTES from the film in the ‘SWEETHEART DANCERS QUOTES’ box (pg 24), and two or more vocabulary words from the ‘VOCAB BOX’ (pg 25) to write either an EXPOSITORY or PERSUASIVE Essay, based on the issues presented in the film SWEETHEART DANCERS. Students may include vocabulary words with connections or similar definitions.
SWEETHEART DANCERS

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

SWEETHEART DANCERS

QUOTES

• “The North American Indian is alive and well... you’re about to listen and watch this beauty come together.”
[00:00:02-00:00:08] (San Manuel Pow wow Announcer)

• “My mom would always say, you’re not dancing against dancers, you’re dancing against the drum.” [00:00:42-00:00:50]

• “When you come to a Pow wow, you’re not just representing your last name and your family, you’re also representing the community – which you came from. You’re dancing for grandma and grandpa who drove 8 hours just to watch you dance.” [00:01:01-00:01:08]

• “To win $10K in a matter of 3 days, it can change anybody’s life, it can have an impact regardless of who you are, there’s an impact.” [00:1:50-00:01:58]

• “We were burned out...and it did change us.” [00:02:33-00:02:40]

• “We’re both really fortunate to be raised by sweethearts....we’re a product of sweethearts.” [00:02:46-00:03:12]

• “We had seen so many couples doing things that represented them and their tribe, so well, we wanted something like that.” [00:03:26-00:03:36]

• “Will we be as good as we thought we were? There’s a lot of self-doubt.” [00:05:32-00:05:38]

• “…and we were hiding in a space [where] everybody knew who we were...it was like hiding in plain sight.” [00:06:47-00:06:56]

• “Having to lie about something so direct in my identity, it’s like a little piece of me was, kinda like taken in that moment.” [00:07:32-00:07:44]

• “We’ll be back in spite of what happened, to try it again.” [00:09:42-00:09:55]

• “You have to be in a long-term relationship to be in this contest.” [00:10:48-00:00:10:53] (San Manuel Pow wow Announcer)

SWEETHEART DANCERS

VOCAB WORDS

• Identity
• Authenticity
• Self-expression
• Sense of belonging
• Persistence
• Resilience
• Inclusion
• Cultural Appropriation
• Intentionality
• Diversity
• Representation
• Motivation

EXTENSIVE ACTIVITIES

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF RESILIENCE, REPRESENTATION & DIVERSITY

1) Using one of the following Prompts, have students write either a NARRATIVE or DESCRIPTIVE essay based on SWEETHEART DANCERS:

– What does RESILIENCE mean to you?
– How are REPRESENTATION and DIVERSITY connected?
– What are some ways IDENTITY and CULTURE are communicated?
– What are some similarities and differences between the tribes Sean and Adrian represent and Montana Tribes?

2) Research historic photographs depicting traditional clothing styles of Native Americans and compare them to current trends in the INDIGENOUS FASHION Industry. Consider the following questions and quotes from outside the film:

– What is CULTURAL APPROPRIATION and how does it IMPACT individuals and cultures?
– How is SELF-EXPRESSION connected to IDENTITY and RESILIENCY?
– “We express ourselves by the way we dress...[we] weave customs and traditions into design.”

“Nothing is as personal as the clothes we wear. Clothing can be seen as a vessel that holds the human spirit.” **

3) Building RESILIENCE:

– Check out the Building RESILIENCE Resources on Handout #4
RESILIENCE IS...

- The ability to “bounce back” when things don’t go as planned
- The ability to stand up to challenges and work through them step-by-step
- Not giving up or breaking down when faced with difficulties and growing stronger through the process
- Overcoming obstacles and gaining insight from them and,
- The ability to persevere through unfavorable circumstances

There are ways to build resilience, many of which have to do with managing emotions, expressing feelings, developing empathy, building relationships, setting goals and practicing optimism, reducing stress, resisting peer pressure and developing mindfulness. Here are a few examples:

APA’s* 10 ways to build RESILIENCE:

1) Make connections building support networks
2) Avoid viewing crises as insurmountable
3) Accept that change is natural and unavoidable
4) Move toward your realistic goals
5) Take decisive actions to face your challenges
6) Look for opportunities for self-discovery
7) Nurture a positive view of you & your abilities
8) Keep things in perspective and in context
9) Maintain a hopeful outlook on life
10) Take care of yourself

MT’S** 10 ways to build RESILIENCE:

1) Learn to relax
2) Practice thought awareness
3) Edit your outlook
4) Learn from your mistakes and failures
5) Choose your response
6) Maintain perspective
7) Set yourself some goals
8) Build your self-confidence
9) Develop strong relationships
10) Be flexible

*APA = American Psychological Association. From: Positive Psychology online
**MT = Mind Tools. Developing Resilience: Overcoming and Growing from Setbacks

SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION:

To most effectively track learning throughout viewing and discussion, have students reflect on what they know about the issues being presented in the films. With their Double Entry viewing chart they will have written down observations and inquiries. The following is a short list of keys terms and vocabulary to help students articulate their analysis:

KEY TERMS (to sound like a professional):

EXPOSITION: the information that grounds you in a story (Who, What, Where When, and Why). Exposition gives us the tools to follow the story as it unfolds.

- Questions to ask students:
  - What information is given away?
  - What still don’t we know?
  - Who are we hearing from/who is interviewed (who is not?)?

- Examples of Expository Information:
  - Shot of a place/location and its landmarks
  - Headlines/printed materials
  - Voice over
  - People getting upset over something
**THEME:** A recurring idea that illuminates an aspect of the human condition. The theme is the most basic lifeblood of a film, it tells you what the film is about. This differs from the subject, which is the topic of the film. A theme gives a story/subject focus and depth and brings out universals from the subject of a complex/simple film subject. A good theme should have multiple layers: personal level, political level, or spiritual level

- Questions to ask students:
  - What are the universal ideas behind the film?

**SUBJECT:** the topic/focal point of the film

- Questions to ask students:
  - What is the general subject of this film?

**ARC:** the ways the events of the story transform the subject/character. Story arcs can be hard to find in documentary film, there is not always an obvious beginning, middle, and an end (as in life!)

- Questions to ask students:
  1. What does the protagonist/subject learn about themselves as they pursue a goal?
  2. How has the film challenged your assumption about the film’s subject? Did you have preconceived notions of who the characters were/where they came from? Did this film change your opinion on this subject matter?

**PLOT + CHARACTER:**

- **CHARACTER-DRIVEN:** a film where the action of the film emerges from wants and needs of the characters
- **PLOT-DRIVEN:** characters are secondary to the events that make up the plot

- Question to ask students:
  1. Who is this film about? Is it about a person or an event?
References & Additional Resources:

- Dupris, Ben-Alex. (2020). PBS Short Film Festival 2021. Director Ben-Alex Dupris Reflects on His Film ‘Sweetheart Dancers.” URL: https://www.pbs.org/filmfestival/blog/director-ben-alex-dupris-reflects-on-his-film-sweetheart-dancers
NATIVES BY THE NUMBERS:

- Sean Stevens is Northern Ute, Shoshone-Bannock, and San Carlos Apache, and Adrian Snyder is Southern Ute and Navajo. Together they represent 6 different Native Nations.

- The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation in southeastern Arizona, was established in 1872. Known today as the San Carlos Apache Tribe of the San Carlos Reservation, it spans 3 Counties (Gila, Graham, and Pinal) and includes at least 8 different bands (the Aravaipa, Chiricahua, Coyotero, Mimbreno, Mogollon, Piñaleno, San Carlos, and Tonto).

- Of the 574 federally recognized tribes, the Navajo Nation is the largest, with a population of over 300,000. Nearly two-thirds Navajo live on the reservation. Navajo also has the largest reservation, covering approximately 27,425 square miles (71,000 km2) and extending into 3 U.S. States, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

- The Shoshone, Paiute, Bannock, Comanche and Ute all belong to the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family, which once stretched from the Cascades in the northwest, to the northern plains of Wyoming, and southward to Mexico.

- Utes are the oldest residents of Colorado, at one time occupying multiple territories: Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Eastern California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and Northern Arizona and New Mexico.

- Around 1848, Ute Indian Territory included traditional hunting grounds in several areas of what are now Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

- A 56 million acre reservation was established in 1868 for the Southern Utes, covering the western half of Colorado. The Southern Ute Tribe has approximately 1,400 tribal members, with half the population under 30. The Southern Ute Reservation is now situated on a 1,064 square mile (681,000 acres) reservation. Utah became a state in 1896.

- For the 2017-2018 school year, 20,535 American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in Montana reported AI/AN is at least one of their races, and American Indians made up 14% of K-12 public school students. (American Indian student achievement data report Fall 2018)

- The Montana Two Spirit Society formed in 1996 through a joint effort by Pride Inc. (Montana’s LGBT advocacy organization) and the Montana Gay Health Task Force to conduct an annual gathering. Over the years, the gathering has grown to nearly 100 attendees from Montana and all over the U.S.

- Out of the 250 groups invited to participate in the 46th annual San Francisco LGBTQ Pride Parade, the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS) participants were a crowd favorite.
TWO SPIRIT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

• “Two Spirit people have been present in Native communities for countless generations that predate LGBTQ terminology” (Enos, 2017). Two-Spirit is a “unique Cultural term” (Herrera), relating to Native and Indigenous people. The term Two Spirit arose in the late 1980’s, early 1990’s and is an umbrella term based on sexual expression, which embodies both the masculine and the feminine.
• Throughout history, different Tribes have used different words in their own languages for Two Spirit. Some Tribes honored these individuals with leadership positions and held them in high esteem. They served their tribal communities as medicine people and in other ceremonial or healing roles.
• Forced colonization, Christianization, and assimilation has negatively impacted the current Two Spirit movement, as well as misinformation. These and other traumatic events brought about by several federal policy periods have greatly affected Indigenous people for generations, throughout the Americas.
• Identifying as Two Spirit today supports youth and adults to live their lives with more of a sense of self and belonging. Others choose not to identify with Two Spirit, as they feel it carries a lot of responsibility.
• Some Two Spirit are transgendered people, but not every transgendered person identifies as Two Spirit. Non-Natives cannot and should not use the term in reference to them.

8 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TWO SPIRIT PEOPLE (Enos, 2017)

1) Two Spirit is not a contemporary “new-age” movement: While the term Two Spirit was coined as a means of unifying various gender identities and expressions of Native American/First Nations/Indigenous individuals, the term is not a specific definition of gender, sexual orientation or other self-determining catch-all phrase, but rather an umbrella term.
2) There is proof of Two Spirit individuals in historical photos.
3) Gay is not an interchangeable term with Two Spirit: Gay specifically is about attraction to a person of the same sex. Two Spirit is more about the embodiment of two genders residing within one person. A Two Spirit person may be gay, but a gay person is not necessarily Two Spirit. Claiming the role of Two Spirit is to take up the spiritual responsibility that the role traditionally had. Walking the red road, being for the people and our children/youth, and being a guiding force in a good way with a good mind are just some of those responsibilities.
4) The Two Spirit Road is a road of long-held traditions, prayer and responsibility.
5) Two Spirit people held significant roles and were an integral part of tribal social structures: In many tribes Two Spirits were balance keepers. Thought to be the “dusk” between the male morning, and the female evening.
6) Two Spirit does not indicate “Colonized Boxed Definitions” of “L”, “G”, “B”, “T” or “Q” - but rather acknowledges the continuum of gender identity and expression.
7) Two Spirit is a term only appropriate for Native People: Two Spirit is a role that existed in a Native American/First Nations/Indigenous tribe for gender queer, gender fluid, and gender non-conforming tribal members. If you don’t have a tribe, you can’t claim that role.
8) Intergenerational trauma, internalized socio-political stigma, phobia, and lateral oppression are just some of the compounded sufferings Two Spirit People face.
Sweetheart Dancers Handout #4 – Building Resilience

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*APA = American Psychological Association

From: Positive Psychology online
https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-activities-worksheets/

**MT = Mind Tools

From: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/resilience.htm
Developing Resilience: Overcoming and Growing from Setbacks (www.mindtools.com)

Additional RESILIENCE resources:
https://www.edutopia.org/article/resilience-resources
https://barclayslifeskills.com/educators/lessons/staying-positive-resilience/
https://au.reachout.com/
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