**Teaching Notes**

**(Revised 2025)**

*The Aftermath of Redskins Indian Mascot Decisions: What’s Next?*

By

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**Learning Outcomes**

*1.) Understand the responsibilities of public education in the areas of diversity and equity attached to sport symbols and mascots.*

*2.) Examine the conflicts of identity issues connected with divisive mascot names.*

*3.) Explore the psychological impacts of potentially divisive names and processes.*

*4.) Understand the varying processes involved in making policy changes about mascots.*

*5) Compare how different schools retired the Redskins mascot and the factors influencing the aftermath.*

**Audience:** This case is suitable for students in high school or college classes and appropriate for classes in Native American studies, history, geography, civics, education, communications, sociology, law, political science, history, and media.

**Related Cases**: There are at least four other cases on the website that relate to this case:

1. “Waiting Patiently - 500 Years” (the process of writing and passing legislation to include tribal history in the schools)
2. “Whose History Should be Taught?” (a teacher meets with conflict from colleagues while attempting to include tribal history)
3. “Should Indian Mascots be Repealed?” (an evaluative look at the divisive nature of NA mascots) and
4. “Is Diversity a Mask or a Bridge?” (the study of the process of changing a mascot name at Port Townsend High School in the State of Washington)

**Update 2025**: The Washington Redskins first changed their name and logo in 2020 in response to complaints about the name being offensive to Native Americans and the economic pressure after the George Floyd protests and rebranded simply as the Washington Football Team. In 2022 they rebranded again as the Washington Commanders.

**Implementation Suggestions**: This case is versatile and can be taught in a variety of ways including small groups, debates, and research. A three session approach is a good format for case study evaluation in the classroom. Session one: lecture/discussion touching on case issues. It would be preferable for students to read the case the night before. Session two: discussion group sessions. Session three: group reports and general discussion pros and cons, proposed solutions, and/or identification of further or unresolved issues. Critical evaluation papers and research essays could be effective follow up assignments.

Divide the students into the following groups after they have all read the case. Their task is to address the issues described below and report out to the whole class.

**Discussion Questions:**

**Group one:** You represent administration in a high school in urban America. Two Native students have come to you with complaints about racial and stereotypical comments made in connection with the school’s “Redskin” mascot by students and a faculty member in their history class. Explain the manner in which you would respond to these students. Would you consider this a breach of diversity that needs to be discussed with parents, faculty, and students? If so, how would you do this? If not, why not?

**Group two**: You are a superintendent of a school that is dropping the Redskins mascot. Explain what you do to facilitate the mascot name change on the following issues: 1.) How to choose a new name 2.) Identify at least three groups who should be involved 3.) Discuss how to cover costs

4.) Describe how to address those who mourn or disagree with the change 5.) How would you sell the change to the community and high school?

**Group three:** Native American mascots and history: Discuss what Indian sports mascots and symbols say about racial, cultural, and spiritual stereotyping of Native Americans. Identify at least four examples where these mascots and symbols represent or misrepresent the history and traditions of Native Americans. Discuss how to best relate the traditions, culture, and history of Native Americans in your school. What can be done in terms of the curriculum, the teachers and staff, the physical space?

**Group four:** As the new principal in a high school that is in the process of dropping its mascot, you are faced with infusing an indigenous studies curriculum as part of a school wide program to address issues of diversity. This need has been made apparent by the mascot controversy. What steps do you take to add this curriculum? Where do you find it? Identify key personnel who could help you with this. How do you sell this to the community? How do you promote this to the faculty and student body? How could local indigenous peoples aid you with this?

**Group five:** Identify from the case study the stages of transition that need to be addressed to ensure a smooth and painless transition to the new mascot. Address and explain each of the five stages.