

1. Indicator: The school provides training for all staff on local tribal history, culture, customs, and values.

Evidence Review:

Best practices for Native Americans are rooted in culture. Native people have proven resilient in restoring culture (King, 2011). Based on research (NCEE, 1983) and interviews with tribal leaders and tribal elders, paucity in training of non-Indian teachers and staff indicates a gap in communication between community, families, and parents of children attending Tribal schools. A Task Force compiled of Native Teachers, parents, and community from a sample of Indian tribes prioritized factors for training teachers and staff working for local tribes on the history, culture, customs, and values. Some of the essential items identified were:

- The United States has a responsibility to help Native governments and communities preserve and protect the Native cultures, which are found in no other part of the world.
- The educational strategies and reforms that will be needed to achieve Native educational goals must guide improvement in all schools that serve American Indian and Alaska Native students.
- Schools must provide enriching curricula and assistance that encourage students' personal best in academic, physical, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.
- Parents, Elders, and community leaders must become involved in their children's education, in partnership with school officials and educators. They must participate in setting high expectations for students, influencing the curriculum, monitoring student progress, and evaluating programs. (The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991)

Erik Erikson (1968) who studied American Indian youth and a proponent for identity formation has pointed out that positive identity formation is an ongoing, cumulative process that starts in the home with a trusting relationship established between mother and child and develops through the child's interaction with other children and adults. To build a strong positive identity, new adults that the child interacts with need to reinforce and build on the cultural messages that the child has previously received. Teaching methods and school curriculum need to be changed to reduce cultural conflict between home and school (Rhyner, 1992). In order to help Native students form positive identities, schools need to be structured to allow teachers to get to know and interact with their students; caring teachers; Native teachers need to be recruited who will spend the time and effort to learn from as well as teach their students; these caring teachers need to use active teaching strategies with their students to keep their students motivated; Native curriculum needs to be developed and used in Native schools to reduce cultural discontinuity; testing needs to be used in schools to help students learn rather than to track them into non-academic programs; and parents need to have the power to demand schools give their children an education that will strengthen Native families rather than separate Native children from their parents (Cummins, 1988).

For these criteria to be accomplished, teachers recruited to work with native children need the support of the tribal community, leaders, and elders. Tribal elders and leaders working together with local colleges and universities need to prepare the teachers by providing assistance to be culturally sensitive and in the preparation of culturally responsive curricula. (Waterman & He, 2011 Klump and McNeir (2005) emphasized the importance of staff knowledge and teacher

training. In their review of the literature, they found that in order to increase their students achievement test scores, schools worked with “community organizations to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders to learn about their students’ culture” (p. 9).

Resources

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2. Indicator: The school provides tribal mentors for non-Indian staff and others who request it.

Evidence Review:

History of retention of qualified teachers at schools serving native students indicates that teachers in schools with large numbers of students from lower socio economics and students of color feel less satisfied and are more likely not to return to the position after one or two years of service (Grissom, 2011; Ingersoll, 2002, 2004) implicating that turnover is concentrated in schools that would benefit most from a stable staff of experienced teachers. Despite the potential challenge that this turnover disparity poses for equity of educational opportunity and student performance gaps across schools, little research has examined the reasons for elevated teacher turnover in schools with large numbers of traditionally disadvantaged students.

Teaching requires the acquisition of a broad array of skills and knowledge. As a result, most teachers, whether white, Native, or from other cultural and ethnic groups, would say they were ill prepared for their first teaching experiences (Starnes, 2006). With the multi-cultural questions faced by non-Indian teachers, it is not surprising that most teachers working in reservation schools are poorly equipped to meet the challenges (Ingersoll, 2004). It is usually necessary for teachers to become prepared on the job. Those best equipped to perform this duty are elders within the community.

Employing mentors from the community would provide reciprocal benefits to both mentor and mentee. The community elders would be exposed to a changing and culturally sensitive learning environment while acquiring the advantages of standards based education. The mentors would be responsible for educating the younger generations as well as visitors to the reservations on their culture and rich historical past creating a legacy of leadership and ignition of interest in their culture. The mentees would be rewarded with support in their profession, access to native families and an understanding of the culture to provide enhanced learning opportunities to students, thus validating the culture and making learning meaningful and appropriate.

As suggested by Hall (2007) mentoring provided by tribal elders is based on generations of accumulated knowledge about the natural world, a complex experiential process, which includes learning by doing, watching, listening, and experimenting, under the caring mentorship of elders and extended family members, traditional values that have long held Native communities together, service, generosity, and respect for self, for others, for all of creation will serve as cultural enhancement for youth.

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3. Indicator: The physical appearance of the school reflects the tribal culture.

Evidence Review:

Several factors make up a physical appearance of a school, including how the building itself actually looks. What art fills the hallways? What displays are in the classrooms? What language is used in posters and newsletters? The appearance of a school can also be reflected in the staff and personnel who fill the offices, hallways, and classrooms. According to a study conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (2007), “most AI/AN students were taught by teachers who identified themselves as White only” (p. 17). The same study asked teachers if they spoke any native languages and found that “the majority of AI/AN students...were taught by teachers who indicated not speaking their students’ native languages at all” (p. 18). The study went on to ask what proportion of staff members in the school building were AI/AN. Most of the AI/AN students were attending schools in which “25 percent or less of the teachers...and 25 percent or fewer of the non-teaching staff were AI/AN” (p. 23).

Schools can also reflect the tribal culture in the curriculum and projects assigned to students. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (Oakes, 2009) in its Issue Brief gives these examples: Zuni Public School District incorporates interviewing tribal citizens for a social studies class and then puts the interviews into a book format. Science classes study the traditional farming methods of the Zuni people. Art classes visit the Phoenix Heard Museum to study and develop their own art projects that reflect Zuni art. Not all of the teachers in the building are Zuni, but the support staff and assistances are Zuni and provide a natural resource for teachers. In Denver Public Schools, ten languages, including Lakota are offered to students.

Trumbull et al. (2001) stress that being aware of different cultural orientations is extremely valuable in developing programs, policies, and activities that build on the strengths and values of a diverse school community

Reflection of the culture within the school displays respect for a culture. Epstein (1995) defines culture as a body of knowledge which includes: philosophies; belief about causes of problems and solutions; local innovation, trial and error; medicinal use of plants and minerals; healing procedures; oral transmission of knowledge; and community evaluation and acceptance of practices and programs. No place else in the United States is this definition of culture more apparent than among the American Indian/Alaska tribes.

Prescribed by research and reiterated by Adams & Christenson, (2000), Edwards et.al, (in press). Epstein et. al.(1997) and Walker (2011), understanding the ways of knowing underlying culture-based practices such as traditional healing, ceremony, and storytelling; escalating cultural pride through celebrations, visual images of portraits and words of wisdom of great chiefs will further strengthen culture-based programs in Indian communities. Specifically, this deeper understanding would enable a reciprocal exchange of knowledge between the tribal community and the visiting community of educators, empowering Indigenous knowledge by creating an improved and expanded understanding of and a greater appreciation for both within and beyond Indigenous communities (Edwards, et al., in press).

Examples

The following indicators provided by LeBrasseur & Freark (1982) and Spindler and Spindler (1997) may be appropriate for this indicator:

1. The physical structure of the school should reflect the local cultural heritage. The students can paint murals depicting local historical events, and also design the bulletin boards to reflect their specific tribal interests. The name of the school should also reflect tribal heritage such as *Heart of the Earth School* in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
2. The local language should be used by the teachers whenever it is appropriate. This will enhance communications both with the students and their parents. Classroom aides, fluent in the native language, should also be use whenever possible, as required in *Ramah Navajo School*.
3. Printed materials should reflect the local Indian history, traditions and language. Student generated newspapers and booklets such as *Tsa' Aszi* from the Navajo school encourage cultural journalism for the language arts requirements.

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4. Indicator: The school provides professional development for teachers on how to integrate Native American culture and language into the curriculum.

Evidence Review:

In order for teachers to adopt and integrate culturally appropriate materials and curriculum in their classrooms, they must first be knowledgeable about the content. Professional development should be provided in order to “expand and deepen educators’ understanding of Native American people and cultures” (Oakes, 2009, p. 4). In order to provide the content for professional development and also to aide in reviewing materials, Native American family members and tribal community members can be asked to assist teachers and administrators. By engaging family and community members, staff can also become aware of the culture, language, and traditions of the students they have in their class: “Schools and districts can benefit students by committing to a multilayered approach—building relationships with students and families, gathering and acting on perception data that provides insight into the thoughts and experiences of students and community members, communicating a belief in the abilities of learners, and providing needed supports to reach high levels of achievement” (Oakes, p. 5).

Klump and McNeir (2005) give two examples of how schools provide professional development to their teachers around culture and language. The intent is to provide the training in such a way as to increase teacher knowledge as well as sustain learning. Their first example is from the Flathead Indian Reservation in which the Salish Kootenai College provides sessions that tribal elders teach schools administrators and teachers the important aspects of their culture and language. The course is held over a number of days to increase chances they will retain the knowledge and then use it in their classrooms. Their second example cited the Title VII Indian Education Program at Warren School which developed curricula and resources for teachers to use in their classrooms at every grade level.

Chou (2007) cites reasons why preservice preparation and continuing professional development for teachers of culturally diverse students is important. Looking at current statistics on the students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, students of color make up about 46% of the current school population, with those numbers growing every year. In contrast, the majority (90%) of the teaching force is made up of a “white woman with two children” (p. 140). The question becomes, how do we prepare teachers for a culturally diverse student population? Chou suggests that “it is imperative to provide an empowering and equitable education for all students in the United States. Within the context of teacher preparation, one of the highest priorities is to help prospective teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with culturally diverse students. Schools, colleges, and departments of education must assume the responsibility of preparing all teachers, regardless of race, to teach in culturally diverse classrooms” (p. 140). Even after pre-service, to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, teachers need to be “prepared to take on a difficult task that requires continuous critical thought, action, and rethinking both individually, collaboratively with other teachers, and with the families and members of the communities in which they teach” (p. 147). Schools also need to hire teachers which reflect the demographics of the population in which they are serving to “serve as role models for all students” (Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Chou makes the point that schools “are not only the place where knowledge and skill are transmitted but also the place where values and social expectations are formed. The children of minority would believe that minorities are not deserved or good enough for professional work if racial minorities are under-represented in that area (Mercer & Mercer, 1986)” (p. 147).

References:

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5. Indicator: All teachers demonstrate in their lesson plans and materials that they have integrated Native American culture and language into the taught curriculum.

Evidence Review: Studies demonstrate that culturally based education improves students' academic achievement and assists in revitalizing and preserving native language and culture (Lipka & Adams, 2004; Gilbert & Carrasco, 1999). Demmert (2001), and Demmert and Towner (2003), also evidence that providing opportunities early in life to develop Native language skills as well as being exposed to curriculum that includes culturally relevant material enhances a student's interest and may also encourage them to attend and complete postsecondary education.

Historically, federal education policy stripped Indian children of their language and culture in order to assimilate them into the mainstream society. Croft (1977), surveying literature on Indian educational performance, noted several conditions impeding effective education. These included findings from Bass (1971b) who found that "irrelevant curricula, inappropriate learning materials, inadequate teachers, cultural bias, and absence of Indian involvement and control" (Croft) were to blame. Thirty five years later, conditions in Indian reservation schools do not indicate changes. These included unequal access to resources, teacher insensitivity, and lack of relevance in the curriculum. A number of factors contributed to the suppression and elimination of Native American languages, therefore decreasing the number of fluent Native speakers. According to Reyhner (1992), one major contributor to Native language loss has been coercive assimilative federal policies implemented throughout the educational system.

Zintz (1978), Heath (1972), Deloria (1978), and Davis & Pyatskowitz (1976) argue that education attempts to assimilate Native American children into the dominant culture. Since most teachers are not versed in the values and practices of the Native American culture, they are unaware of the discontinuity between values embedded in their curriculum and those of the native culture. This condition denigrates the students' identity. One way that we can be sure that Indian culture is effectively integrated into the curriculum is to write units of study in every subject area which will emphasize Native American thought and culture, then be sure these units are used in the classrooms. The learning approaches that incorporate culturally based education are noticeably absent from the curriculum and pedagogy because it has been assumed that if native language and culture is taught it must be taught separately from other content areas which would require additional time and resources to implement successfully within the allotted school day or after school programs.

This is even more so with the mandates of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 whereas teachers often are teaching to the test in this case; reading and mathematics, in order to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In fact, *Title III, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement* (NCLB 2001), supports the learning of Native languages as a primary focus under NCLB as long as English is one of the objectives (Demmert & Towner).

According to Demmert & Towner, culturally based education may be defined as approaches that recognize and utilize native languages as a first or second language, pedagogy that incorporates traditional cultural characteristics and involves teaching strategies that are harmonious with the native cultural knowledge and contemporary ways of knowing and learning. Culturally based

education includes curricula based on native culture that incorporates legends, oral histories, songs and fundamental beliefs and values of the community. It also includes parents, elders, and community members' involvement and participation in educating native children in the social and political mores of the community. Sepeda (1995) introduced the idea of "literacy continuum" that honors the knowledge that children come to school with and builds upon that knowledge to enhance English literacy. This knowledge could include the oral traditions and storytelling that is vital to many tribal communities.

An effective education is one which teaches skills, logic, self-identity, and interaction skills. If these are criteria of effective education, then the ability of education to achieve such goals in the culturally pluralistic world may require both segregation and integration; isolation and assimilation. The recognition of diversity and the cherishing of uniqueness are essential to effective education. The values of each need to be reinforced and encouraged since each devoid of the other is less effective than the combined approach. Cleary and Peacock (1998) found that both Native and non-Native teachers "believed it was important to teach tribal cultures alongside 'academics,' [however] the Native teachers...saw it as an imperative, essential part of the school" (p. 109).

Examples

(Provided from LeBrasseur & Freark, 1982 and Spindler & Spindler, 1997).

1. States require a social studies unit in third or fourth grade on the state history. The names of towns, counties or rivers which reflect Indian history should be researched as a class project. An example of the Lumbee history in the State of North Carolina is evidenced in the *U.N.I.T.Y. curriculum kit*.
2. In the study of nutrition, American Indian students should know the harvest plants that were cultivated prior to European contact (corn, beans, squash, and peppers are examples). Other uses of plants should be studied for their local history—trading, medicine, and dyes.
3. For an art class, the subject should reflect the specific tribal customs. An example is Cheyenne design, which is derived from five sources—teepee, circle of life, cardinal points, the stars, and maker-life. Colors used by the Cheyennes are green, blue, yellow, black, red, and white.
4. Oral history: Many schools encourage community participation in the planning and development of new courses. For example, the Seneca nation of Indians brings the elders to the school to relate their tribal history; these sessions are videotaped for use in other classrooms or future use.
5. Recognition of American Indian celebrations. In many areas, tribal celebrations play a significant part in the social and cultural development of the student. The observance and participation in these events such as Shalako for the Zuni are important aspects of American Indian culture.
6. In government class, the study of the tribal structure is just as important as the study of the Senate and House of Representatives.
7. In the study of literature, Indian students should compare the creation story of their own tribe to one of another tribe. Each tribe has its own story of creation, and students can analyze their own creation story and that of another tribe to find similarities and differences.

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6. Indicator: The school includes tribal elders, speakers, and leaders in planning and providing school events that feature Native American culture, customs, and values.

Evidence Review:

If the Native American child is to experience school success and a better quality of life, then schools must take the initiative to foster a process to find a “goodness of fit” between home and the education system. A bidirectional approach to home-school relationship has been suggested whereby teachers become involved and knowledgeable about the Native American family, which in turn becomes involved and knowledgeable about the goals of the education system (Gabriano, 1992).

Ozawa (1986) mandated a "cultural imperative" whereby institutions typically serving children and their families modify their traditional programs to accommodate the needs of ethnic minorities. Suggestions for how teachers can become aware of the Native American culture with some ideas for culturally sensitive classrooms have been presented as follows by Sizemore & Langenbrunner, (1996):

- a) Be cognizant of culturally biased terminology, for example, “Sit Indian style”
- b) Scrutinize classroom materials for culturally biased content
- c) Offer reading materials with rich cultural heritage of which children can and should be proud
- d) Stress differences in all of us and incorporate this concept to all areas of the classroom
- e) Talk with the children about different ethnic customs. Try to make this a concrete activity by having children discuss in small groups how they typically celebrate their birthday or a favorite book they have read that describes the kind of birthday they would like to have. Thus, children will gain insights about the different types of celebrations and customs of their classmates.
- f) Post pictures in the classroom that are culturally appropriate. Avoid displaying only those with Anglo-Saxon children
- g) Instead of celebrating Christmas (a Western tradition based on Christianity), have a "Winter Fest." Children can still exchange gifts and celebrate the season of sleep, cold, snow, and so forth.
- h) Introduce a second language and encourage children to speak in their native language
- i) To enhance what the teacher does in the classroom, Demmert & Towner (2003) suggest utilizing tribal leaders, or speakers in presenting “joint, meaningful activity” through “language exchanges or other semiotic processes. Language vocabularies and routines acquired by learners through these processes are the elements that account for community, linguistic, and cultural continuing, and are the primary cognitive tools for individual and group problem solving and adaptations.”

Other studies (i.e., Lipka & McCarty, 1994; Smith, Leake, & Kamekona, 1998; Stiles, 1997; Yagi, 1985) have shown a strong correlation between language and culture programs and “improved academic performance, decreased dropout rates, improved school attendance rates, decreased clinical symptoms and improved personal behavior (Demmert, 2001, p. 9). In the report Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action (1991), it states the belief of tribal communities and educators that “cultural context is absolutely essential if one is to succeed academically and to build meaningful lives as adults” (in Demmert & Towner, 2003, p. 1).

Demmert and Towner in their 2003 literature review on the importance of culturally based education gave these six critical elements:

1. Use of indigenous language
2. Traditional cultural characteristics emphasized in the pedagogy
3. Teaching strategies that are consistent with the traditional culture
4. Culturally based curriculum
5. "Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities"
6. Awareness of the social/political mores of the community (p. 10).

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7. Indicator: Tribal elders, speakers, and leaders are engaged as volunteers in the school and classrooms.

Evidence Review:

Overcoming society's expectations of failure as well as the difficulties they confront, young Native American people face overwhelming obstacles to survive and reach adulthood (Fleischacker, et al., 2011; Hall, 2007; Willow, 2010). As a result of inferior educational opportunities which often include poverty, Native American children and youth must learn to steer successfully in the dominant culture while faced with challenges to retaining their Native traditions. Faced with many obstacles, many lose self-confidence and respect for themselves, which can lead to school failure, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, and other self-destructive choices (Martinez & Dukes, 1997).

Research continues to show that young people who have access to opportunities that allow them to build skills and demonstrate leadership are better able to make the transition to a healthy and productive adulthood (Ogbu, 1998; Schweigman, 2011). Cultural-based practices to enhance Native identity may well be useful to improve mental and behavioral health among Native American youth. Martinez and Dukes (1997) found a higher level of ethnic identity to be associated with increased self-confidence and purpose in life.

Similarly, another study found ethnic identity related positively to measures of psychological well-being such as coping ability, mastery, self-esteem and optimism, and negatively to measures of loneliness and depression (Roberts et al., 1999). It is important to find ways to sustain strong ethnic identity especially when Native American youth who either live in the city or on a reservation face adversity that negatively influence their lives.

Stronger ethnic identity among Native American youth may be helpful in reducing and eliminating substance abuse problems. Due to the urgent behavioral health related issues such as substance abuse, suicide and violence in this group, it is imperative to understand and meet their mental health needs. The cultural practice unique to each culture is a sacred tradition handed from the older generations to their young. Academic institutions being a place where youth congregate, this offers an opportunity for mentoring through elders in a community to hand down habits and procedures directly to youth while educating visiting professionals in tradition unique to that tribe.

Who best to teach culture and language? Agbo (2001, 2004) argues that the best way for students to learn about their tribes traditional values is from the elders, "children should have an opportunity to learn their culture and language in order to preserve their tribal identities, that they should learn traditional values from elders, that tribal languages and cultures are an important aspect in the education of indigenous youth, and that schools ought to become clearinghouses for community traditions and cultures." In surveys conducted by Wells (1997), he found that almost half of the schools educating American Indian students do not offer classes in IA culture or language. Because 90% of the schools have few if any American Indian teachers, it becomes "essential that tribal elders and native speakers be brought into the school to fill this very important void in Indian education" (p. 6). Wells gives this recommendation from the results of his survey:

Any reform of the educational system which serves Indian students needs to recognize that Indian communities are the most qualified group to identify Indian educational needs and what programs are most necessary to meet tribal educational objectives. Indian tribal

leaders place a high priority on education for their people. 86% of the respondents placed education as either the highest tribal objective or among the highest tribal objectives....Education is without doubt the key to Indian self-determination and cultural survival. Without knowledgeable tribal members, Indian tribes will continue to be dependent upon others for expertise and advice in the several areas of tribal responsibility (pp 13-14).

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8. Indicator: The school staff includes one or more speakers of the community's prevailing tribal language(s).

Evidence review:

Language is a living thing; it is the very core of our cultural identity. Preservation of language is therefore a means of preserving a culture. The fact that most languages are unwritten, not recognized officially, restricted to local community and home functions, and spoken by very small groups of people reflects the balance of power in the global linguistic market place. (Ogbu, 1998; Romain, 2002). As Fishman (1997) has pointed out, endangered languages become such because they lack informal intergenerational transmission and informal daily life support.

Richard Littlebear captures the importance of preserving language:

Our native languages are in the penultimate moment of their existence in this world. It is the last and only time we will have the opportunity to save them. We must continue to promote the successful programs throughout Alaska and Indian Country. We must quit endlessly lamenting and continuously cataloging the causes of language death; instead, we must now deal with these issues by learning from the successful language preservation efforts. So if we do nothing, then we can expect our languages to be dead by the end of the next century. Even that time-line might be an optimistic one if we do nothing to present our languages. A great void will be left in the universe that will never be filled when all of our languages die. (Littlebear, 1996, p. xv)

Peacock & Day (1999) prescribe schools serving Native Children to,

Find mentors. There are people in every school who want to help find native traditions through the cultural and historical haze.

We cannot wait for them to approach us; we must find them. By hiring native teachers who are often related to multiple children and families, students in the school will feel secure while having opportunities to hear and speak their native language.

We can begin by asking Native faculty, staff, and community members factual questions about social expectations, community life, and traditions.

If using Native American language or traditions in the classroom, it is important to work closely with a mentor to ensure that what is done is correct and appropriate. Eventually the cultural differences between mentors and others will disappear because you come to know one another (Peacock & Day, 1999).

The greater the distance between other cultural understandings and those of the children taught, the more difficult it will be to bridge. In all cases, building effective mentoring relationships across cultural lines requires a serious commitment of time, energy, and patience on both sides (Littlebear, 1996).

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9. Indicator: The curriculum for all grade levels includes lessons on the accomplishments of Native Americans.

Evidence Review:

Classroom approaches that are responsive to the children's cultures promote academic achievement by providing cultural relevance and a rationale for accepting school (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Banks, 1981). But academic and future success also depends on the student developing an accurate understanding of relationships with the larger society (Banks, 1992; French, 1987; Henze & Vanett, 1993). Educational processes must provide Indian students with this knowledge of how their tribal cultures interact with the complex, multicultural American society in order to increase the future options of these students (French, 1987).

The challenging task facing educators of American Indian children is to assist in the maintenance of bonds to traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures while also providing preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse, modern technological society. Research on the education of American Indian and other minority group students has shown that schools that respect and support a child's culture demonstrate significantly better outcomes in educating those students (Estrada & Vasquez, 1981; U.S. Department of Education, 1991). Classroom approaches that are responsive to the children's cultures promote academic achievement by providing cultural relevance and a rationale for accepting school (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Banks, 1981). But academic and future successes also depend on the student developing an accurate understanding of relationships with the larger society (Banks, 1992; French, 1987; Henze & Vanett, 1993).

Educational processes must provide Indian students with this knowledge of how their tribal cultures interact with the complex, multicultural American society in order to increase the future options of these students (French, 1987). They may then participate successfully in the larger society, if they choose to do so, while also maintaining their own cultural identities.

An understanding of the historical relationship between American Indian cultures and the American educational system is essential for contemporary educators of American Indian children. Also of concern are the various issues, meanings, and perceptions revolving around the idea of multicultural or bicultural education. Other questions concern the nature of culture itself. Indian cultures, like all other cultures, are dynamic and continuously evolving. Cultural beliefs and practices are continuously being reshaped through changing environmental circumstances and interactions with other cultures (Butterfield, 1983; Swick, 1986).

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. These standards are an excellent base to guide and model to educators in the implementation of pride and value in the cultural heritage of any tribe or culture that educators work with. It is essential that the education of American Indian students be built around the rich cultural heritage they bring with them to the classroom in order to develop the

sense of pride that is critical to personal and cultural identity and academic success (Van Hamme, 1995).

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10. Indicator: The Leadership Team plans ways to infuse tribal customs and values into the school's operating procedures, rituals, and activities.

Evidence Review:

The concept of culturally appropriate education is not new. The importance of the cultural background of students was recognized in the *Meriam Report* in 1928 in the US, in which the recognition of Native American's different world view and incorporation of their traditions, cultures, and epistemologies in education were emphasized. These "cultural standards" are predicated on the belief that a firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally-responsive educators, curriculum, and schools (ANKN, 1998, p. 2)

Schmidt (2005) argues, "to get the most from students, teachers must plan instruction for the diverse populations in their classes and make learning relevant to motivate students to do their best." He further stated that "What seems more apparent than ever before is that culturally responsive instruction is excellence in teaching – excellence in teaching for successful learning" (pp. 30-31). Research places emphasis on the infusion of tribal customs and values into teaching which in turn is a reflection of the school's operating procedures, rituals, (Reyhner, et.al. 2011; Warford, 2011) and activities to be placed when guiding the school to successful cultural pedagogy.

The leadership team, as the decision making body for the school, can outline "components of the system that must be added or improved, timelines, and teams or persons responsible" (Marzano, 2003) for carrying out not only the overall school improvement process but also the plan for incorporating and carrying out culturally response curriculum and other school activities. The leadership team should also serve as a "conduit for communication, ensuring that the views and concerns of all members of the school faculty [and other stakeholders] are represented in decisions" (Redding, 2007).

References and other resources:

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11. Indicator: The principal and other school leaders demonstrate an understanding of tribal culture, customs, and values and model a respect for them.

Evidence Review:

Ethno theories are systems of beliefs and ideas concerning the nature of the ideal child and the socialization practices necessary to achieve this ideal. These ethno theories are shared (and negotiated) among members of cultural communities. Values concerning preferred developmental goals can be expressed explicitly, as in parental ethno theories, or implicitly, as in cultural practice. Socialization into a particular cultural pathway begins very early (Rothstein-Fisch, 2011, Triandis, 1995, Triandis & Shu, 2002), therefore it is imperative that administrators and school leaders fully understand the cultural norms, values to include the individualistic or collectivistic nature of the population they would serve. For example, people in collectivist cultures belong to groups as a matter of right, by birth or marriage, whereas those in individualist cultures often have to earn their membership in a group. People in collectivist cultures use indirect and face-saving communication more than people in individualist cultures (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Holtgraves, 1997).

The American Indian student enters the school system with a cultural heritage and set of values appreciably different from that of the educational system itself. LeBrasseur & Freark (1982) stated that it should be the aim of the system to adapt to the needs of the Indian student, not to try to change the student to fit into the system. The term "culturally disadvantaged," which is often used to explain poor achievement, implies that there is an absence of cultural experience, and teachers therefore must try to fill this void. In reality, the Indian student has a different set of cultural experiences.

Culturally based education includes curricula based on native culture that incorporates legends, oral histories, songs, and fundamental beliefs and values of the community (Trumbull et. al. 2001). It also includes parents, elders, and community members' involvement and participation in educating native children in the social and political mores of the community. The aim of Indian education should be to try to help children "become bi/multicultural" with "schools facilitating that process (Lomawaima, 2000, p. 2). In order to graduate Native American youth, administrators and teachers need to provide "a challenging and high quality education that is intimately connected and relevant to tribal communities" so that the youth are "academically prepared, connected to and active members of their tribal communities, and knowledgeable about both the dominant and their home cultures" (Lomawaima, p. 2).

A study done by Kawakami and Anton (2001) of the Kamehameha Early Education Project in Hawaii described culture-based education as the

grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, belief, practices, experiences, places, and language that are the foundation of a culture.

Culture-based education may include teaching the traditions and practices of a particular culture, but it is not restricted to these skills and knowledge. More important, culture-based education refers to teaching and learning that are grounded in a cultural worldview, from who lens are taught the skills, knowledge, content, and values that students need in our modern, global society.

They go on to give examples of what this looks like in a school:

- Allow for/promote cultural protocol in school;
- Integrate cultural values in school operations;
- Provide venues/sponsor events in the community that allow sharing of cultural knowledge and traditions; and
- Foster participation of elders in all aspects of education process.

References

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12. Indicator: Parent education programs include Native American and tribal history, customs, values, and language(s).

Evidence Review:

The effect of parental involvement on student achievement has been the subject of multiple studies over the years. Butterfield and Pepper (1991) in their discussion of the importance of parental involvement or parental support of education state that the school must focus resources, teacher training, and the support of the administration to make sure that the parents have options for participation that are meaningful. Educating parents on the difference between parental involvement (such as volunteering at the school or in a classroom, serving on committees, etc.) and parental support (talking with a child about what he is learning in school, setting aside time and place for homework, discussing the importance of education) can be one way in which the school can facilitate conversations with parents.

At the National Indian Education Conference, a parent suggested, “They want to be there for their children but nobody has even shown them how to be in very concrete, enjoyable, supportive kinds of ways” (Butterfield & Pepper, p. 2). Schools may have to consider all the ways in which they can educate parents to better support their children. This might include “orientation to the language of the school, the school system, child development information” or their role in reinforcing what the child has learned in school (Butterfield & Pepper, p. 2).

Schools must also be cognizant and respectful of the information, expertise, and experience parents can bring to the school. Schools must be careful to respect the culture of the tribes in which they are serving. Parents want to see that schools are retaining “their Indian language, culture, and values within their educational programs” (Butterfield & Pepper, p. 3). Relationships need to be built between parents and the school, but this cannot happen without being aware of the “influences of culture.” Dorfman and Fisher (2002) state, “Supporting families means reducing cultural discontinuities and building on the strengths of all children....When a visitor walks into Cherry Valley School, she sees a permanent teepee in the lobby adorned with Kootenai words and symbols. Photographs of local chiefs of the Salish and Kootenai tribes are on the school walls. Culturally relevant family fun nights at the school and an annual ‘Celebration of Families’ powwow are sponsored each year. ‘The message,’ says Principal Elaine Meeks, ‘is that this school belongs to every child and family’” (p. 15).

It is impossible to apply the same “cookie-cutter approach” for any school when it involves family engagement. This is especially true for the Native American population. As Sheley (2011) writes, American Indian students represent “over 500 recognized tribes with different cultures and languages (Kitchen, Valasquez, & Myers, 2000; Oakes & Mayday, 2009). However, when all these differences are stripped away, there is still a teacher, a student, and the student’s family who all want the student to succeed” (Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011, p. 158). Just as Cherry Valley School makes the effort to ensure its parents are comfortable in the school surroundings, every school must “make a concerted effort to communicate positive behaviors of the student, as well as encouraging parents to share their perceptions and knowledge of their child with the teacher. Schools must initiate the effort to make parents feel welcome and respected (Cockrell, 1992)” (Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, p. 158).

Examples

Taken from *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement* (Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011).

1. The school uses multiple means of communicating with parents (websites, notes to home, bulletin boards, face-to-face meetings, home visits) that are two-way, allowing for parental input and feedback.
2. The school offers workshops for parents to learn about and discuss their role in their child's education, including studying at home, reading at home, parent-child interaction, school-home compact, and learning standards.
3. The school maintains a School Community Council consisting of the principal, teachers, and parents who have currently enrolled students, to discuss and develop meaningful activities and ways for families and schools to interact.
4. The school selects and evaluates all staff based on their ability to work effectively with families and to attend to the social and emotional development of their students.
5. The school trains all staff on Native American culture, effective relationships with families, and the importance of children's social and emotional development, and expects the training to be demonstrated in daily work.

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13. Indicator: All students receive instruction in the basics of the prevailing tribal language(s) and an opportunity to use the language.

Evidence Review:

Dewey (1915) was a pioneer in identifying schools as the transmitters of culture. Because historically schools played such a powerful role in the decline of Native languages, it is reasonable to expect that today they can play a powerful role in restoring languages. Tribal groups that begin Native language instruction at an early age will be more successful than tribes that concentrate on teaching older students (Greymorning, 1997; 1999).

As identified by Ogbu & Simons (1998) and Romain, (2002), preservation of language is a means of preserving a culture. Indigenous languages are unwritten, not recognized officially, restricted to local communities and home functions, and spoken by very small groups of people. Lipka & Adams, (2004) and Gilbert & Carrasco, (1999) added to this base of knowledge that culturally based education improves students' academic achievement and assists in revitalizing and preserving native language and culture. American Indian tribes like many indigenous tribes the world over, are seeing the numbers of those speaking the native language dwindling to elders (Lane, 2012). Stiles (1997) stated that teenagers who are more conflicted about their culture are at greater risk of engaging in gang activity, developing alcohol and drug problems, and dropping out of school.

Indigenous languages are rarely the language of everyday social discourse, and English is the language of government and commerce in many tribal communities. Crawford (1996) stated that there are indications of language use declining in social gatherings, ceremonies, cultural observances, and the home where parents fail to teach their children the language resulting in many tribal communities being left with a handful of fluent speakers and the language rarely heard except in a few tribal school language classrooms and tribal college classes and at some ceremonies and feasts.

The importance of children learning to speak and understand their native languages is demonstrated by the fact that native languages do not always translate precisely or meaningfully to English. American Indian and Alaska Native religious ceremonies are language based; the inability of American Indians and Alaska Natives to speak their languages have already caused many to lose understanding of who they were and their place in the universe. Many American Indian and Alaska American Indian believe that if traditional languages are lost, they will cease to be Indians and become merely descendants of Indians. (Lipka & Adams, 2004);

To not let this prophesy be realized is up to tribal communities, leaders, school administrators and teachers of today to instill through schools and children, our future communities, leaders, administrators, and teachers the importance of their precious cultural heritage and the preservation of it through preservation of their language.

In addition to the importance of preserving the language, research has indicated that "students who enter school with a primary language other than the school language (e.g., English) perform significantly better on academic tasks when they receive consistent and cumulative academic support in the native/heritage language for a minimum of four to seven years" (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Their more striking finding however was that these results held true for "children who

entered school with no English background, children raised bilingually from birth, and 'children dominant in English who were losing their heritage language' (Thomas & Collier, 1997, p. 15).

Examples

Cleary and Peacock, (1998) in *Collected Wisdom: American Indian Education* gives these points to consider when incorporating native languages in schools:

- There are two schools of thought about the relationship between American Indian languages and culture. One would say that the demise of languages will mean the demise of culture. The other says that aspects of culture can exist without language.
- Historical attempts to eliminate American Indian languages are having a profound effect on American Indian education today, with the possible loss of hundreds of tribal languages. Only a concerted effort by schools, homes, and communities will ensure their survival.
- Language maintenance is a paramount concern in American Indian country as attested by the multitude of efforts in many communities.
- American Indian language teachers possess rich cultural backgrounds but may not have been trained as teachers. Teachers must develop most of their own curriculum materials where few or none have existed before.
- Some American Indian students are under intense peer pressure not to learn or use their tribal language.
- Cultural and religious issues sometimes clash with language maintenance efforts.
- The absence of an acceptable orthography (spelling of the language) is an impediment to language maintenance in some communities.
- Dialectic differences and varying levels of proficiency complicate language efforts.
- Urban American Indian students may find access to American Indian language instruction hindered by the number of tribes and languages represented in their schools and community.
- There are obvious relationships between tribal language use, literacy, and English.
- Teachers can encourage the preservation and maintenance of American Indian languages by modeling and encouraging their use in schools. Communities must seek or retain everyday uses for the language in the community. Students need to understand the purposes for knowing the language.

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14. Indicator: The promotion of Native American history, culture, customs, and values is done in a way that engenders respect for the history, culture, customs, and values of other groups.

Evidence Review:

It is a simplification to speak of American Indian culture as a unity. There are over 500 Indian tribes in the United States today which differ in language, economic and governmental systems, history, traditional customs, and religious beliefs (Chiago, 1981). For students to better understand the meaning of multicultural education for American Indians, it is necessary to first look at the nature of contemporary American Indian cultures. While many commonalities prevail within cultural values and practices of different American Indian tribes, there are also many differences.

Prior to the European invasion, each Indian group had its own traditional forms of education (Hampton, 1993). Some of these educational processes were quite structured such as vision quests and other ceremonies, ritualized stories, oral histories, and formal instruction. Others were more informal processes characterized by observation and imitation of daily activities geared toward teaching children the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for survival in a subsistence economy organized around kinship relations within specific tribes (Hampton, 1993; Reyhner, 1992, 1994).

American Indians of North America are not a monolithic group. They are as diverse as any other population (Flood et. al. 2007). Additionally, few peoples have been the subject of as many cultural misconceptions and stereotypes as American Indians. A significant factor in the academic underachievement of American Indian students is the sense of alienation produced by the incompatibility of their cultural values with their experiences in mainstream classrooms (Luftig, 1983, Ogbu, 1987). It is essential that the education of American Indian students be built around the rich cultural heritage and history they bring with them to the classroom in order to develop the sense of pride that is critical to personal and cultural identity and academic success. A multicultural education would prepare American Indian students to function in a global society, among other tribes that make up the American Indian culture, as well as in the world of their own tribal culture.

Demmert et al., (2008) provides some broad definitions of what is meant by including culture in the classroom. The definitions are as follows:

Language: Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages (this may include use bilingually or as a first or second language).

Pedagogy: Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions as the starting place for education (mores that are currently practiced in the community and that may differ from community to community). Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture as well as contemporary ways of knowing and learning (opportunities to observe, opportunities to practice, and opportunities to demonstrate skills).

Curriculum: Based on traditional culture that recognizes the importance of native spirituality and places the education of young children in a contemporary context (e.g. use and understanding of the visual arts, legends, oral histories, and fundamental beliefs of the community).

Leadership: Strong native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities.

Assessment: Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community.

Each American Indian culture while sharing commonalities with other tribes, still proudly bare their own traditions, language, food, dance, and ceremonies (Reyhner, 1992; Whiteman, 1986). It is essential that the education of American Indian students be built around the rich cultural heritage they bring with them to the classroom in order to develop the sense of pride that is critical to personal and cultural identity and academic success. But a multicultural education must prepare American Indian students to walk in the world of the larger, pluralistic society as well as in the world of their tribal culture.

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