

## **Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy for Indigenous Children**

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Globally educational systems have failed Indigenous students in regards to both respecting their human rights, including providing academic success, and as a result, Indigenous students around the world have demonstrated a lack of academic achievement and enthusiasm for schooling in its conventional colonial form. The United Nations General Assembly's adoption in 2007 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples brought new attention to this failure. This chapter provides a review of literature indicating how validating and utilizing Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in schools can improve the education of Indigenous children and illustrative examples of how the United States and India have provided some support for the Indigenous educational rights now recognized by the United Nations.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) can be described as wisdom needed to survive in a particular environment—be it successfully hunting seals in the frigid Canadian arctic or growing maize in the desert southwestern United States—and knowledge of how to live and interact in an extended family and Indigenous community. IK is based on centuries of experience and close observation of one's surroundings, including plants, animals, and weather. Indigenous Pedagogy (IP) is based on centuries of experience raising children to function productively in close-knit communities. Family members, Elders, and other community members pass on this knowledge to each new generation. Central to the transmission of this wisdom is language, which through oratory, storytelling, advice and conversations shows youth the way to live well. In this chapter we do a general discussion of IK and IP and its relation to Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and give examples of support for CRE in India and the United States.

As former National Indian Education Association president Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert (Hopi) writes, western colonial powers saw no value in the “rich cultural heritage” of Indigenous peoples that “has been transmitted orally to each successive generation in song, stories, legends, and history via their native language and traditions” and which “provides an understanding of the natural order of existence both personally and communally” (2011, p. 43). The schooling colonial governments and Christian missionaries provided interrupted the intergenerational transmission of IK, especially when children attended boarding schools in Australia, Canada, and the United States, and many of the challenges faced by Indigenous communities today are caused by a breakdown of traditional values that can be traced to this interruption. Sheilah Nicholas notes that her Hopi Elders link Hopi language loss to “un-Hopi” behavior by youth that includes “substance abuse, gang membership, and domestic violence” and how

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the “fundamental principles of the Hopi way of life are those of reciprocity and humility,” which need to be handed down to each successive generation to live a good life (2011, pp. 58-60). Likewise, Barnhardt and Kawagley in their collection of Alaskan native perspectives on education include in their appendices complementary sets of Alaskan Native values collected from various regions in Alaska that focus especially on “respect for self, Elders, and others” (2011, p. 365).

Assimilationist colonial approaches to schooling devalued IK and IP and broke the pattern of intergenerational transmission of culture, and this interruption is still going on. However, increasingly the damage done by schooling that devalues or ignores IK and IP is being recognized. This recognition is especially apparent in the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption in 2007 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 13-1 of this declaration states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons” and Article 14-1 states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.”

Globally educational systems have failed Indigenous students in regards to both respecting their human rights and providing academic success, and as a result, Indigenous students around the world have demonstrated a lack of academic achievement and enthusiasm for schooling in its conventional colonial form (Battiste, 2002; Cooper, Batura, Warren & Grant, 2006; Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2012; Ezeife, 2002; Yamauchi, 2005). The widespread failure of Indigenous students is seen in high dropout rates. Educators who do not recognize and value the cultural background of Indigenous students can instill self-doubt that leads their students to discount their experiences, capacities and gifts (Battiste, 2002; RRCAP, 1996). In Canada dropout rates for Indigenous students are almost three times that of non-Indigenous students (Gilmore, 2010). In the United States the National Center for Education Statistics found Indigenous students with more than twice the white dropout rate, the highest death rate of 15-19 year olds, the highest percentage of special education students, and the highest absenteeism (Freeman & Fox, 2005). They were also the most likely to have failed to complete core academic programs in their schools and the most affected by school violence. This is despite the fact that the U.S. government’s past assimilationist English-only policy in schools has been successful to the extent that 51% of American Indian and Alaska Native eighth graders reported in 2003 never speaking any language other than English at home and only 22% reported speaking a non-English language half the time or more (Freeman & Fox, 2005).

### **Culturally responsive education**

As the UN’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples asserts, it is time to recognize, value, and include IK and IP in schools serving Indigenous

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students. This move to valorize IK and IP can be implemented as culturally responsive education (CRE) and is put forward as an antidote in this chapter to the myriad social and educational challenges faced by many Indigenous youth. Its foundation includes constructivist learning theory that situates all learning in a cultural milieu and is built around how human beings learn by connecting and integrating new knowledge into what students have previously learned outside of school. When the culture, and often even the language, of the school—usually white middle class and English-speaking in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA—is too different from the home cultures of Indigenous students, they face severe identity issues and learning difficulties. CRE is designed to decrease that gap and to increase the chance for educational success for Indigenous students. If too much of the actual world children live in—their place, community and culture—is left out of the school’s one-size-fits-all curriculum designed around state, provincial, or national standards then children have real difficulty connecting to it and finding their place in it. According to Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner they can ask, “What am I doing here anyway? What’s this to do with me?” (1996, p. 98). Virginia Richardson notes:

The traditional approach to teaching—the transmission [lecture and textbook] model—promotes neither the interaction between prior and new knowledge nor the conversations that are necessary for internalization and deep understanding. The information acquired from traditional teaching, if acquired at all, is usually not well integrated with other knowledge held by the students. Thus, new knowledge is often only brought forth for school-like activities such as exams, and ignored at all other times. (1997, p. 3)

In their review of educational research on CRE for Indigenous youth, emphasizing Tribal Critical Race Theory, sovereignty, and human rights, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argue in the United States, “The increased emphasis on standardization and high-stakes accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) seems to have resulted in less, rather than more, culturally responsive educational efforts and more, rather than no, Indigenous children left behind in our school systems” (p. 942). They note the contrast between “the assimilative model and the culturally responsive model” and conclude that “the research is quite clear: there is no evidence that the assimilative model improves academic success; there is growing evidence that the culturally responsive model does, in fact, improve academic success for American Indian/Alaska Native children.” They also found “no evidence in Indian country that parents and communities do not want their children to be able to read and write or do mathematics, science, etc.” (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009, p. 31). A both/and approach is generally advocated that supports a bicultural and often bilingual approach to teaching that valorizes IK and IP as students also learn about the wider world beyond their community and nation.

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CRE is an approach to teaching and learning that facilitates critical consciousness, engenders respect for diversity, and acknowledges the importance of relationships, while honoring, building on, and drawing from the culture, knowledge, and language of students, teachers, and community. It is both a means of attending to prominent educational issues and a pledge to respond to the specific needs of students, their families, and their communities (Demmert, 2011; Demmert & Towner, 2003; Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbelljones, 2005; McCarty, 2003). This conceptualization of CRE complements calls by Indigenous educators and scholars (see e.g., Battiste, 2002, 2008; Castango & Brayboy, 2008; Marker, 2006; Urion, 1999) for the integration of IKs as a foundational aspect of education with Indigenous learners.

### **Historical antecedents to culturally responsive education**

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) note that culturally responsive schooling “is certainly not a new phenomena or a passing fad; instead, it has been central to tribal nations’ calls for improved schooling since at least the early part of the 20th century” (p. 944). Luther Standing Bear (1933) recalled being the first student through the doors of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879 and taught in an American Indian day school; he concluded in his autobiography that young Indians needed to be “doubly educated” so that they learned “to appreciate both their traditional life and modern life” (p. 252).

In the mid nineteenth century examples of culture responsive pedagogy were being used with Indigenous students include the work of Sylvia Ashton-Warner with Māori students in New Zealand (Ashton-Warner, 1963; Jones & Middleton, 2008) and Polingaysi Qöyawayma (1964) with Hopi students in the United States. One of the earlier calls for CRE with Indigenous students was made with the release of an extensive investigation of the U.S. Indian Office, commonly called the Meriam Report (Institute, 1928), which highlighted the poor results of the assimilationist education provided by the U.S. government. The report emphasized the need for incorporation of Indigenous cultures in educational material and programming, as it was stated, “Everything in the Indian life and surroundings will have to tie in the educational program in a manner now seldom observed” (Institute, 1928, p. 351). Furthermore, the report emphasized moving beyond the mainstream education system and curricular framework to educate American Indian children. Referring to the mismatch of the then U.S. education practices for Indians, the report stated:

A standard course of study, routine classroom methods, traditional types of schools, even if they were adequately supplied—and they are not—would not solve the problem. The methods of the average public school in the United States cannot safely be taken over bodily and applied to Indian education, no matter how carefully they might be prepared, would be worse than futile. (Institute, 1928, p. 347)

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In line with the 1928 Meriam Report, the 1972 Canadian policy paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, focused on CRE in their recommendations as they emphasized parental responsibility and local control as crucial for improving academic success among Indigenous learners. The importance of local control was reiterated in the 1996 *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* that found, “The ability to implement culture-based curriculum goes hand in hand with the authority to control what happens in the school system” (RRCAP, 1996, p. 478). The call for IP is further strengthened by the culturally responsive standards published in 1998 by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators that focus on how learning about the local environment, language, and culture can foster culturally-healthy students, educators, schools, and communities. The Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) asks “schools and communities to examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well being of the students in their care” (1998, p. 2). IP involves strategies that include an in-depth study of the surrounding physical and cultural environment in which the school is situated, while recognizing the unique contribution that Indigenous people can make to such study as original inhabitants who have accumulated extensive specialized knowledge related to that environment (ANKN, 1998).

A major U.S. educational reform effort, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), included developing CRE that makes cultural knowledge, language, and values an indispensable part of the formal curriculum in rural Alaskan communities. Barnhardt (this volume) observes that the initiatives of the AKRSI enhanced educational experiences of students in participating rural Alaskan schools by challenging the dominance Western education system while utilizing and honoring Native Alaskan knowledge systems and pedagogical practices. The AKRSI approach has both affective, cognitive, and environmental advantages. Walter Soboleff (2010) highlights how traditional Tlingit teaching is a pleasant experience for the family and the whole clan,

It was important for parents to be role models as well as devoted to the family. It is pleasing to know how the clan thought of their greatest resource: their children. The matriarchal society was the school of learning, all joining willingly as volunteer teachers. (p. 140)

The AKRSI focus on learning from the land complements Chet Bowers (1993) call for the need for “land literacy” (p. 64) where students learn about the ecology of their home areas and sustainable practices that conserve that land for future generations. An example of culturally- and land-based curriculum material is the book *Between Sacred Mountains: Navajo Stories and Lessons from the Land* first published in 1982 by Rock Point Community School, one of the first Indigenous controlled schools in the United States in modern times. Studies by Erickson and Mohatt (1982), Philips (1983), and Chisholm, Laquer, Hale, Sheorey and McConville (1991) underscore the need for culturally responsive pedagogy to counteract the continued marginalization of Indigenous people, even within minority educational discourse and practice that tends in the U.S.

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to focus on Black and Hispanic children. Despite the early recognition of the centrality of culture to education as in the previously mentioned Meriam Report, the ethnocentrism of dominant groups has continued assimilationist education to the present time, which can be seen in the United States in various anti-bilingual education measures passed in California, Arizona and Massachusetts in the past two decades (Cushner et al., 2012; Gandara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia et al., 2005; Lindsey et al., 2005; Reyhner, 2001, 2010; Reyhner & Singh, 2010).

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005; see also Barnhardt, this volume) reiterate the concern over the mismatch between mainstream schooling and education of Indigenous children, stating that the teaching methods of mainstream schools have not recognized or appreciated IK systems that focus on inter-relationships and interconnectivity. They point out, "Indigenous knowledge is not static; an unchanging artifact of a former life way. It has been adapting to the contemporary world since contact with 'others' began, and it will continue to change" (p. 12). Pewewardy and Hammer (2003) saw interest in CRE grow "during the late 1980s and early 1990s as a result of rapidly rising diversity and concern over the lack of success of many ethnic/racial minority students despite years of educational reform" (p. 2). The International Council for Science reports:

Universal education programs provide important tools for human development, but they may also compromise the transmission of Indigenous language and knowledge. Inadvertently, they may contribute to the erosion of cultural diversity, a loss of social cohesion and the alienation and disorientation of youth.... Actions are urgently needed to enhance the intergenerational transmission of local and Indigenous knowledge. (2002, pp. 16-17)

Many recent publications discussing CRE address a growing concern over the increasingly apparent cultural disconnection between Indigenous students and mainstream curriculum and teachers (Cushner et al., 2012; Gay, 2010; Garcia, et al., 2005; Lindsey et al., 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). CRE can have a healing impact on Indigenous communities through addressing issues particular to students and their families and communities (Reyhner, 2010). In Indigenous contexts, this includes working toward cultural revitalization, honoring a rich heritage, and attending to a host of other social and economic issues that arose primarily from more hegemonic, colonial approaches to education (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Thus, Indigenous epistemologies imply a way of knowing that is adaptive, complex, and growing in nonlinear dynamic ways. The challenge is to move IK systems and worldviews from the margin of formal schooling to the center and to consider how IK systems can inform and be informed by alternative ways of seeing the world (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). This means that a focus on IK systems places value and importance on knowledge developed and distributed within and by local cultures and communities.



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Demmert and Towner (2003) argue that the challenge is how to include and honor local cultures, places, and traditions in a system of schooling that has over time, with colonization, done so much damage to culture, places, and the value of other worldviews (see also Demmert, 2011). In line with Kuokkanen (2007), it can be argued that how Indigenous epistemologies can be sources of inspiration and intellectual or theoretical tools for challenging mainstream curriculum and pedagogy.

IP involves transmitting IK intergenerationally, learning in local cultural contexts, and using this context as a way to connect students with IK systems and the local community and its practices. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) and Demmert and Towner (2003) in their research reviews of CRE emphasize the need for community involvement in sustainable CRE practices. For them, tribal members, elders, parents, and other adults need to be given active roles in the development of culture-based education initiatives, programs, and school policies, and be invited often in culturally appropriate ways to school events and be generally viewed as equal partners and collaborators in the schooling of their children.

However, despite the diversity of student population in today's schools, students from non-mainstream communities are still expected to adapt to the monolithic culture that schools disseminate. Gilbert (2011) expresses this concern,

When the current educational system ignores American Indian students' own traditional teachings nurtured in the home and within the local community, the educational system has lost a valuable educational tool to augment the existing curriculum as critical opportunities to build upon or draw from Indian students' existing knowledge are disregarded and overlooked. (p. 43)

Most formal education systems ignore and underutilize the IK that Indigenous children bring to school and fail to utilize IP practices that are used in Indigenous homes. They ignore the fact that being taught in a different way in school from the way students are taught at home and learning in a different language or dialect than the one spoken at home exerts extra pressure on children. As a result, children find it difficult to cope with the challenges they face in school, which ultimately make them feel alienated (Gay, 2010; Garcia, et al., 2005; Lindsey et al., 2005; Nieto, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, 2010).

Fredrick Erickson (2010) describe the results of culturally inappropriate schooling:

Students whose lives are not affirmed by the establishment seem intuitively not to accept hegemonic content and methods of instruction. They often resist, consciously or unconsciously, covertly as well as overtly.... Marginalization is alienating, and one response to alienation is resistance—the very thing that makes teaching and learning more difficult for students and their teachers. (p. 46)

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The Alaska Native Knowledge Network's *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*:

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)

As an example, Kawagley, Norris-Tull, and Norris-Tull (2010) maintain that the worldview of Native Alaskans is unique:

Yupiaq people have extensive knowledge of navigation on open seas and rivers, and over snow-covered tundra. They have their own terminology for constellations and have an understanding of the seasonal positioning of the constellations and have developed a large body of knowledge about climatic and seasonal changes—knowledge about temperature changes, the behavior of ice and snow, the meaning of different cloud formations, the significance of changes in wind direction and speed, and knowledge of air pressure. This knowledge has been crucial to survival and was essential for the development of the technological devices used in the past (many of which are still used today) for hunting and fishing. (pp. 224-225)

Referring to the gap between the worldview of Native Alaskans and Western science, they further note:

Yupiaq people view the world as being composed of five elements: earth, air, fire, water, and spirit. Aristotle spoke of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. However, spirit has been missing from Western science. The incorporation of spirit in the Yupiaq worldview resulted in an awareness of the interdependence of humanity with environment, a reverence for and a sense of responsibility for protecting the environment. (p. 227)

Thus, to increase student success, it is imperative for teachers to help students bridge the gap between home and school cultures and contexts (Allen & Boykin, 1992). For example, Kaiwi and Kahumoku (2006) found that the introduction of a Native Hawaiian approach to analyze literature, by acknowledging and validating students' perspectives, empowers them by demonstrating a sustained connection to ancestors, greater appreciation for parents and grandparents, and an increased desire to learn. Gilbert (2011) found in his research on Apache, Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni students that cultural knowledge fosters order and understanding to the individual within the community and also sustains order and survival within the



larger context of the natural environment. He surmised that IK and IP are usually not included in schooling because it is assumed that if they are to be incorporated then they must be delivered separately from other content areas which would require additional time and money. However, as Barnhardt (this volume) shows, IK and IP can be successfully integrated with Western Knowledge to improve the quality of Indigenous education.

### **Initiatives promoting IK and IP in India**

In the last two decades, many programs have been launched by nation-states to honor the rich heritage of Indigenous people and preserve it for the future generation. In the changed national, regional, and global contexts, IK was given priority in the national education practices of India. The forum of South Asian Nations, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) recognized the need for preserving the IK and Indigenous heritage in the region by adopting the *SAARC Agenda for Culture* in 2005. The *People's SAARC Declaration 2007* includes demand number 27 that countries "Respect and recognize the identity of South Asian Indigenous Peoples and ensure their social, political, economic and cultural rights in the constitution." Since then, major program initiatives for culturally appropriate education for the children of Indigenous communities are in top priorities of education and curricular reforms of the member states in the region.

In India, the concept of culturally appropriate education practices came into vogue along with its independence movement in the early 1920s and 30s when Mahatma Gandhi wanted to replace the British education system, also known as Macaulay education system, with one that incorporated local knowledge and skills (Khumbhandani, 2008, Singh, 2011). Addressing a group of audience at Chatham House, London, on October 20, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi said:

I say without fear of my figures being successfully challenged that India today is more illiterate than it was before a fifty or hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root and left the root like that and the beautiful tree perished.... I defy anybody to fulfill a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our state would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls. (cited in Dharampal, 1983/2000)

In 1979 the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) was established and today functions as an autonomous organization under the aegis of India's Ministry of Culture. Its goal is to make students aware of the importance of culture in all development programs by conducting a variety of training programs for in-services teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators, and

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students throughout the country that links education and culture to develop the child's personality—particularly in terms of helping children to discover their latent talents—and to express it creatively. It also conducts various academic programs on Indian art and culture for foreign teachers and students. The Center adopted the motto to develop consciousness of the “Indian Cultural Heritage” through the utilization of local resources and community interaction, stating,

[India's] National Policy of Education (1986) recognised the need of education to be culture-based. The role of education in developing democratic citizenship was recognised. Knowledge of culture plays a prominent role in democratic thinking: a democratic citizen is known for his ability to sift truth from false and he/she is more receptive to new ideas. True education also brings clarity of thought, compassion and concern for mankind and is a basis for human rights. (CCRT, 2012)

Local tribal culture-based education project, Janshala was launched in nine Indian states as a joint program of the Government of India and five UN agencies—United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Labour Organization (ILO)—for the universalization of primary education among educationally underserved communities. It covered nearly thirty million children and 58,000 teachers in 18,000 schools. Tribal children make up a third of the target group children in the project area. However, in a survey study, records collected in schools in the Janshala program areas indicated continuing high dropout rates among tribal children. A major reason for that was that in most states the medium of instruction was the regional language. Most tribal children did not understand the textbooks, which were generally in the regional language. The appointment of non-tribal teachers in tribal children's schools was another problem: the teachers did not know the language the children spoke and children did not understand the teacher's language (Gautam, 2003).

In a 2007 project started in the Indian state of Orissa in 200 schools, Indigenous (“tribal”) children from ten language groups are being taught through their mother tongues in the first grades, with materials collected from children, parents, and teachers. Sixteen more languages were added in 2008 (Muthukumaraswamy, 2009, p. 5). Similarly, the *Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in India* (Council, 2006) emphasized cultural appropriateness. The framework is comprised of four clusters of competencies encircled by four supportive themes and suggests that each teacher is allowed to interpret the framework within his or her context and personal approach to pedagogy. One of the four themes of the framework is Context and Culture that identifies the culture and other contextual factors that must be considered in infusing technology into the teacher education curriculum. It includes the use of technology in culturally appropriate ways and the development of respect for multiple cultures and contexts, which need to be taught and modeled by teachers.

**Language immersion schools as exemplars of IK and IP in the United States**

In the United States efforts started with the establishment of Rough Rock Demonstration School in 1966 to promote IK and IP (McCarty, 2002), however these efforts have often fell short (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). More success is being shown in recent years with the establishment of language immersion schools patterned after efforts by the Māori in New Zealand. This radical departure from the use of English as the medium of instruction and commercial textbooks for teaching various school subjects changed the whole climate of these schools in the direction of developing healthier children as students are immersed in traditional cultural values (Reyhner, 2010).

In Window Rock Public School District's Navajo immersion program started in 1986 in the Navajo Nation immersion students exhibited more adult-like behavior than students being taught all or mostly in English (Holm & Holm, 1995). The school's curriculum is based Navajo Nation's *T'áá Shá Bik'ehgo Diné Bì Ná nitin dóó Íhoo 'aah*—Diné Cultural Content Standards (Johnson & Wilson, 2005; Office of Diné Culture, 2000). Observing classrooms at the Window Rock immersion school, Navajo researchers Kathryn Manuelito (see Reyhner, 2006) found, "Navajo values are embedded in the classroom." Central to Navajo values is the concept of "Ké," being a balanced person, which involves examining beauty before me, beauty behind me, beauty underneath, beauty above, and beauty around; with beauty I speak with the goal of becoming a balanced person who walks in beauty. She quotes a parent who,

noticed a lot of differences compared to the other [Navajo] students who aren't in the immersion program. [The Navajo language immersion students] seem more disciplined and have a lot more respect for older [people], well anyone, like teachers. They communicate better with their grandparents, their uncles.... [It] makes them more mature and more respectful. I see other kids and they just run around crazy. (as quoted in Reyhner, 2006, pp. 79-80)

The preface of the Navajo Nation's Education Division's cultural content standards for schools states, "The Diné [aka Navajo] Cultural Content Standards is predicated on the belief that firm grounding of native students in their indigenous cultural heritage and language, is a fundamentally sound prerequisite to well developed and culturally healthy students" (Office of Diné Culture, 2000, p. v). According to the Standards, Navajo students need to learn the empowering values of the Diné people that include being "generous and kind," "respecting kinship," "being a careful listener," and "having a balanced perspective and mind" as well as not being lazy, impatient, hesitant, easily hurt, shy, or mad. Diné citizens are to respect the sacred, have self-discipline, and prepare for challenges (Office of Diné Culture, 2000, p. 80).

Native Hawaiians are also actively seeking to restore their traditional values. The Pūnana Leo movement begun in 1983 in Hawaii according to its mission

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statement is built around re-establishing the Hawaiian philosophy of life. In a case study of a new immersion teacher, researchers Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a (Hawaiian) and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley (Yup’ik) noted, “people have realized that they have to revitalize their language and culture for healing to begin” (cited in Reyhner, 2006, p. 69). They observed that the Hawaiian language immersion school was “Family-based, enrolling the families rather than the individual student.” In it the Hawaiian language,

best expresses the thought world of the ancestors and thrusts them into the Hawaiian worldview. This is the language of connectedness, relatedness and respect. The language provides the cultural sustenance and the lens from which the dynamics of the school community has evolved. The language is formed by the landscape with its soundscape and therefore, conducive to living in concert with Nature. The families working together as part of the total learning community become an integral part of the learning environment.... The language shapes and nurtures the school learning community as a complete and whole entity. (unpublished case study by Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a & Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley quoted in Reyhner, 2006)

### **Conclusion**

Over the years, the push for Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty has intensified, culminating in the passage of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes that one-size-fits-all educational systems have failed Indigenous children in regards to both respecting their human rights and providing academic success. Indigenous people are also in danger of losing their cultural heritage and distinct identity. The problems, issues, and challenges of the Indigenous peoples are common all over the world. A 2003 UNESCO position paper, *Education in a Multilingual World*, states, “Education should raise ‘awareness of the positive value of cultural [and linguistic] diversity’, and to this end: curriculum [should be reformed] to promote a realistic and positive inclusion of the minority [or indigenous] history, culture, language and identity” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 33).

While some aspects of modern life require new pedagogical approaches, such as the use of computers, one only has to look at modern youth and society to understand modern society has moved too far from traditional child rearing practices that taught Indigenous values, including respect and humility, and to be close observers both of their Elders and their surroundings in order to learn what they needed to survive and live fruitful lives.

In recent years there has been an increased realization of the rights of Indigenous people all over the world. Indigenous peoples are now demanding their national governments launch programs to incorporate their rich Indigenous cultures and heritages into the schools serving their children. As a result, many programs have launched by nation states to incorporate rich Indigenous cultures and heritages into mainstream education. IP is based on thousands of years of

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experience bringing up children by Indigenous extended families and communities. Thus, it can be inferred that IP can be healing tools for instilling rich IK systems and cultural heritage for the coming generations.

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