

**A Descriptive Account of the
Best Practices in American Indian Education
On-line Seminar Pilot Project**

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Abstract

During the spring semester of 2008, six educators from California, Colorado, Montana, and Wisconsin participated in an on-line seminar that focused on best practices in American Indian education. The seminar facilitator was Dr. Martin Reinhardt, an Anishinaabe Ojibway research associate at Colorado State University in the Interwest Equity Assistance Center. The seminar is one of a series of seminars that were developed in partnership between the Center, the CSU School of Education, and the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly. This descriptive account of the seminar was co-authored by Dr. Reinhardt and three of the seminar participants.

Introduction

During the 2008 spring semester, the Interwest Equity Assistance Center (IEAC), in partnership with the Colorado State University School of Education (CSU SOE) and the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA), piloted a Best Practices in American Indian Education on-line seminar. The seminar syllabus (see Appendix A) was developed by Dr. Martin Reinhardt, and the seminar was delivered completely on-line using RamCT (the CSU version of WebCT 6.0). The Best Practices seminar was held from January 22 to May 9, 2008.

The seminar was developed to address a need voiced throughout Indian Country regarding the lack of opportunity for Indian education professionals and other educators to discuss the idea of best practice as it relates to Indian education. Dr. Reinhardt is a research associate with the Interwest Equity Assistance Center and provides professional development activities for schools, school districts, and tribal/federal/state agencies across the Nation. In his travels he has witnessed a serious lack of specialized development opportunities designed specifically for Indian education professionals. With

this at the forefront, he put together a series of on-line seminars including: Introduction to American Indian Education, Law and Politics of American Indian Education, Best Practices in American Indian Education, and Tribal/State Specific Issues in American Indian Education. Additionally, Dr. Reinhardt created an American Indian Education Professional Development Workshop (AIEPDW) that is delivered on-site, and is intended to assist educators in conceptualizing, or re-conceptualizing, the idea of Indian education.

Six individuals enrolled in the 2008 Best Practices seminar, three of whom contributed to development of this descriptive account. Participants completed assigned readings, interacted through a discussion board, took quizzes, summarized materials and information supplied by guest presenters, and attended live chats with those guest presenters.

Two texts selected for the seminar were Cajete's (1994) *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*, and Tippeconnic and Swisher's (1999) *Next Steps: Research and Practice to Advance Indian Education*. Cajete's book was chosen for its grounding in American Indian traditional perspectives on education, and because it provides the reader an opportunity to compare and contrast the philosophical underpinnings of that which is called "education". Tippeconnic and Swisher's book was selected for its multiple perspectives on a broad range of issues in Indian education. The authors are all American Indian education professionals and topics covered include history, law and politics, curriculum and instruction, assessment, parental involvement, language and culture, and counseling.

Guest presenters for the seminar included Donna Sabis-Burns, Casey Sovo, Terry Janis, McClellan Hall, and Dr. William Demmert. Donna Sabis-Burns was invited to

discuss her contributions to the US Department of Education's Digital Teacher Workshops - Teachers of Native American Students. Casey Sovo of the Bureau of Indian Education was asked to speak about the Reading First program. Terry Janis presented on the Indian Land Tenure Foundation's Indian Land Tenure curriculum. McClellan Hall was asked to present on the National Indian Youth Leadership Program. Lastly, Dr. William Demmert responded to the seminar participants with his perspective on culturally based education.

Although the syllabus was constructed with eight modules to be completed within a sixteen-week semester, in actuality we covered only five. In hindsight, the amount of reading and intensity of assignments exceeded requirements for a two credit on-line seminar and adjustments were made as needed. The seminar's RamCT platform also presented a great deal of technical difficulties, some of which were based on connection speed, computer hardware capacity, and compatibility with operating systems. See Appendix A for a complete list of modules which is included in the syllabus.

The original design also called for the production of a Best Practices in American Indian Education Manual as one of the outcomes of this seminar. As we approached the end of the seminar, it was apparent that production of such a manual was beyond the scope of the colloquium, and that a descriptive account of the outcomes would make much more sense. Thus, three of the seminar participants, Dr. April Lea Go Forth, Calvin Pohawpatchoko, and Darcy Skunkcap, were enlisted to assist Dr. Reinhardt in preparation of this paper. This document will serve as a starting point for the redevelopment of the seminar for future offerings, will also provide insight into the

Indian education programs reviewed, and may offer some guidance as to the eventual development of an actual best practices manual.

Personal Definition of Best Practice Exercise

The first seminar assignment was to share a personal definition of “best practice”. Having a sense for where people are with the idea of best practice is an important first step in facilitating a professional development process on this topic. What is often revealed, and important to understand, through that exercise is that there are many definitions of best practice and none are right or wrong.

In the following example, the participant provides a multifaceted definition that incorporates positive social interaction, culturally relevant curriculum, character education, Indian identity, cultural revitalization, and philosophical orientation.

A best practice for Native education consists of several points: An environment that is Supportive, Caring and Nurturing. It is cultural both in curriculum and history. It is spiritual, both from an individual standpoint and religiously, but it is also strong to build strength and insight. It is language, song and laughter. It is our stories from the past, present and into the future. It is who we are and will continue to be at the next sun rise. It is who we will be in the future without loss of self and culture. It is knowledge to provide food for our children, for ourselves and our children’s children to come. It is our learning circles from elders to youth, which we are regaining. It is learning to live as we once lived and learned.

A second example focuses on positive teacher/student interaction, flexibility, and responsiveness.

What is a best practice? A best practice in teaching children is to be caring, considerate, humorous, honest, and willing to change your strategy at the "drop of a hat"! I care for every child that I encounter in the classroom and in the community. I explain to them that I am their teacher because I want them to love learning and have successes. I consider all the "out of school" issues my students have upon entering my classroom each day. I try to help them through hard times they maybe experiencing at home by providing a routine that they find consistently positive, but yet educationally invigorating. A smile and laughter go a long way in any classroom situation! I love to see the children having a fun time while reading, writing, solving math problems, or whatever curricular area we are studying...it's worth it to have humor in a classroom; to be laughed at and laughed with! Honesty is a key to any relationship. I strive to have honesty with my students and they return the same to me! To me there is not just one exact way to do things all the time. A teacher must be extremely flexible, open minded, and ready to change up their best practice at any moment when working with children!

Both examples indicate that the act of defining best practice in your own words is a complex process that evokes passion and emotion, while simultaneously encouraging individuals to draw upon their own experience and beliefs as they struggled to communicate their definition to others. This exercise served as a "big idea" starting point for a discussion that continued throughout the seminar and beyond.

Best/Worst Experiences in Indian Education Exercise

The second assignment was to respond to the discussion question “What were my best and worst American Indian educational experiences”? The exercise provided participants with an opportunity to consider how their personal definitions of best practice are shaped largely by their personal experiences.

The following example of a worst experience in Indian education shows how the smallest incidents may have lasting effects on our perceptions of what we consider the best and worst practices in education. In the following case, a participant recalls a time when she was treated unfairly as an Indian student, as compared to White students.

I was in the 8th grade and it was freezing outside, so about six of us decided that since the classroom door was unlocked, we would go and just warm up inside. We all knew that we weren't supposed to be in there, but we went anyway. Well, [one of the teachers] was coming down the hallway and there was only one way out, which meant if we took that way we would be seen, so we stayed and hid. Long story short, two of us received an in-house suspension, while the other 4 (whites) only received trash duty for one recess. Those others had a choice of trash or a referral. Pretty low. I didn't recognize it back then, but do now. I've seen and heard of other Natives and there not so good experiences in education.

Obviously, racial disparity in discipline between Indian and non-Indian students left an indelible mark on this participant and undoubtedly helped shape her definition of best practice.

An example of a “best” experience in Indian education shows how teacher expectations of students can impact students’ expectations of themselves.

My teacher was also my great-aunt, so I was expected to do better than most, but that was great for me! From that it made me want to be pushed or challenged academically, and I made my teachers challenge me by asking for more or harder work, and most did. I was also in the Gifted and Talented program 4th grade to 6th grade. So it was good to be an Indian and be in the "smart kid" category.

Compare this example of a best experience to the example of a worst experience, and it once again clear that how educators treat, or mistreat, children can have a long lasting impact on how individuals think about the educational process. In the first example, the disparity in discipline was alienating to the student, whereas the high expectations by someone who she felt actually cared about her in the second example did the exact opposite.

Text Based Discussions

Original design of the seminar proposed that reading assignments and on-line quizzes would provide fodder for in-depth discussions about best practices in Indian education during the live chat sessions. However, open and insightful exchange was better achieved after a decision to forgo text based quizzes. Quizzes were replaced with pointed-questions from assigned readings, which served as springboards to discussions and live chats. Due to technical difficulties and scheduling conflicts with live chats, early consensus switched live chat sessions based upon reading assignments to a discussion board format. The revision led to richer exchange with expanded thought.

An example of how seminar participants were better engaged in a discussion board is shown by a piece of one discussion thread by the facilitator and seminar

participant responses. The discussion question was based upon an assigned reading from the Tippeconnic and Swisher text.

Original Question from Facilitator: “According to the sources that Fox references, what are the problems of relying on standardized tests as indicators of student learning?”

Response from Participant 1 to Facilitator: “According to Peter Sacks (1997): Lack ability to determine academic success. Scores linked to socioeconomics. Test-only is superficial learning. According to FairTest: Fails to measure learning adequately. Doesn’t lead to high quality education for children, minorities and/or low-income. Multiple choice formats aren’t how we learn in life. Testing outcome tools pre-predicts failure/low expectations/clusters students/segregate students. They don’t include gender and culturally bias. Giving only one test, that is held “as the measure” doesn’t present a true picture, and has been misused with serious implications. Other: Limited to primary English language users. Only measures acculturation into mainstream society. Personal comment: I’m an oval that doesn’t fit into a square or a round hole, both physically and psychologically”.

Response from Participant 2 to Participant 1: “Hey, you are a "just the facts" kind of guy as well. I appreciated your list and wish that I would have cut to the list as well. Will give more consideration to that answer style. As for the oval, consider the shapes of our world without names and that is our classrooms!”

Below is another example of a piece of a discussion thread based on assigned readings from the Cajete text.

Original Question from Facilitator: “From your various perspectives, how might you help create opportunities for Indian youth to draw on their dreams and visions as part of their authentic education in today's world?”

Response from Participant 1 to Facilitator: “By becoming a teacher and teaching Blackfeet children on the Blackfeet Reservation, was my vision and dream as a 17 year old. Now 17 years later, I have 12 years of teaching experience in Browning, and everyday I try hard to help the youth learn a Standardized Based Education while including the Blackfeet values and views. All this in hopes the Indian youth will dream and vision educational futures themselves. I really rely on the spiritual aspect of life to take all the negative effects of public school education and help me give positive effects to the Indian youth. My question being, how do you undo 500 years of acculturation, assimilation, genocide, etc. and redo culture of American Indians through public education while still being sensitive to the adaptations American Indian people have made to feeling successful in European based world?”

Response from Participant 2 to Participant 1: “Valid and really pivotal question. While we cannot undo nor change much, we must give Native youth voice. Anger must be heard, grappled with and channeled into positive change. Friere said "When your voice is marginalized, hostility never subsides" and that seems to be ignored by public education - well

dominant culture, politics, etc. I hear you, as loudly as I hear that you are not giving up either!”

While the threads were generally not very long and consisted only of individual answers to the original questions posed by the facilitator, it did give the seminar participants an opportunity to engage each other and the facilitator about the content in the texts.

Generating discussion around assigned readings, however, was more difficult than generating discussion around self-knowledge topics. The amount of reading required and the level of the content may have been the primary factors in limiting the amount of text-generated discussion. Only three of the six students were able to consistently respond to the discussion questions based on assigned readings, whereas all participants responded to the self-knowledge questions.

Live Chats with Indian Education Professionals

Individual technical restrictions surfaced early so that only two of the six participants regularly participated in scheduled live chats with Indian education professionals. Therefore, it was decided that all seminar participants would benefit from a review of the materials referenced or supplied by guest presenters, summarizing those materials, generating questions that would be posed to presenters, and then reviewing the live chat transcripts afterwards.

Each guest presenter was asked for opening remarks about the program he or she was addressing in the live chat. They were also asked a similar question regarding their views on why their program should be considered a best practice in Indian education. Seminar participants were able to ask questions that they had prepared based on their review of the program, and new questions resulting from the chat flow. Guest presenters

also had opportunities to ask participants about their own experiences and perspectives on the topics.

Donna Sabis-Burns (Mohawk/Tuscarora), Digital Teacher Workshop - Teachers of Native American Students:

Early in planning the seminar, Dr. Reinhardt contacted the US Department of Education, Office of Indian Education and asked them what OIE supported program or activity they thought was a best practice. He was told that the OIE was very excited about the new Digital Teacher Workshops for Teachers of Native American Students and that he may want to contact the workshop authors directly. He contacted Donna Sabis-Burns who agreed to act as an on-line guest presenter.

Donna joined the class as an on-line guest presenter on the evening of February 19, 2008. Participants in the seminar were asked to work through the on-line workshops prior to her presentation. According to their website,

The Digital Teacher Workshops are designed to provide professional development training for Teachers of American Indians and Alaska Natives in all grade levels and content areas. The workshops support mastery of academic content and application by modeling strong teaching methods that have been successful in the classroom and providing a classroom application component, and additional resources.

(<https://www.t2tweb.us/NativeAmerican/home.asp>)

There are currently four workshops that have been developed. Besides the two that Donna prepared, there was one other workshop that had been developed at the time of

Donna's presentation—*The Wisdom of Words*, and one workshop has been posted since—*Tléix', Déex, Nás'k: Tying Math to Culture*.

Donna is featured in two of the four workshops. One of the workshops, *Mirrors and Windows*, was designed to:

- Design and meet challenging state academic content and student achievement standards.
- Meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students.
- Increase all children's cultural awareness of AI/AN literature.
- Ensure that AI/AN children see themselves appropriately represented in books.

It was anticipated that individuals who worked through *The Reading Circle* session would be able to:

- Promote family involvement in selecting and sharing appropriate literature for children that feature AI/AN people.
- Incorporate AI/AN perspectives into selected materials.
- Implement ideas on ways to share the culturally appropriate materials.
- Foster partnerships with the Native community and promote their involvement in book selection and storytelling.

According to Donna, developing the two workshops was “a labor of love”. She explained that it is difficult to want to provide a meaningful learning opportunity while also trying to meet the requirements in an assessment-focused environment. She says that she is “a firm believer in critical thought and inquiry which doesn't always mesh well with direct instruction approaches”.

When asked about which elements of the digital workshops make them a best practice in American Indian education, Donna responded that “it is teaching about social justice, about critical inquiry, and how looking beyond the status quo is critical in today's society”. She added that she thinks it is important to ask “Who gets to decide what are considered best practices?”

Donna asserts that “teaching non-Native teachers in a way that focuses on culture in literature in this case, is always helpful”. “Content that stretches beyond what is in the textbook, pedagogy that takes into account multiple intelligences, and thinking of the teacher as a facilitator” are some of the elements that she cites as important elements in these workshops.

She explains that “as educators we all share common ground across cultures, however, each student, each classroom, each culture may need something a little different for their learning experiences”. Donna also points out that “we cannot claim that all Indians are the same--with over 550 tribes and communities it goes to a deeper level when thinking about best practices across tribes, but I think we look at some more broad issues like language, expression, the arts, as part of those best practices”.

Donna also had an opportunity to ask the participants about their thoughts on how Cajete’s work fits into the idea of best practices in American Indian education. One participant responded that he sees “Cajete's work as viewing the indigenous education processes founded upon tribal traditions and ecological principals - sort of common laws of nature and human nature, even at the spiritual level”. Another participant explained that “Cajete brings enlightenment to my perspective of best practices. As an educator, I've tried to incorporate Natural teachings and contemporary issues. The Blackfeet have a

character known as Napi. He teaches morals through his mistakes. Napi's teachings are similar to Coyote, Spider stories...always relating to Nature”.

In reflection, Donna suggested that one important consideration of the workshops she developed is that “critical inquiry looks beyond the written word--it takes the reader, in the area of literature in this case, through a more human approach and experience--it looks at social justice, about the dominance and power of the mainstream”. She adds that the approach she used may not be as focused on spiritual relationships as emphasized in Cajete's work, but “it does have the flavor of enlightenment through a personal viewpoint and personal voice”.

On a practical note, the seminar participants reported that their experience with the Digital Teacher Workshops would have been better if they had not had to deal with technology issues like upload time and timing out issues. It has been suggested to DOE that they provide a cd based version of the workshops for those who do not have high-speed internet access, or who would like to use the workshops while away from an internet connection entirely. The digital format contains a very good pause feature that allows processing of information, forming of questions, or making applications with the information. However, whom would questions be presented to for accurate response and then meaningful direction in use?

Overall, and most positively, the workshops are a springboard for training. Content areas are important and well presented with short, inspiring and motivating information that reveals important knowledge to be gained and applied for American Indian students to be successful and confident learners. However, the workshops cannot stand alone.

Most teachers lack accurate foundations on culture to know the questions to ask. A simple resource list has proven to be overwhelming to teachers without sufficient time to plan their lessons, let alone to enrich curriculum. Many educators, both Indian and non-Indian, lack the experience to apply the simplest good instruction in the workshops. If a person does not have enough experience to know the questions to ask, it is quite challenging to apply let alone implement new information.

Casey Sovo (Comanche), Reading First at Bureau of Indian Education Supported Schools:

While planning the seminar, Dr. Reinhardt contacted the Bureau of Indian Education and asked them a similar question to the one he had asked DOE. Their response was that the Reading First program has had the greatest results, and that they were very enthused about the outcomes. It was suggested that he ask one of the Reading First specialists to join his class as a guest presenter. Dr. Reinhardt spoke with Casey Sovo who agreed to act as an on-line guest presenter.

Casey joined the class as an on-line guest presenter on the evening of February 26, 2008. He was asked to present on the Reading First program as promoted by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) for kindergarten through grade 3 at BIE supported schools. Participants in the workshop were asked to read through the materials that were submitted by Casey prior to his presentation. A list of the materials he submitted is included in the references section of this document.

Casey explained that he has personally been involved with the BIE Reading First program since February of 2006, but that he has been involved with reading instruction and school wide implementation since 2002. When he began working with Reading First,

the BIE was in the third year of Cohort 1 for the Reading First program. The selection of Cohort 2 was just beginning. There were twenty-five schools in the original cohort, and fourteen new schools in the second cohort. At the time of his presentation they were in the second year of Cohort 2.

To put it in perspective, Casey explained that the Reading First program impacts about 4600 students at BIE supported schools on an annual basis, and costs about \$4.6 million dollars per year. The program also includes professional development and training for about 400 teachers, reading coaches, and principals. There are Reading First schools located in eleven of the twenty-three states that have schools supported by the BIE. The states include: Arizona, North Dakota, New Mexico, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Washington.

According to Casey, BIE schools compete for sub-grants that range from approximately \$110,000 to \$445,000 annually depending on the size of the school. “The BIE's state level grant from the USDOE provided some guidelines about funding: the coaches salaries and benefits are guaranteed, schools requested funds for supplies and curriculum materials, and estimates were made for travel and professional development costs”.

Casey provided an example of a BIE school that is also a successful Reading First school. The Hannahville Indian School, located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, is a Cohort 1 school. He explains that

Hannahville has been successful on several fronts: First, the moral and student learning expectations of the K-3 teachers have been completely overhauled. Formerly, there was a lot of disbelief on how quickly and how

well students could read at early ages. Now, the K teachers are strong advocates for their students and continually strive to break their "learned to read by December" mark. Second, their SPED referral and placement numbers for K-3 students has dropped through the floor. The year prior to beginning RF, Hannahville referred almost 50 students and placed nearly 30. Last year they referred 2 and placed zero! Third, the school's reputation with the community and surrounding school districts has drastically improved. In the words of the reading coach, Sue Mielcarek, Hannahville used to be the school that everyone made fun of and looked down upon for having low academic expectations. Now, they have been repositioned as the regional expert in RF and Response to Intervention and a resource for demonstration quality, individualized education.

Regarding AYP, Casey was a bit more guarded yet optimistic. He explained that "AYP is an elusive animal, but the Cohort 1 schools are starting to realize some gains". He emphasized that most states begin measuring AYP at the third grade level, and that third grade is the last one impacted directly by Reading First. He underscores that "most AYP tests are reading comprehension test, and that is the most difficult literacy skill to improve".

Regarding how some schools have been successful in the areas of Native languages and cultures and Reading First, and Casey reported that there are some school that have mixed instruction in the local Native Language and English during the reading block. Jemez Day School in New Mexico comes to mind. Jemez Pueblo is completely and fully bi-

lingual. All of the teachers and students are fluent in Tewa and English and both languages are used interchangeably during formal instruction and casual conversations. For the first three years of RF implementation within the BIE, Jemez Day school was #1. Their students typically made 80% growth from the beginning of the year to the end. I think Jemez even made AYP in reading and math for the 2006-2007 school year. Jemez absolutely followed the RF model. They are an SFA school so deviation from the curriculum was not encouraged, but bilingual instruction was not viewed as a deviation.

In the case of Jemez bilingual instruction, Casey noted that “Tewa is only a verbal language. There is no written format”. Casey also explained that there are opportunities to incorporate Native stories and literature in the Read Aloud component of Reading First.

There is no written criteria per se, but right now we are focusing on the Read Aloud to build vocabulary and comprehension. So if a book qualified as "high quality literature" meaning it had an adequately high vocabulary load, provided a plot that led to comprehension questions and discussion, then yes those books would be considered for inclusion. Each RF school is free to select Read Aloud materials. Solid selections are generally spread word of mouth from RF school to RF school during professional development or formal training events. The state office does not provide total direction in this area.

It was suggested by seminar participants that the Creating Sacred Places curriculum developed by the National Indian School Board Association may be a good

resource for teachers to draw on when looking for culturally relevant materials for the Read Aloud component of the Reading First program.

Casey explained that he is also aware of most of the criticisms regarding Reading First. He suggested that one of the primary misunderstandings is in respect to fluency and use of the DIBELS test. He stresses that “fluency includes expression, pause, and understanding,” not just speed.

Finally, Casey points out that “Reading First has taught all of the participating reading teachers, paraprofessional, reading coaches, and principals what the essential early literacy skills are: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension”. The program has provided “in-depth, continuous , and on-going professional development in effective teaching practices” that have helped schools develop comprehensive reading programs.

Terry Janis (Oglala Lakota), Indian Land Tenure Foundation’s Indian Land Tenure Curriculum:

Dr. Reinhardt met Terry Janis of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF) at a Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA) meeting held during the National Congress of American Indians convention in November of 2007. While planning the seminar, Dr. Reinhardt contacted Terry and asked him if he would like to join the on-line seminar as a guest speaker to discuss their newly developed Indian Land Tenure Curriculum (ILTC). Terry joined the class as an on-line guest presenter on the evening of March 11, 2008. Participants in the workshop were asked to review the entire head start through higher education curriculum prior to his presentation.

There are four curricular standards which comprise the core of the ILTC. The standards were designed to provide a more meaningful, culturally relevant educational experience for American Indian students, but were also designed to be non-exclusive to American Indian people. All students can benefit from a curriculum that includes: historical and contemporary perspectives on the land, multiple tribal cultural and linguistic references; a focus on civics that is inclusive of tribal governments and citizens; and an approach to the natural sciences that acknowledges the importance of spiritual and ecological relationships.

As shown on the ILTF website, the four curricular standards include: American Indian traditional land values, American Indian land tenure history, contemporary land issues, and building a positive future for Indian communities. Each standard is accompanied by an objective, and a detailed explanation of the standard. See Appendix B for a complete breakdown of the standards.

The Head Start component of the curriculum provides culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate activities for children age three to five. The purpose is to instill a sense of belonging to the children's traditional land base and to provide a foundation for future learning of Indian land tenure issues. The child's family is asked to provide stories or teachings specific to the cultural background of the child and to encourage at-home participation. The activities are focused on eight lesson sets: Creation, Mother Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Plants, Animals, and Stars. Each lesson provides a hands-on activity, storytelling, and discussion.

For grades K-12, several lessons are provided for each standard at each grade level. Grade levels are split into the following groupings K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The

teacher is provided an overview of the lessons, including the rationale for the lesson, a recommended timeframe, goals for student outcomes, activities, and discussion questions. References are also provided for further reading.

The Higher Education portion of the curriculum provides an Introduction to Indian Land Tenure course, and a Strategic Land Planning Course. The introductory course addresses four major concepts: the historical origins of land tenure and its status, the major concepts of Native “property” law, the use and management of Native lands, and the re-acquisition of a Native land base. The planning course offers Indian landowners and land users systematic ways to:

- learn about the closely interwoven historical, legal, cultural, ecological and economic aspects of Indian land tenure and land use
- apply specific problem-solving and strategic land planning practices to research, develop, implement and evaluate their own land tenure and land use decisions.
- engage affected persons in participatory, comprehensive academic exercises that incorporate experiential learning opportunities through partnerships, applied problem-solving research, community outreach, and community service.

The curriculum is designed for the instructor to modify to a particular situation or tribal group. Course syllabi are provided which include learning outcomes, and resource lists.

According to Terry, the ILTF intended the ILTC “to be a rich source of material that teachers and school systems can use as they see fit for the best education of their students”. Terry points out that the curriculum is available free of charge, and “places no restrictions on its use, or the ability of teachers to adapt the material. In fact we encourage adaptation to fit local history, culture and tradition”. He says that “when teachers take the

time to develop these applications, we have consistently found that it is a powerful experience for students, whether Indian or not”.

Terry is aware that teachers need support and training regarding the ILTC. That is why the ILTF offers “grants to teachers and school systems to cover the expense of adaptation, and to develop appropriate materials”. The ILTF recognizes “that hands-on resources are needed to go along with the ILTC materials, and that there needs to be content that speaks to local experiences”. At the time of Terry’s on-line presentation the ILTF had awarded fifteen grants to schools that have implemented the curriculum. Half of the schools are located in Indian communities, and half are not. They have also awarded grants to three school districts including Saint Paul Public Schools, Wolf Point Schools in Montana, and Kenai Schools in Idaho.

Terry was also eager to share that the ILTF has entered into some strategic partnerships with the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA) and the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Indian Education Department to address professional development and public information needs. TEDNA has enlisted assistance from the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) to help disseminate information about the ILTC to tribal education agencies and other Indian education organizations. TEDNA has also enlisted Dr. Reinhardt, and others through Reinhardt & Associates, to help produce professional development materials for the ILTC.

Terry also envisions a day when the tribal colleges and universities will take on a bigger role of working with local schools systems to help them teach children about Indian Land Tenure issues. According to Terry, “one of the biggest issues that teachers struggle with is how to use the ILTC to meet state standards”. The partnerships with

TEDNA, Montana OPI, and feedback from the field will help ILTF better address this issue, and will provide data for future partnerships with tribal colleges and universities and others.

Terry is very aware of the critical importance of “administrative commitment; a state mandate or something close to mandate, materials that are presented to teachers fully developed with standards alignment and in a format the teachers can easily ingest; and consistent professional development with individual teachers who can offer coaching in class or one-to-one,” he is also aware of the need to show how the ILTC is impacting student achievement. Terry says that “while the ILTC has not been challenged with respect to concerns about it being based on scientific research,” he is sensitive to the fact that as schools begin implementing the ILTC, there must be a push to collect data related to its impact at the same time. Based on the work of Demert, Cajete, and others, he believes that it can have a significant impact on student success if implemented in a good way.

Dr. William Demmert (Tlingit/Oglala), Culturally Based Education:

In the fall of 2007 at an Indian education achievement forum in Minnesota, Dr. Reinhardt asked Dr. William “Bill” Demmert if he would be interested in discussing his work in culturally based education with participants in an on-line seminar. Bill agreed and submitted several documents for the participants to review in preparation for his presentation. A full list of the documents he submitted is included in the references section of this paper. He joined the seminar as an on-line presenter on the evening of April 8, 2008.

The major focus of Dr. Demmert's work has been on the education of AI/AN people. He is an associate professor of education at Western Washington University, the former commissioner of education for the State of Alaska, and the former deputy commissioner of the U.S. Office of Education, Health, Education and Welfare. Bill's current research "explores education programs and schools serving Native communities to better understand the role of traditional knowledge and systems of education within these programs, and to assess those that are relatively successful in providing a school environment that values academic performance, citizenship, and more traditional social responsibilities" (<http://crede.berkeley.edu/about/bios/demmertbio.html>).

One of the items that Bill submitted for the seminar participants to review was a draft copy of a rubric he and others had been developing regarding culturally based education. The official title of the rubric is "Indigenous Culture-Based Education Continuum". Dr. Reinhardt and the seminar participants were authorized to review it but were asked not to distribute it as it was still being finalized. The rubric incorporates many of the ideas that Dr. Demmert and others have written about in previous articles and reports, like those submitted for this seminar.

According to Bill, the schools he refers to in the continuum as "U.S. Schools" are similar to those schools that are called "traditional mainstream schools" in the book *Teaching Transformed*. Such schools exist at one end of the continuum, while at the other end you would see the type of school that "Promotes and strengthens the distinctive contemporary as well as traditional linguistic, cultural, and social mores of the community". At the time of his on-line presentation, there were three schools that were selected for piloting the rubric located in Hawaii, Alaska, and Arizona. He was also

looking at doing a validity test with key individuals from various backgrounds and locations.

Bill was careful to point out that this continuum is intended to measure whole school systems, not disparate programs or components. He explains that “if schools use the rubric as a guide for what they are not doing they can work to develop goals to move toward being more enacting”. He says that the rubric could be used to see how programs would fit a culturally based model however.

Dr. Demmert and his colleagues have also developed a “curriculum based measurement that is used three times per year”. This instrument includes reading, writing, mathematics and they are in the process of developing one for oral performance for Native languages. He gives an example for how it is used in reading: “A student will read three passages, one each minute to test their skills early in the year. Missed words are charted each time the test is given, and then an average score is calculated at the end. At each reading, the score should be getting better”.

Bill has also been working on a model for wellbeing that will focus on spirituality. The place of spirituality in American Indian education is core from a pre-colonial perspective. It has been negated by what would be considered U.S. schools in Bill’s rubric. The rubric will cover interactions within an Indigenous cultural context, the highest score being that which reflects Native languages and traditions as the primary basis for the educational process.

Bill also points out that the rubric is being designed so that it is applicable beyond AI/AN contexts. He thinks it is important that other Indigenous peoples like the Sami in

Norway and the Indigenous Greenlanders be able to share a common measure with Indigenous peoples in the US.

Although Bill and others have produced many materials that underscore the importance of culturally based education, it does little good if the leadership doesn't read them and act on them. He stresses that it requires much attention be focused on "working with leadership to assess their openness to truly be culturally based". There is a lot of work to be done in this area at all levels.

One of the participants asked Bill what his thoughts would be regarding use of the rubric for a virtual culturally based school. Bill suggested that a university course could be built around that question and that he would be interested in seeing how it came together. He said that whoever took on that task should use great fidelity in keeping within the parameters set forth in the rubric.

Finally, Dr. Demmert suggested that Title VII Indian Education programs have been drifting away from cultural programming under No Child Left Behind with the pressure to provide more tutorial assistance like Title I. He has been encouraging the National Indian Education Association to work with Congress to move it back towards a more culturally responsive framework.

McClellan Hall (Cherokee), National Indian Youth Leadership Project:

Over the past seven years, Dr. Reinhardt has participated as an instructor and program director for a National Indian Youth Leadership Project summer camp in Northern Michigan under the direction of Richard Sgarlotti of the Hannahville Indian School. He attests to the remarkable effect this camp, and others like it, has had on both the students who attend and on the staff and volunteers. Dr. Reinhardt originally met

McClellan “Mac” Hall at the camp in Michigan a few years ago. Mac is Cherokee, and is the founder and executive director of the NIYLP. He asked Mac if he would be willing to talk about the NIYLP during an on-line session for this seminar and Mac agreed. He was able to join the seminar participants for class on the evening of April 15, 2008.

Mac recalls when he and Board member, Roger McKinney started doing camps with Rich Sgarlotti in Michigan in the early 1980s. He said that one of the first camps had only four staff members and they were extremely busy. He is pleased that Rich and others have tried to keep it going for nearly twenty years. He has fond memories of Rich’s cooking and his dedication to working with Native kids.

According to Mac, the NIYLP has been in operation for 23 years. It is a nonprofit organization headquartered in New Mexico. NIYLP publishes the *Native American Journal of Service Learning*, hosts the *Positive Youth Development in American Indian Communities Conference*, and serves as the parent organization of *Project Venture*. They have fifteen Native staff members and a board of directors that is primarily made up of Indian people.

Mac points out that Project Venture is the only American Indian "evidence based program" in the country. This status is conferred by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). He says that

Project Venture has nearly twenty years of data from evaluations of mid and high school aged Native youth. In the 2002 National High Risk Youth Study, Project Venture was designated as the most effective of all programs (48) serving Native populations. It was in the top four of all the programs over all. It is being replicated in eighteen states, as well as

numerous sites in New Mexico. NIYLP provides trainings and Technical assistance to potential replication sites. Project Venture is a combination of outdoor adventure activities, ropes course, rock climbing, rappelling, canoeing, backpack trips, camps, etc., with service learning and culturally based leadership development, based on Native models.

Mac goes on to explain that the NIYLP works with schools, after school programs, summer, camps, and weekend programs. Most of the work they do is targeted for middle school aged Native kids.

Many of the NIYLP alumni now join in on the activities as service staff. This is something that Dr. Reinhardt has seen with his own daughters Nim and Daabii at the camp in Michigan. Both attended the camp and now serve as helpers for the younger students. Dr. Reinhardt explained that his older daughter Nim was going to help Rich as a cook's assistant for the upcoming camp, and that his younger daughter Daabii was going to assist the instructors.

The NIYLP is the Native affiliate for Dr. Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots program. This program incorporates service learning projects targeted to animals, the environment, and human interaction with both. Mac was looking for a project director at the time of his presentation.

The NIYLP also partners with the Shinnyo-en Foundation on the Six Billion Paths to Peace project. This project brings Native middle and high school students together with inspirational speakers on the topics of peace and violence reduction in Native communities.

Mac noted that Bill Miller and Keith Secola have been great supporters of the NIYLP over the years. It is common to see one or the other at the various camps or activities as instructors. They provide great role modeling for the kids, and seem to enjoy the activities as much if not more than the kids themselves.

One of the key ingredients of the NIYLP is their data gathering processes. Mac explained that their evaluator keeps track of all the data and can share that with others who are interested in learning more about the project.

We do pre/post surveys on all the kids we serve, every year. Lots of analysis is done on that. We have statistically significant data on everything from overall risk profile for ATOD use, lifetime use of alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, aggressive behavior, depression, internal locus of control, personal competence, parental support, resiliency, family bonding, school engagement, etc. We have a chronology that goes back over 16 years.

Their first-class data gathering and analysis endeavors have really helped shape the NIYLP over the years and have elevated the project to the evidence based status it has today. This really helps when you have to show effectiveness for funding. There is no doubt from a research perspective that the NIYLP is working.

Mac also stressed that the NIYLP incorporates Native language, culture, and values into everything they do. They often have activities built into their programs that bring elders together with youth. “Elders are reminded that their role is not to scold but nurture, we work with elders a lot before we put them together with kids because there is a perception with many elders that their role is to scold, tough love, etc.”. Mac says that

when the elders are able to act in a Native traditional teaching capacity “the gatherings are magical”.

Finally, Mac pointed out that the NIYLP is having a tremendous impact on helping students have a more positive outlook for their future. This is rather important when a lot of these kids have been “feeling like they were left out, feeling like they weren't valued or respected by the teachers and administrators, dealing with negative peer pressure from their peers, lacking Native role models in leadership positions, etc.”. School and community engagement undoubtedly has an impact on academic achievement. Mac rounded the discussion off by stating that “what NIYLP does is a best practice in Positive Youth Development for native youth”. He believes that kids need to “learn how to learn, build skills and confidence through hands on experience. These skills will allow them to do anything they choose to do”.

Recommendations/Conclusion

At midpoint in the seminar, Dr. Reinhardt was posed with a question by a participant about how he has exemplified the idea of best practices in the seminar. It was a very thought provoking question, and Dr. Reinhardt responded via the discussion board. His mid-semester self-evaluation is included as Appendix C. This section is a combination of the mid-semester self-evaluation, participant evaluations, and ideas generated since.

The original goal of the seminar was “to help educators develop their critical analysis skills in the practice of American Indian education”. Based on Cajete’s (1994) suggestions about what contemporary Indigenous education should incorporate--storying/oral poetry and critical analysis—it was agreed that the goal should be modified

to read as follows “to help educators develop their critical analysis skills in the practice of American Indian education, while simultaneously encouraging them to develop their ability to engage students in educational activities that support oral traditions”.

The activities in this seminar certainly addressed the goal as originally stated, but would have slanted toward critical analysis when compared to the modified goal. The self-reflection exercises and assigned readings, especially from the Cajete text, were right on point regarding oral traditions, but the live chats were more geared toward critical analysis. As such, the seminar will likely be restructured to incorporate opportunities for participants to engage in more activities that support the integration of oral traditions.

The four objectives related to the original goal for this seminar were stated as follows:

- Objective 1: Reflect on personal experience as it relates to best practices in American Indian education.
- Objective 2: Engage in high level, text-based, theoretical, discussions about best practices in American Indian education from both an historical and contemporary perspective.
- Objective 3: Interact with American Indian education professionals in a live chat environment regarding best practices in American Indian education.
- Objective 4: Compile a manual on best practices in American Indian education based on seminar outcomes for use in future seminars.

Objective 1 will likely remain an objective within the new framework for the seminar. It seems to fit the proposed new goal parameters, as it has encouraged both self-reflection

(a form of critical analysis) and has been flexible enough to encourage free style writing and storying.

Dr. Reinhardt and seminar participants have discussed alternative ideas for how to modify the activities under this objective to better support oral traditions. Some of the ideas that were generated include using platforms like Second Life, Skype, or WebEx to allow for real time voice interactions. Second Life would even allow for real time visual interactions through the use of avatars in a virtual world. All three of these programs still require seminar participants to have a high speed internet connection and some orientation to the technology prior to engaging in focused seminar activities.

The activities designed for objective 2 seemed to cause the most confusion and stress for seminar participants. It is likely that the objective will remain as part of the seminar, but the activities will likely change. Dr. Reinhardt had originally intended that participants would do assigned readings, take on-line quizzes based on the readings, and then incorporate points from the readings in their live chats with Indian education professionals. There were some difficulties with the original plan due to technology issues, late registrations, and finding available copies of the required texts.

It was suggested to forgo the quizzes and instead post a few discussion questions based on the readings that can be used to guide the live chats or discussion threads. It was proposed that fewer questions—but questions that deal with larger concepts—will generate more free flowing discussion, and that will help the educators practice using storying and oral poetry.

It is likely that the start date for this and the other on-line seminars will be moved from the beginning of the semester to mid-semester to allow more time for participants to

register, locate copies of the required texts, and to determine if they are going to have difficulties with the technology requirements. An orientation activity will likely be built into the seminar to get a feel for how participants are doing with pre-seminar preparation, especially if using a new platform for seminar delivery.

Out of the five live chats that were held with Indian education professionals, all but one seemed to go well regarding technology. Dr. William Demmert's presentation almost didn't happen as a result of technology issues. In fact, Dr. Reinhardt ended up calling Dr. Demmert on the phone and had to act as a relay for the live chat. It is likely that whichever platform is selected for the seminar in the future, that Dr. Reinhardt will ask that the guest presenters also have an opportunity to engage in some type of practice run prior to their presentation to avoid this type of issue.

Content wise, all seminar participants agreed that the presenters and programs selected for the live chats were very intriguing. There was a good diversity of perspectives on Indian education, and all of the presenters were high caliber professionals. It is likely that Dr. Reinhardt will seek additional presenters and programs for future seminars, but may also want to draw on the same presenters as all seemed willing to present again.

The elusive objective for the seminar was most definitely Objective 4. The idea of the development of a best practices manual seemed worthy of the time and energy of Dr. Reinhardt and seminar participants, but as the seminar unfolded, it became obvious that such a manual was beyond the scope of an on-line seminar. The seminar participants seemed to agree that such a manual should be produced by an inter-organizational body at the national level where there is a greater diversity of thought and experiences at the

tribal, state, and national levels. Interestingly enough, a similar perspective was voiced during an Indian Education Think-Tank that was held in Denver on May 20-21, 2008. Thus, it is very likely that Objective 4 will be replaced with a new objective. The new objective will likely read something like: compile a descriptive account of the best practices in American Indian education experience for use in future seminars.

References

Required Texts:

- Cajete, G. (1993). *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*. Ashville: Kivaki Press.
- Swisher, K. & Tippeconnic, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Next Steps: Research and practice to advance Indian education*. Charleston: Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Materials to Review for Donna Sabis-Burns' Presentation:

- Digital Teacher Workshop: Teachers of Native American Students
Website: <https://www.t2tweb.us/NativeAmerican/home.asp>

Materials to Review for Casey Sovo's Presentation:

- Torgesen, J., Houston, D., & Rissman, L. (2007). *Improving literacy instruction in middle and high schools: A guide for principals*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Adler, C. (Ed). (2003). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Available from: National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>.

- The Partnership for Reading. (circa 2003). *Put Reading First: Helping your child learn to read*. A parent guide for preschool through grade 3. Available from: National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>.
- The National Institute for Literacy. (2006). *What is scientifically based research? Using Research And Reason In Education: A Guide For Teachers*. Available from: National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>.

Materials to Review for Terry Janis' Presentation:

- Indian Land Tenure Curriculum Website:
<http://www.indianlandtenure.org/curriculum/>

Materials to Review for Dr. William Demmert's Presentation:

- Demmert, W. (2001). *Improving Academic Performance among Native American Students: A Review of the Research Literature*. Charleston: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.
- Demmert, W. (2005). "The Influences of Culture on Learning and Assessment Among Native American Students". *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 20(1), 16–23.
- Demmert, W. (2006). *A Native American Response: Why Do Colleges And Universities Fail The Minority Challenge?* National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
- Demmert, W. (et al). (2008). *Indigenous Culture-Based Education Continuum*. Unpublished document, used by permission only.

- Demmert, W. & Towner, J. (2003). *A Review Of The Research Literature On The Influences Of Culturally Based Education On The Academic Performance Of Native American Students*. Portland: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Hammer, P., & Demmert, W. (2003). *American Indian and Alaska Native Early Childhood Health, Development, and Education Research*. ERIC Digest.
- United States. Department of Education. (1991). *Indian Nations At Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action*. Final Report of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.

Materials to Review for McClellan Hall's Presentation:

- National Indian Youth Leadership Project Website:
<http://www.niylp.org/node>

Appendix A

Best Practices in American Indian Education Syllabus

ED 591 Workshop: Best Practices in American Indian Education (2cr)

Instructor: Dr. Martin Reinhardt

Location: On-line via RamCT

Seminar Schedule: This is a 16-week seminar. Participants will be expected to complete each module as scheduled, and must have all work completed by the end of the semester. Classes begin on Jan. 22 and end on May 9, 2008. Check RamCT calendar and announcements for live chat schedule/agenda.

Seminar Description: This seminar is a survey of best practices in American Indian education. Seminar participants will be required to research and compare and contrast federal, state, tribal and privately funded Indian education projects. Based on their findings, assigned readings, class discussions, and guest presentations, participants will help develop a Best Practices in American Indian Education manual that will be used for future seminar offerings. It is a mix of synchronous and asynchronous delivery with intensive use of discussion forum. Live recorded chats with American Indian education professionals are included.

Seminar Goal: The primary goal for this seminar is to help educators develop their critical analysis skills in the practice of American Indian education.

Objective 1: Reflect on personal experience as it relates to best practices in American Indian education.

Objective 2: Engage in high level, text-based, theoretical, discussions about best practices in American Indian education from both an historical and contemporary perspective.

Objective 3: Interact with American Indian education professionals in a live chat environment regarding best practices in American Indian education.

Objective 4: Compile a manual on best practices in American Indian education based on seminar outcomes for use in future seminars.

Required Materials:

Swisher, Karen & Tippeconnic, John. (Eds.). (1999). *Next Steps: Research and practice to advance Indian education*. Charleston: Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Cajete, Gregory. (1993). *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*. Ashville: Kivaki Press.

Other materials will be available within RamCT or students will be directed to external websites.

Grading System:

Points Received	Activity
40%	Quizzes
40%	Individual Contribution to Class Project
20%	Class Participation
100%	Total

- A = 94-100
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 86-89
- B = 83-85
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 76-79
- C = 73-75
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 66-69
- D = 63-65
- D- = 60-62
- F = 59 and below

Module 1:

What is a best practice? Define it in your own words and post your definition in the discussion forum by the end of the first week. The title of your posting should be “(your first name)_definition”.

Read each of your peers’ postings and compare them to your own. Reply to at least 2 of your peers’ postings and let them know how your definitions are similar or different.

Reading assignments for this module include:

Next Steps pages 33-52.

Look to the Mountain pages 11-41.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 1 and be prepared to discuss during the first live chat.

Module 2:

Answer the following questions in the discussion forum: What were my best and worst American Indian educational experiences?

Post your answers in the discussion forum by the end of the third week. The title of your posting should be “(your first name)_experiences”. Read each of your peers’ postings and compare at least two postings with your own and let them know the similarities and differences between yours and theirs.

Reading assignments for this module include:

Next Steps pages 83-106.

Look to the Mountain pages 42-73.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 2 and be prepared to discuss during the second live chat.

Module 3:

One page summary of materials and four questions posted to discussion forum prior to third live chat (check RamCT calendar).

Our task for this module is to begin developing a Best Practices in American Indian Education manual. We will begin by surveying multiple projects and programs that are being promoted by the Bureau of Indian Education, the US Department of Education Office of Indian Education, the Kellogg Foundation, and others. We will have a live chat with individuals representing each program or practice that is included throughout the rest of the semester. Our chats will be recorded (and edited) and included in the manual. Prior to each chat, each seminar participant should read through the materials that have been posted to RamCT, **create a one page summary for each project or program, and develop a set of the top four questions you have based on your review.** Participants are highly encouraged to utilize their assigned readings in developing their questions. Your summaries and questions should be posted to the discussion forum prior to the appropriate chat. The instructor will choose the best summary of each program to include in the manual, along with chat recordings, and the materials that were submitted for review. This manual will serve as an example for future seminar participants.

Reading assignments for this module include:

Next Steps pages 107-134.

Look to the Mountain pages 74-114.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 3 and be prepared to discuss during the third live chat.

Module 4:

One page summary of materials and four questions posted to discussion forum prior to fourth live chat (check RamCT calendar).

Reading assignments for this module include:

Next Steps pages 161-178.
Look to the Mountain pages 115-140.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 4 and be prepared to discuss during the fourth live chat.

Module 5:

One page summary of materials and four questions posted to discussion forum prior to fifth live chat (check RamCT calendar).

Reading assignments for this module include:
Next Steps pages 179-200.
Look to the Mountain pages 141-163.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 5 and be prepared to discuss during the fifth live chat.

Module 6:

One page summary of materials and four questions posted to discussion forum prior to sixth live chat (check RamCT calendar).

Reading assignments for this module include:
Next Steps pages 201-235.
Look to the Mountain pages 164-185.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 6 and be prepared to discuss during the second live chat.

Module 7:

One page summary of materials and four questions posted to discussion forum prior to seventh live chat (check RamCT calendar).

Reading assignments for this module include:
Next Steps pages 295-307.
Look to the Mountain pages 186-227.

Answer the questions related to the reading assignments under Quiz 7 and be prepared to discuss during the seventh live chat.

Module 8:

For this module, we will put the finishing touches on the Best Practices in American Indian Education Manual. All quizzes must be completed and any late assignments submitted by the last day of the semester.

Please complete the On-line Seminar Evaluation.

Appendix B

Indian Land Tenure Curriculum Standards

Standard One: American Indian traditional land values

Objective: Students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of traditional American Indian land values that formed the foundation for Indian cultural identity, sense of place, and survival.

This first standard considers traditional Native American land values. The survival of American Indian tribal societies is dependent upon their abilities to know and retain special connections to their homelands. The origin stories and related cultural practices that create unique tribal identities are often based upon particular places, land-related incidents or the use of specific natural resources and materials. Many tribal societies that were heavily dependent upon and sustained by their lands are seeking to restore that relationship in order to strengthen their communities.

Standard Two: American Indian land tenure history

Objective: Students will demonstrate a knowledge of key events in American Indian history and how these events relate to the current land tenure of American Indian tribes and individuals.

Modern Indian land tenure is a result of centuries-long history between natives and their colonizers. Huge native land losses were a result of warfare, displacement, assimilation, broken treaties, tax lien foreclosures, congressional diminishment, executive orders, forced evictions, illegal settlement by non-natives and illegitimate sales. Furthermore, highly complex relationships between

federal government, tribal governments, and state governments have evolved, created by treaties, legislation, executive orders and court decisions. All of this has had an enormous impact on modern Indian land tenure, which cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the history of American Indian colonization. In addition to exploring the history of domestic colonization and subsequent changes in land tenure, principles of European colonization are further explored in relation to indigenous homeland losses in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and South America.

Standard Three: Contemporary land issues.

Objective: Students will be able to discuss issues presently affecting American Indian lands and the ability of tribal nations to exercise sovereign powers over those lands.

The third standard grapples with a variety of issues concerning Indian land that are relevant today. The evolution of federal Indian land policy has created a special “trust relationship” with American Indian tribal nations and the lands they occupy. This trust relationship has created a complex set of issues that must be thoroughly understood by Indian communities in order for them to effectively exercise their sovereign powers and prevent further land loss, regain lost lands, realize benefits from good land stewardship and revitalize traditional connections to the lands. Contemporary issues include continued land losses but also successful land claims and acquisitions, land management issues, jurisdictional conflict, natural resource disputes, and the protection of sacred sites.

Standard Four: Building a positive future for Indian communities

Objective: Students will explore how a return to American Indian traditional land values can help correct the effects of decades of land loss.

The final standard looks to what Indian communities should consider as they work toward a successful future in managing their lands. Indians have had their lands severely diminished and, in many cases, they have been moved great distances from their original homelands. This diminishment and displacement has had significant impacts on tribal culture, clan and social structure, traditional education, languages and overall tribal health. Tribal nations are finding the means of asserting their sovereign status and taking steps to correct some of the harm to their tribal societies and their land bases. This assertion can include acquisition of lost lands, halting the erosion of Indian land base, restoration of traditional land values and development of sustainable land-based tribal economies.

ILTC standards can also be viewed at:

(<http://www.indianlandtenure.org/curriculum/>)

Appendix C

Mid-Semester Self-Evaluation

Dr. Martin Reinhardt's Best Practices in American Indian Education On-line Seminar Pilot Project Mid-Semester Self-Evaluation

Aanii (Greetings) All,

Calvin asked an important question in an e-mail to me over the weekend that I thought I would share with all of you since it has to do with this seminar. He asked me "how have I tried to exemplify best practices in this seminar". I want to treat this as a discussion since my opinion is only one of the many we have among us. I will provide you all with my formative self-evaluation as we go along, but I am also interested in your opinion as the participants.

I want to start my self-evaluation by restating the primary goal for the seminar that I developed before starting the semester, and to remind you all that this is the pilot course.

"Seminar Goal: The primary goal for this seminar is to help educators develop their critical analysis skills in the practice of American Indian education".

Based on what Cajete suggests about storying/oral poetry and critical analysis, the goal is obviously slanted toward critical analysis. Perhaps the goal should be modified to read as follows:

"Seminar Goal: The primary goal for this seminar is to help educators develop their critical analysis skills in the practice of American Indian education, while simultaneously encouraging them to develop their ability to engage students in educational activities that support oral traditions".

This may take some radical restructuring of the seminar. I will need to consider what elements that are currently included should remain, which elements need to be eliminated, which need modification, and what is missing. I also need to consider technology resource issues as I continue to rethink this seminar.

I also developed 4 objectives related to the original goal for this seminar. They are as follows:

"Objective 1: Reflect on personal experience as it relates to best practices in American Indian education.

Objective 2: Engage in high level, text-based, theoretical, discussions about best practices in American Indian education from both an historical and contemporary perspective.

Objective 3: Interact with American Indian education professionals in a live chat environment regarding best practices in American Indian education.

Objective 4: Compile a manual on best practices in American Indian education based on seminar outcomes for use in future seminars".

Objective 1 seems to fit the proposed new goal parameters, as it has encouraged both self-reflection (a form of critical analysis) and has been flexible enough to encourage free style writing which is, in my opinion, closer to oral tradition than more stringent writing methods. I am considering using other platforms like Second Life or Skype for live voice discussions for future seminar offerings. The use of live voice chats may help participants develop their ability to engage students in educational activities that support oral traditions better than the current discussion threads and live text chats.

I believe that I have been struggling with Objective 2. The intent of the original seminar design was to encourage you all to do the assigned readings by requiring you to take quizzes over the readings, while using live chats to discuss them. This has not worked out well primarily due to technology related difficulties in participants accessing quizzes and chats. There were also issues related to late registrations and difficulties finding copies of the texts. Regardless, based on feedback from Calvin and April, I adjusted the amount of questions from 20 to 10, thereby decreasing the amount of time required to remain on-line for quizzes. That was better, but because we weren't all able to make live chats, it still didn't afford us an opportunity to really discuss the assigned readings at any high level as a class. Thus, for module 4, again based on suggestions from you all, I changed the method from quizzes to discussion questions. For module 5, Calvin has suggested that maybe we should have only 3 questions, 1 from each assigned reading and 1 that ties the readings together. He also suggested that we should have more free flowing discussion on how the concepts included in the readings are realized in our real time experiences. All very good suggestions and will be incorporated into module 5.

I sincerely appreciate the feedback/input as we continue to move along through this seminar. Your insight as the first class of participants is invaluable to the improvement of this seminar for future classes.

We have had 2 live chats with American Indian education professionals thus far. Given the technology issues, that has not worked out well for attendance and participation. I am open to ideas for how we may improve this component. I believe it is a unique component to this seminar and has allowed us to interact with key players in the field that otherwise may have been unavailable. Maybe a live phone conference would be easier for folks to attend. If that is the case, I need to figure out how to record the conference for later review.

Objective 4 is somewhat dependent on the other objectives, as it involves the compilation of a manual on best practices in American Indian education based on seminar outcomes. The intent of this manual is descriptive rather than prescriptive. I don't assume to be an expert on Best Practices in American Indian education. I think that I have given it much thought as others have, and I believe that by describing what we have experienced in this seminar will help people think or rethink their ideas about what constitutes good Indian education. I have certainly biased this seminar with some of my favorite readings and

interests in Indian education, but have incorporated other course materials based on the recommendations of the Indian education professionals that were invited to act as guest presenters. As you can tell by reading the transcripts of the two live chats that we have had thus far, the guest presenters were at liberty to steer us in any direction they chose with readings and their personal insight. I asked you all to summarize their recommended course materials so that you were aware of where they were coming from. I also asked you to pre-develop 4 questions each for the presenters based on their recommended materials, our assigned readings, and your own personal/professional insights. We have not asked all of your prepared questions, but have asked some, and we have also let the discussion take us where it may. In my opinion, the semi-structured live chat is better than a completely structured/rigid chat because it allows for voices to be heard that otherwise may be absent, and it allows for real life concerns that are often more spontaneous in nature than the theoretical constructs that we come up with in advance. The manual, from my perspective, should include an introduction about the seminar, including how it came to be, some insights learned from our assigned readings, descriptions of the live chats, summaries of the course materials, a list of pre-developed questions sets, edited versions of the live chat transcripts, and a bibliography of resources used and recommended for further reading. I am also thinking that it would be nice to include a major section on insights learned from module discussions, especially since we are now going to be incorporating the text based discussions into the discussion threads.

Now, getting back to Calvin's original question, how have I tried to exemplify best practices in this seminar? In my humble opinion, I hope that I put together an initial package that incorporated:

- * a balance of reading materials (including the primary texts and course materials) that reflect both historical and contemporary issues in Indian education.
- * made use of RamCT, the current technology supported by CSU, for on-line learning opportunities that may not exist otherwise.
- * created a partnership between the CSU school of Education, the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly, and the Interwest Equity Assistance Center to offer a graduate level credit bearing professional development opportunity specific to American Indian education.
- * utilized lessons learned from previous on-line course offerings to design the original seminar structure, but remained flexible to incorporate changes as needed as the seminar continues to unfold.
- * encouraged participant feedback to use as data in seminar redesign.
- * incorporated discussion questions designed to elicit responses about personal and professional experiences in Indian education. This was intended to set the stage for common ground, a starting point for all of us to grow as a class, but also as individuals.
- * attempted to maintain integrity of seminar goal and objectives, while integrating changes to improve upon initial model.
- * allowed flexibility in seminar modules to help participants of various skill and ability groups to advance at their own speed within certain limitations. This is always a sticky situation, because life happens.

I want to close by saying that I want everyone to get something out of this seminar that will benefit them in their real life. Given this informal goal, it is sometimes difficult to be all things to all people. Some struggle with technology, some struggle with keeping up with readings, some want to move forward as fast as possible, and some need more time to ponder and digest. I hope that you all are having a positive experience in this seminar. I truly value your opinions and will try to make changes as we go along to improve the seminar. If my design is over ambitious, I apologize, and can modify the design. There are certain things that I must adhere to based on the level of the course and the original proposal to the CSU School of Education, TEDNA and the IEAC. But they also understand that this is a pilot course, so we have some flexibility in the system. I hope this answers Calvin's question at least somewhat. I look forward to your responses and think this is a good way to have an ongoing conversation about this seminar as it continues to develop. I am happy that it is not just an idea in my head anymore, but one that has become a shared vision. Sometimes it is hard to let go of something that you hold dear, like a piece of art. But by sharing it with others, it becomes an even more interesting creation, and then has the potential to help others like it never could if were not shared.

Miigwech (Thank you),

Marty

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