



Culturally Based Education for Indigenous Language and Culture

A National Forum to Establish Priorities for Future Research

Forum Briefing Materials | November 3, 2013 | Rapid City, South Dakota



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Annotated Agenda

Objectives

- Review federal policies supporting indigenous language and culture in education
- Review the current research on indigenous language and culture
- Discuss the manner in which language and culture is reflected by educational practice
- Identify the areas in which additional research is needed to better define, operationalize, and evaluate indigenous language and culture education efforts
- Prioritize and justify the areas into a recommended R&D agenda

10:00 a.m. **WELCOME, BLESSING, AND INTRODUCTIONS** 30 minutes
*Steven Nelson, REL Northwest; Ceri Vean, REL Pacific;
Linda Fredericks, REL Central*

10:30 a.m. **PANEL PRESENTATION: WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT** 60 minutes
CULTURALLY BASED EDUCATION POLICY,
RESEARCH, AND PRACTICE?
*Joyce Silverthorne, OIE; Dr. David Beaulieu, UW/M;
Leslie Harper, Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School (MN)*

11:30 a.m. **BREAK** (hosted by Education Northwest) 30 minutes

12:00 p.m. **WORKING LUNCH: SMALL-GROUP BREAKOUT** 90 minutes
DISCUSSION
*Ceri Vean, Pacific; Phyllis Ault, Northwest; Linda
Fredericks, Central; Wendy Kekahio, Pacific; Kit Peixotto,
Northwest*

What should future research tell us about:

- Teacher development and CBE pedagogy
- Organizing the CBE instructional content of language and culture
- How schools and communities work together to deliver CBE
- How CBE is organized in different settings and situations
- Other important aspects of CBE

1:30 p.m.	LARGE-GROUP DISCUSSION, CONSOLIDATION, AND PRIORITY SETTING <i>Ceri Vean, Pacific</i>	60 minutes
2:30 p.m.	BREAK (Hosted by Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University)	15 minutes
2:45 p.m.	SMALL-GROUP SESSION IN TABLES OF THE FIVE RESEARCH AREAS, DRAFT A RATIONALE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH RESEARCH PRIORITY <i>Ceri Vean, Pacific; Phyllis Ault, Northwest; Linda Fredericks, Central; Wendy Kekahio, Pacific; Kit Peixotto, Northwest</i>	60 minutes
3:45 p.m.	CLOSING REFLECTIONS AND ADJOURN <i>Steven Nelson, Northwest; Ceri Vean, Pacific; Linda Fredericks, Central</i>	15 minutes

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Introduction

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 makes it federal policy to promote, protect, and preserve the indigenous languages of the United States (Native American Languages Act, 1990). While this has long been a focus of linguists concerned with language preservation, it has more recently become a greater issue for K–12 education. Further, since the Indian Education Act of 1972, it has been “the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government’s unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian children. The Federal Government will continue to work with local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities toward the goal of ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children” (Indian Education Act, 1972). These programs recognize American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children.

In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education (2005) issued a task order to conduct a preliminary study for experimental research on culturally based education for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. The purposes of the task order were to review the literature on theories and empirical evidence related to Native language and culture in education; to assess the feasibility of conducting experiments in multiple locations to determine the effectiveness of programs or interventions incorporating Native language and/or culture in education; and, if such experiments were feasible, to produce a

preliminary experimental design (Demmert & Towner, 2003). The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Yap, 2004) carried out this task order by conducting a review of relevant literature and a national survey of culturally based educational programs. However, the feasibility of conducting an actual randomized study of a culturally based educational intervention was called into question because of the variability of the dimensions used to define fidelity.

Much has been done since that time, including a series of national studies carried out by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on the achievement of AI/AN students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments through oversampling in selected states and the nation as a whole (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2012). Further work has been accomplished, as well, on achieving greater definitional precision in describing the essential elements of culturally based education (Demmert, 2008).

There has also been an increase in federal attention to the issue of the use of Native language and culture to promote school success among AI/AN students. On December 2, 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13,592 for improving AI/AN educational opportunities and strengthening tribal colleges and universities. In the Executive Order, the President asserts in part, “It is the policy of my Administration to support activities that will strengthen the nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for AI/AN students in order to fulfill our commitment to furthering tribal

self-determination and to help ensure that AI/AN students have an opportunity to learn their Native languages and histories and receive complete and competitive educations that prepare them for college, careers, and productive and satisfying lives” (Exec. Order No. 13,592).

On April 8, 2013, a meeting was held by representatives from the Institute of Education Sciences and the U.S. Office of Indian Education to discuss the research needs of the Office and the current Indian Education activities of the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs). As an outgrowth of this meeting, three RELs proposed to host an invitational forum in conjunction with the National Indian Education Association in Rapid City, South Dakota, in autumn 2013. The purpose of the forum is to share what is known about indigenous language and culturally based education policy, research, and practice in order to establish priorities for future research in the field.

In preparation for the event, the three RELs have prepared a set of briefing papers on culturally based education policy, research, and practice as resources for forum participants. These materials should prove useful as a base for advancing future research, as well as a point of reference for discussions of policy and practice. The briefing materials were not intended to be exhaustive, but rather reflect recent publications intended to capture the state of the art in indigenous language and culturally based education policy, research, and practice. The research priorities that will result from the forum are delimited by the knowledge and expertise of the participants attending the meeting, as well as the information made available to them in the briefing materials and panel presentations. The recommendations will not reflect official policy of the government.

Part I

Native Culture and Language in Education: Addressing the Interests of Special Populations Within U.S. Federal Policy

As the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) approaches, policymakers are considering strategies that will achieve what the law initially set out to do—narrow achievement gaps and ensure that all students are proficient in academic subjects. Although there are numerous research-based strategies that can improve the condition of education, not every strategy will work for all students. American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, for instance, are in unique circumstances that merit alternative approaches. Among alternative approaches for these groups are Native culture- and language-based education, which comprise promising and potentially scalable practices that are currently only used sporadically.

Research has shown that culturally based education can have significant positive effects for students, including improved retention, graduation rates, college attendance rates, and

standardized test scores (Demmert & Towner, 2003; Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d.). Support for Native culture and language education is growing, particularly among indigenous leaders and groups such as the National Indian Education Association, the National Indian School Boards Association, and the National Congress of American Indians (Navajo Nation, 2011; Reyhner, 2010). Despite its potential promise, however, the use of culture- and language-focused education is still variable. Part of this variability can be attributed to provisions within U.S. federal law.

This brief provides an overview of federal laws that shape the relationships between Native American communities and the federal government, as well as federal laws that address culture and language in education. Although these policies often involve immigrants to the United States, this brief focuses on American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

Native American Sovereignty and Local Autonomy in Education

Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act, encourages self-governance and self-determination. In addition to restoring the right to Native Americans to manage their land and resources, the act also authorizes funds to be used in aiding the organization of a tribal government and to provide education

assistance to reservation inhabitants (25 U.S.C. 461).

Prior to IRA, it was federal policy for Native American students to be placed in a boarding school system with a curriculum that aimed to eliminating their tribal cultures. IRA negated that practice and instead introduced the teaching of Indian history and culture

in schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2013a).

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (1975) provides Native American tribes with greater autonomy and the opportunity to manage the programs and services provided by the U.S. federal government. The passage of this act also led to the creation of the Division of Indian Self-Determination within the BIA Office of Indian Services. These services, which include education, health clinics, housing, roads and tribal operations, are administered by the BIA and by the Indian Health Service (Public Law 93-638; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2013b).

The education component of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 serves two primary purposes. First, it gives tribes control over schools operated by the BIA. Second, it creates advisory boards composed of parents of the Native American students attending schools that receive federal funds (Public Law 93-638; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2013b).¹

Education Amendment Acts of 1978

The Education Amendment Acts of 1978 (1978) address the accreditation and academic standards for BIA schools and school facilities. The acts gave greater authority to Indian school boards and permitted local hiring of teachers and staff. Furthermore, the acts established a Division of Budget Analysis within the BIA's Office of Indian Education Programs to administer a system of direct funding for tribally operated schools in an effort to support quality education programs. These funds can be used for school board training, hiring of Indian education personnel, compensation or salaries for teachers and counselors, early

childhood development programs, or other aspects of the tribal departments of education (Public Law 95-561; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2013b).

Government-to-Government Consultation and Coordination

The legal relationship between recognized Native American tribes and the United States mandates that the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) routinely consult with tribal governments. To avoid misunderstanding and to promote the progress of Native American policies, this policy, implemented in 2000, provides consultation guidelines for both parties that aim to maintain a professional and respectful relationship between tribal leaders and the U.S. federal government. These guidelines emphasize the ongoing right of tribes to self-government, sovereignty, and self-determination (Exec. Order No. 13,175).

Consultations ensure that the BIA has a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding a particular matter. To understand the complexities of any issue, tribal input is considered to prevent the BIA from making decisions on federal action or developing incomplete proposals that fail to address the root of a problem. Direct input from tribal leaders grants Native Americans some authority in determining the federal policies that most directly affect them (Exec. Order No. 13,175).

1 Federal funds are received through the Johnson-O'Malley Act which provides for federal state or territory cooperation and funding in Native American education.

Addressing Native Culture and Language in Education

Native American Languages Act

In 1990, Congress passed the Native American Languages Act (NALA), which recognizes the unique status of Native American cultures and languages.² According to the law, U.S. federal policy is to “preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Native American Languages Act, 1990). Further, NALA declares U.S. federal support for “the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction.” NALA’s authors articulated a number of reasons for encouraging instruction in Native languages, including not only language survival and community pride, but also improved educational opportunity and increased student achievement.

Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act

The Native American Languages Preservation Act (NALPA), an act that builds on but does not replace NALA, was signed into law in December 2006 (Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006, 2006). Named after Esther Martinez, a Tewa³ teacher and storyteller, NALPA bolsters federal support for Native language education by creating and funding the following programs:

- **Native American language nests** are educational programs that provide instruction and child care to at least 10 children under the age of seven and offer Native American language classes to their parents. Such programs use Native American language as the primary language of instruction.
- **Native American language survival schools** are similar to language nests but have broader aims and more objectives.

Located in regions with high numbers of Native Americans, these schools provide a minimum of 500 hours of K–12 instruction in at least one Native American language to at least 15 students. These schools aim to achieve student fluency in a Native American language alongside proficiency in mathematics, science, and language arts. Moreover, survival schools provide for teacher training and develop instructional courses and materials to advance Native American language learning and teaching.

- **Native American language restoration programs** operate one or more Native American language programs. In addition to delivering instruction in at least one Native American language, these programs provide training to Native American language teachers and develop instructional materials for Native American language programs. Funds are given to restoration programs for a variety of activities that increase proficiency in at least one Native American language, such as language immersion programs, culture camps, Native American language teacher training programs, and the development of books and other media.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Similar to NALA and NALPA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)⁴ contains specific provisions that affect Native language education. Title VII of ESEA, also known as the Indian Education Act, declares that the federal government will support both “the basic elementary and secondary educational needs” of Indian children and “the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children” (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Programs supported under Title VII include those

2 In Both NALA and NALPA, the term “Native American” includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

3 The Tewa are a group of Pueblo American Indians who speak the Tewa language.

4 ESEA was reauthorized in 2001 and is currently known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

related to curriculum development, academic enrichment, professional development, early childhood education, career preparation, family literacy, and at-risk children and youth, among others. Within these and other programs, Title VII prioritizes the linguistic and cultural needs of American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives. Examples of this priority include Title VII support for the following:

- Demonstration projects designed to explore “the use of Indian languages and exposure to Indian cultural traditions”
- Projects that address “the use of the Hawaiian language in instruction”
- “Instructional programs that make use of Native Alaskan languages” (NCLB, 2002)

Title I of ESEA requires that states submit plans for a single, statewide accountability system that will determine whether school districts and schools are making adequate yearly progress by meeting student reading and math proficiency targets each year. Title I also requires participating states to administer annual assessments in grades 3–8. These assessments are then factored into the performance of states, districts, and schools, and any actions that may be required as a result of performance status.

These mandates affect Native language education because, in most instances, the assessments required by Title I must be administered in English; however, assessments can be administered in a native language if specific conditions are met. For instance, ESEA allows school districts to test “limited English proficient” students in their native language when doing so produces “accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content settings” and when certain other legal conditions are met (NCLB, 2002). However, ESEA limits the number of years that students may be assessed in a language other than English, which can create challenges for those students in native

language education programs who are not used to the communicative methods often used in English assessments and protocols. For example, a student from a Native American education program may receive an oral prompt spoken in English and may not answer as quickly, potentially resulting in that student receiving a lower score than an English-speaking student. Without a formal assessment method for these native language and culture education programs, it can be difficult to track students’ language proficiency and learning process (Haynes, Stansfield, Gnyra, Schleif, & Anderson, 2010).

The information shared in this section is not exhaustive, but rather traces recent Congressional and Executive actions that reflect the state of the art in indigenous language and culturally based education policy. The United States Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education do not officially endorse or support these materials.

Part II

Research on Culturally Based Education for Native American Students

In line with a series of federal mandates referred to in Part I of this brief, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13,096 in August of 1998 (Exec. Order No. 13,096) to create a “long-term, comprehensive Federal Indian education policy” designed to improve educational achievement and academic progress for AI/AN students. To guide these efforts, the Executive Order directed the U.S. Department of Education to oversee the creation of a three-part research agenda: first, to review existing literature on theories and empirical evidence related to effective educational strategies for AI/AN populations; second, to examine the feasibility of conducting studies in multiple locations to determine the impacts of certain programs or interventions; and third, to produce a preliminary experimental design for further

investigation of promising practices. The statement of work for the task order relating to the research agenda defined culturally based education (CBE) as interventions incorporating “native language and/or important elements of native culture [within] planned activities and materials designed to improve education and introduced within education systems” (Yap, 2004).

The research mandate contained within Executive Order 13,096, as well as that endorsed by Executive Order 13,336 from April 2004 (Exec. Order No. 13,336), spurred the development of a number of federally funded studies to identify essential components and effective strategies for CBE. Key findings from several of these studies are described below.

Critical Elements of Effective Interventions

One of the first large-scale studies to describe the influences of CBE on academic performance was issued by REL Northwest (formerly the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory [NWREL]). This report (Demmert & Towner, 2003) identified six critical elements associated with effective interventions for Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian) students:

1. Recognition and practice of Native American languages, used bilingually or as a first or second language
2. Pedagogy that emphasized the traditional cultural characteristics of each community and adult-child interactions as the starting place for education
3. Pedagogy that embraced teaching strategies congruent with the traditional culture while simultaneously incorporating contemporary ways to know and learn, with multiple opportunities to observe, practice, and demonstrate skills
4. Curriculum based on traditional culture and recognizing the importance of Native spirituality while placing the education

of young children in a contemporary context, as exemplified by the use and understanding of visual arts, legends, oral histories, and fundamental beliefs of the community

5. Strong and consistent participation by parents, elders, and other community resources in the education of students and the planning and operation of school activities
6. Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community

These elements were derived from an extensive review of several sources: sets of culturally based standards developed by the states of Alaska and Hawaii; a review of the research literature by Demmert (2001); and a review of partner programs conducted by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2006) [now REL Northwest]. Later, these critical elements were used as the basis for the Indigenous Culture-Based Education Rubric Protocol (Demmert, 2008), which was developed to measure CBE program levels in partner schools. (See Part III for additional discussion.)

Role and Impact of Native Languages and Cultural Context

McCarty (2011) examined a number of research studies related to CBE and identified promising practices that enhanced the range of linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and affective strengths possessed by Native American students. The researchers defined promising practices as activities that “facilitate learners’ self-efficacy, critical capacities, and intrinsic motivation as thinkers, readers, and ethical social agents.” Furthermore, they stated that promising practices support the professionalism of teachers, cultivate the intellectual resources present in local communities, and promote Native self-determination. They also viewed promising practices as those which:

1. Allow students to achieve full educational parity with White mainstream peers, with the eventual goal of preparing Native students to participate fully as citizens of their home community and the world
2. Contribute to learners’ sense of well-being and the development of their academic and ethnic identities
3. Promote positive, trusting relationships between the school and community

The researchers maintained that there was extensive documentation to show the failure

of policies that excluded Native languages and cultural contexts. Additionally, there was ample evidence to demonstrate the academic benefits of approaches that systematically incorporated home and community language and cultural practices as an integral part of the school curriculum.

Key findings were that:

- Strong, academically rigorous Native language and culture programs had beneficial effects on Native language and culture programs and student achievement, as measured by multiple types of assessments
- Regardless of the level of students’ Native language expertise on entering programs that were characterized as “strong,” time devoted to learning the Native language did not detract from students’ ability to develop academic English
- Students required a minimum of 4–7 years to develop age-appropriate academic proficiency in a lesser used language, whether that language was English or the Native/heritage language

- Native language and culture programs rated as “strong” enhanced student motivation, self-esteem, and ethnic pride
- Effective programs offered unique and varied opportunities to involve parents and elders in children’s learning
- Effective programs were characterized by substantial investments in teachers’ professional development and in community intellectual resources that supported teacher preparation and curriculum development
- The effectiveness of strong CBE efforts were dependent upon culturally based leadership and decisionmaking related to the content, process, and medium of instruction

The study characterized “strong” efforts as those utilizing a combination of academic rigor and incorporation of Native language and culture as part of the core curriculum, as well as part of the school’s accountability system. “Weak” programs are pull-out or add-on classes with little connection to the mainstream curriculum.

Language Immersion Programs

A number of schools are utilizing, or considering the use of, language immersion techniques as a component of CBE. The Windwalker Corporation and the Center for Applied Linguistics (2012) conducted an extensive literature review on the current status and effectiveness of Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) language immersion programs. The goal of the review was to examine how to introduce or maintain the heritage language of NA/AN students in an educational setting while ensuring a meaningful and useful education with improved educational outcomes.

Studies in the review were largely inconclusive due to the difficulties associated with conducting research in educational settings with NA/AN populations, namely small student populations and high levels of linguistic and cultural diversity. Also, definitions and measures of “student success” in terms of academic outcomes varied widely in the studies. The review found some evidence that the use of language immersion education could improve academic outcomes of NA/AN students, but suggested that more high-quality research was needed to identify practices that are effective in fostering the linguistic and academic development of students and improving academic outcomes.

Experimental Research in Culturally Based Education

To address the third aspect of the research mandate specified in Executive Order 13,096, REL Northwest (formerly NWREL; Yap, 2004) undertook a study to assess the feasibility of conducting experimental research in CBE. Two data sources were used to write the report: a review of existing literature on the impact of CBE on the school performance of AI, AN, and Native Hawaiian students and a national survey of CBE programs that was conducted to ascertain

the feasibility of developing experimental or quasi-experimental research designs among existing programs. The literature review found only six studies examining the impacts of CBE programs or interventions that involved the use of random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions. However, in the national survey, results suggested that multiple CBE sites could be utilized for the random assignment of students to treatment and control conditions. At this time no

large-scale experimental trials have been undertaken.

The information shared in this section is not exhaustive, nor is it limited to highly rigorous studies. Indeed, it is the absence of these studies that helped to spur this National Forum. Instead, this section offers recent publications intended to capture the state of the art in indigenous language and culturally based education research. The United States Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education do not officially endorse or support these materials.

Part III

What Does Culturally Based Education Look Like in Practice?

Part III of the forum briefing materials is intended to provide you with information to help establish some common ground and framework for thinking about the nature of culturally based education. The specific focus of the forum discussion is on indigenous language and culture in the United States—AI, AN, and Native Hawaiian peoples. However, this information could likewise apply in other settings where people are bound by a common language, legacy, homeland, and value systems. This is not about right or wrong, but rather about the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that connect a people. In today's society, transportation, communication, commerce, and family ties have created a diverse blend of backgrounds that defy cultural definition. However, when the cultural frameworks of schools and communities are not congruent, expectations of learners become confusing and family support for the schools' efforts may be suspect. Culturally based education is about reinforcing common ground, wherever and whatever that may be.

As Nelson (2002) points out,

Our cultures and worldviews are not the same. European American society values individual achievement over the common good. The American Declaration of Independence reflects a European-influenced tension between "the commonwealth" and individual rights "to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Traditional Native American people may be more intergenerationally linked to families and communities. Social

obligations go far beyond individual achievements and family honor. Each individual is inextricably tied to the community destiny.

Schools need to respect the special, sovereign status of Native peoples in the United States. American Indian and Alaska Native communities have special, recognized, government-to-government relationships that uniquely provide for "nations within nations." Native communities strive for self-determination through social and economic self-sufficiency ... (T)hey depend on modern advances in fisheries, forestry, agriculture, and other natural resources, as well as hospitality, gaming, law, medicine, technology, and commerce. Native communities today recognize education as key to self-determination because education enables Native people to capitalize on Western society's innovations and technology to pursue their own community, social, and economic goals. American schools don't always understand or respect that Native American children have the right to pursue their education within the context of self-determination (p. vi).

Simply put, culturally based education is intended to create a school climate where cultural diversity is valued, the dynamics inherent to the interaction of cultures are recognized, and the various dimensions of cultures are embedded within the school and classroom (Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko, & Stuczynski, 2011).

Defining Context

The dimensions of cultural context are challenging. It's easy to make unintentional stereotyping or assumptions about the nature of students or the community. Likely the most important lesson to be learned is that context is exceedingly important in defining the cultural base with which educational practices are to be focused. Kana'iaupuni (2007) discusses the dimensions of heritage language, family and community involvement, culturally ground curriculum, assessment, structure, and culturally linked accountability. These are important dimensions for local reflection. Is there a heritage language in local use by members of the community, multiple heritage languages reflecting either a formal historic confederation, or a mix of languages from other places? What role do indigenous language conventions play in the community—names, places, rituals, history, family, government? Is there a common homeland important to the traditions of the community? Are there shared beliefs, behavioral rules, and social norms for behavior? Multicultural urban settings are

particularly challenging because of the absence of a common cultural standard and the absence of this common influence in the backgrounds and lives of the students. In any case, the nature and emphasis on culturally based education is going to be locally defined. It does not come off the shelf, out of a can.

Nelson (2002) noted that using local context to define the cultural dimensions to be reflected in the school is dependent on an open and ongoing dialogue between the school and community along nine dimensions:

1. Vision, Planning, and School Improvement
2. Administrative Leadership
3. Parents and Community
4. Schoolwide Behavioral Climate and Policies
5. Instructional Practices
6. Assessment
7. Professional Development
8. Facilities
9. Resources

Thinking About the Cultural Base

Defining the indigenous cultural base is likely to be an ongoing process of discussion, negotiation, and refinement. The Hawaiian Cultural Pathways for Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments (Kawai'ae'a, 2010) identified nine cultural pathways to think about the fundamental cultural dimensions of a people:

1. Relationships
2. Language
3. Cultural Identity
4. Wellness
5. Personal Connection
6. Intellectual
7. Applied Achievement
8. Sense of Place
9. Worldview

Cultural dimensions of this framework help us to think in the broader sense of cultural connections—to a place, a heritage, a lineage of families, a language, a body of knowledge, and a way of doing, thinking, and behaving. Again, what that specific cultural base looks like and what it emphasizes will depend on the specific community. Cultures are not static reflections of the past frozen in time, but rather vibrant, ever-evolving sets of traditions, language, history, and values to be fostered. The Native Hawaiian Education Council (Kawai'ae'a, 2002) went on to apply the cultural pathways as a set of five cultural guidelines for learners, educators, schools, families, and communities, respectively. The guide serves as a valuable roadmap for incorporating various cultural dimensions into the school and community.

Dimensions of Educational Practice

What might culturally based education look like in a school? The Coalition for Indigenous Language and Culture Education, led by the late William Demmert (2008) developed a research-based rubric that provides exemplars for enacting, developing, and emerging culturally based practice in five distinct dimensions:

1. Culturally Based Indigenous

Language Use, exemplified by using the indigenous language as a primary language of instruction across the grades and curriculum areas. The language is reinforced within the home and/or community social and cultural functions. Instruction promotes the distinctive spiritual, cultural, and social mores of the community.

2. Culturally Based Pedagogy, exemplified by use of traditional elders and local mentors to demonstrate lessons, practical field experiences, and the direct demonstration of knowledge and skills as a method of assessment. Instructor knowledge of indigenous language and local cultural standards.

3. Culturally Based Curriculum, exemplified by the use of cultural mores relevant to contemporary life, including legends, oral histories, clan and social structures, and fine arts, as well as the contemporary legal, social, political, economic and historic milieu, integrated into the broader state/ national curriculum standards.

4. Culturally Based Patterns of Participation in Leadership and Decisionmaking, as exemplified by community participation in setting the direction of the school and the use of local sociopolitical leadership and decisionmaking that exemplify spiritual, cultural, and social mores of the community.

5. Culturally Based Methods of Assessing Student Performance, as exemplified by the use of embedded curriculum-based measures carried out in the language of instruction. Direct methods are used to demonstrate reading, writing, mathematics, and oral proficiency.

Each of these five dimensions of practice is developmental in nature and could range from fully enacted to not at all present. Further, each of the five dimensions of practice is defined by the local cultural context—the indigenous language and its level of use in the community; the degree to which spiritual, cultural, and social mores are actively practiced within the community; and the extent to which curriculum content exists, particularly in literature, oratory, science, history, and government.

The information shared in this section is not exhaustive, nor does it reflect all of the ways in which culturally based education could potentially be organized and delivered. Rather, the section reflects recent publications intended to capture the state of the art in indigenous language and culture based education practice. The United States Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education do not officially endorse or support these materials.

The Next Step

These briefing materials were intended to provide readers with an overview of the federal policy, research, and educational practices associated with indigenous culturally based education. Much is known, but much is yet to be learned. The information shared in these briefing materials is not exhaustive, but rather reflects recent publications intended to capture the state of the art in indigenous language and culturally based education policy, research, and practice. The United States Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education do not officially endorse or support these materials.

The next step challenges the readers, particularly those attending the National Forum, to reflect on the long-term goal of culturally based education: to better connect the education process to the lives of students and the living heritage of the indigenous community. Setting priorities for further research carries a burden of responsibility. We have an obligation to act upon what is known and yet to be known. The authors hope that the science of research will serve us well through the art of education.

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