

Principles of Indigenous Education for Mainstream Teaching

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This paper examines workable principles of indigenous education that can be applied to mainstream classrooms: finding each student's gift, professionalism, using real objects and tools, practicums, apprenticeships, elders and older students as teachers, and observation. These principles are illustrated with personal teaching experiences and historical examples. While examining these principles, it became apparent that they operate best within the context of community and that there may be different types of communities.

As noted by Māori educator Charles Royal (personal communication, February 12, 2005) and Tewa educator Gregory Cajete (1994), indigenous people in modern times have yet to design an indigenous approach to schooling although Cajete (1994) “*advocates* developing a contemporary, culturally based, educational process founded upon traditional Tribal values, orientations, and principles, while *simultaneously* using the most appropriate concepts, technologies, and content of modern education” (p. 17, emphasis in original). In New Zealand, Māori children often attend school in uniforms, following the British system. The day is divided among regular school topics and often math and science is conducted in English. Even in Māori language immersion schools, the schools follow schedules similar to the English-speaking schools.

The education situation in the US is more complex than the one in New Zealand owing to the multi-layers of governments and the number of types of schools, such as public schools operated under State Boards of Education, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Schools, or BIE grant schools. Despite the governing agencies, most of these schools operate generally in the same manner and having to meet federal guidelines leaves little time in a school day for indigenous knowledge or approaches. The one exception to this patterning might be charter schools. The question that needs to be explored might be what are some principles of an indigenous or Native American educational system.

This chapter begins with several premises. The first premise is that American education should be based upon American principles. Native Americans were the first Americans, being here before the continents were called the Americas, and there is ample evidence that current US culture is built on the foundation of Native America, giving “American” culture a distinctive uniqueness from European cultures (Cohen, 1952). For this very reason, education in the US needs to be based on an American philosophy and not an imported one. A second premise is that workable methods work for all people. Consequently, methods that work for Native American children are good methods and can and should be used with all children. This assumption is illustrated by the fact that Vygotsky (1978, 1986; Vygotsky & Luria, n.d.) rediscovered these principles with Rus-

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sian children. As Daniel Wildcat so aptly observed, “the problem with Indian Education in America is really the problem of education in America” (2001a, p. 9). Medcraft, a Tasmanian educator, endorsed the importance of indigenous education in her statement that “indigenous education should be taught around the world” (2008, p. 156).

While most North American Native Americans had no formal schools, some of the principles used for educating—the passing down of culturally relevant and survival knowledge—children were actually employed to a degree by European Americans in their one-room, common schools. These community controlled schools taught children to read, write, and do math while preparing them to become adult contributing members of their own communities and fulfilled the definition of education to provide “intellectual, moral, and social instruction.” Something current schools do very little of. Some of the principles discussed here include finding each student’s gift, professionalism, using real objects and practicums, reinstating apprenticeships, utilizing elders and older children/youth as teachers, and observation.

A strong partnership between community and a school is the basis for real education for children. Vine Deloria, Jr. noted, “The old ways of educating affirmed the basic principle that human personality was derived from accepting the responsibility to be a contributing member of society” (2001a, p. 44). Cajete affirms the importance of community to education, writing “traditional American Indian education historically occurred in a holistic social context that developed the importance of each individual as a contributing member of the social group” (1994, p. 26). Lack of membership in a community is not just a problem for Native American children, but it is also a problem for many children in the US. Isakova (2012) describes American children as the most pampered children in the history of humankind. Ochs and Izquierdo (quoted in Isakova, 2012, n.p.) noted that while “American children had to be nagged mercilessly to do even the smallest chore, . . . in the Peruvian Andes . . . six-year olds routinely make themselves useful by sweeping sand off of sleeping mats and catching and cooking crustaceans for the adult’s dinner.” Isakova notes that Peruvian children do this because they are taught to do this, implying that this level of contribution is exactly what is missing in education for American children.

Although Isakova primarily addressed the lack of parental involvement in children’s learning, today’s children spend six to eight hours a day, five days a week, for approximately 180 days a year, or about half a year in school. These hours during the day are the hours that traditionally children would have been interacting with family and community and becoming contributing members of their communities so that once they become adults they know their place. Because children spend so much of their lives in school, schools also need to take some of this responsibility. In her own endeavors in Indian education, L. A. Napier, a Cherokee educator, observed this lack of partnership: “One of the most significant barriers we face in education is that we are not communicating—we are not working together” (2008, p. 124). As a consequence, schools must be reconnected to families and communities in order for children to become truly

educated and “whole” people. To be completely effective, the principles described here are interrelated and additionally need to be contextualized within families and communities.

Finding each child’s gift and professionalism

I have put two principles together because I believe there is an intrinsic link between the two. The first is finding each child’s gift, and this idea is borrowed from a wonderful work done with defining “giftedness” among Pueblo people (Romero, 1994). As Cochiti Pueblo educator Joseph Suina noted:

Our people believe that people have different gifts. Some are really good teachers and can communicate certain things well. Others are excellent composers of songs, and that is their gift. Others may be artists, and so forth. . . . If you want to learn and do things right, then you have to do things in the way that the little ones will want to be there with you. (2008, p. 97)

Suina implied that teachers themselves should be gifted. The basic idea from Mary Eunice Romero’s study is that each person has something at which s/he can excel. This idea is at odds with many current practices in modern education, including the “assembly line” educational model (Cornelius, 2011; Rosenberg, 2011) in which each student marches through the same identical activities at the same identical time, and at the end of the year each child is an identical model—at least test-wise. In fact, teachers in the Albuquerque Public Schools have been required to follow a script and expected to be doing exactly what the script dictates for that day if the principal decides to drop in (Louis García, personal communication, May 22, 2010). Finally, Romero’s study indicated a gifted person shares that gift with others.

A good example of the idea of giftedness is represented by Laguna Pueblo educator Susie Reyes Marmon, who helped to establish and taught at the school at Laguna Pueblo. Additionally, as an elder, she shared her storytelling gift with her grandchildren and grandnieces and nephews, including Leslie Marmon Silko (H. Marmon, personal communication, January 17, 2009), whose first publication, *Storyteller* (1989), reflected these very same stories. Marmon’s educational efforts also inspired her granddaughter Harriet to become a teacher. Helping a child find his/her gift is basically recognizing that individuality is important for educational success. As Jeff Lambe (2003, p. 309) writes, “During my encounters with the Oglala/Lakota and Mohawk oral traditions, I noticed that teaching and learning was nurtured not by methods that were assumed valid and appropriate for everyone but through spending time with the individual so as to come to know that individual.”

Not only does a “standardized” approach assault common sense, but it also violates the theories of the Swiss developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget, so often used to justify actions in the US done to children. Obviously, “standardized” curriculums and scripted teaching do not allow any child an opportunity

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to discover what s/he might be really good at. In discussing this idea with one mother, she said that finding her child's gift was really her job, and parents do play an important role in this discovery. However, considering that children spend a substantial sum of time in school with added time spent on traveling to and from school and parents often working, there is little time left over for parents to enjoy this kind of interaction with children. Schools and schooling have become an almost full-time occupation for children: Therefore, schools need to provide opportunities for children to discover their giftedness, for children to become another Steve Jobs or Sherman Alexie or even the best baker in the family.

Giftedness in the Pueblo sense is what a person does well and also gives back to the community (Romero, 1994). Schools do a particularly poor job of connecting children and youth to their families and communities or in teaching students to give back. In European American, middle-class values—and those values are the ones taught in schools, a person excels to make money, be acclaimed as the best, or to get personal satisfaction. Little emphasis is placed on giftedness being the sharing of a person's gift, or that gift might be learning traditional songs, stories, and activities so that those can be preserved and shared with future generations, another notion not emphasized in European American cultural values. Current methodologies are at odds with traditional Native American values and actively diminish Native American and other indigenous cultures in which education would have “affirmed the basic principle that human personality was derived from accepting the responsibility to be a contributing member of a society” (Deloria, 2001a, p. 44).

Related to a student finding his/her own gift is the notion of professionalism. Professionalism is attaining a level of proficiency or becoming a master. The idea of professionalism contrasts with a current notion of “competency,” which is actually the minimum level expected of a child's learning. Boloz (2012) noted that all children need a gifted program, the idea being that children need to be allowed to learn beyond just meeting a minimum level. Deloria described the role of schools in creating professionalism:

Traditional knowledge enables us to see our place and our responsibility within the movement of history as it is experienced by the community. Formal American education, on the other hand, helps us to understand how things work, and knowing how things work and being able to make them work are the marks of a professional person in this society. (2001a, p. 46)

While not a lot has been recorded about traditional educational practices, one aspect that has been mentioned is that children generally practiced an activity, such as beading or bow making, and only when s/he felt that what was produced would be worthy of praise was the final product shown (Scollon & Scollon, 1984). To put this simply, even children know when something is really good because they measure their products against what they see produced by adults because they have as their goal to become an adult, to become a “professional”

in whatever they do. And this is achieved in some schools today when students are given real equipment and challenged to do real scientific experiments or given real problems to solve. In these exercises, children and youth are challenged to achieve a degree of professionalism in their own lives. Finding a person's gift and achieving professionalism are related to other important aspects of indigenous education—tools, real objects, and using what is learned.

In a traditional way, knowledge of how to do things, how to make things was passed down from generation to generation (Ah Nee Benham & Cooper, 2008), yet this was done without squelching individual innovations. A good example of wanting to achieve a “professional” model or ability is the story of Sequoyah and his invention of a writing system to represent the Cherokee language. Evidence now indicates that he began working on this system in his youth with bits and pieces of the syllabary written even on cave walls. It was not until he could demonstrate that Cherokee could be easily and successfully written in his syllabary that he began to share it with others (Cushman, 2011).

Schools and teachers with low expectations for Native American students afford them few opportunities to strive for any professionalism. And this attitude has changed little since the early schools for Choctaw and Cherokee, in which the curriculum consisted of what can be classified as vocational education (Morrison, 1978). In those early days, Indian children were trained to be domestics or farm hands without much thought to their place in their own communities or their ability to achieve anything beyond manual labor. This curriculum reflected a societal function of schools to provide workers for a specific economy (Dewey, 1916). In the late 1800's, the US needed manual laborers. Ask where today's economy needs workers and what skills those workers need and predict what a child will actually learn in school. As it turns out, many jobs will be in the service industry and construction (Bureau, 2012), jobs often requiring very low competencies in literacy, math, and science. In examining needed changes in education for Native Americans, Wildcat (2001d) stressed the need for indigenous people who are professional.

The idea of professionalism has been successful in teaching children to be good writers. In many classrooms, as children begin to express themselves in writing, they are given school tasks often unrelated to any real world uses and judged, not upon the author's ability to communicate an idea effectively, but solely upon the author's ability to transcribe the mechanics of writing—spelling, punctuation, and standard English sentence structure. Granted these latter skills do come in handy in the real world, and most students can easily see their merits once they have been assured of the real purpose of writing, to communicate. The real world needs good communicators and good communicators who can write effectively. There are ways to show students how to achieve a level of professionalism in writing, and these methods need to be used in schools.

In the 1980's, I accepted a teaching position working with middle-school students from the Middle Rio Grande Pueblos. These students had been placed in a special program to help them increase their literacy skills. Using the ideas of Graves (1983), all students wrote several times a week in a variety of genres.

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Students then edited and polished their favorite pieces for a publication entitled 1000 Words. Publication makes children authors and gives them a real purpose for writing—it makes them professional writers as publication is part of that professionalism. What the students learned in my classroom actually put them ahead of other students in regular classroom in terms of writing compositions.

Tools, real objects, and using what is learned

Any real standard of proficiency can only be achieved by students being allowed to use real objects in learning and using what they have learned by contributing to others. Real objects and using them are part of Cajete's (1994) metaphor of "ecology of indigenous education" or relating education to the real world, the physical universe. Traditionally, children's toys were often miniatures of the tools they would use as adults. For example, a girl might have her own child-sized lodge that she learned how to erect, and boys had small bows with which they hunted.

A young boy might be given a bow and arrow, or a blow pipe, with which to practice hunting skills that he'd need as an adult. Darts and arrows were used to bring down game, and since men were expected to provide meat for the family, a young boy would need to develop keen hunting skills. (Strain, 2012, n.p.)

"Their toys were designed to teach something useful, and to learn the skills they would need as adults" (Historical, 1996). And children soon learned how to handle tools, such as knives, necessary for skinning animals or gutting fish (Scollon & Scollon, 1984). Additionally, toys were used to teach children values.

Little girls were often given dolls made of corn husks or corn cobs. Such dolls might be assembled using pine straw, fur, beads, or human hair. According to custom, no face would be drawn on the doll. Mothers would tell their children the story of the beautiful doll who was so vain [that] the creator took her face and reflection to punish her. Children were taught that no one person should think themselves better than any other. (Strain, 2012, n.p.)

Toys as tools were part of passing skills down from generation to generation to keep children connected to families and communities in opposition to children who are housed separately from communities and learn data not connected to any real life experiences or for any useful purpose and only for the purpose of passing tests.

Modern children rarely get tools as toys unless they attend a more affluent school. In these schools, even young children might have computers, iPads, or other electronic gadgets, but these tools are rarely related to the child's community or that community's values. Like the data presented, the technology is de-contextualized and disconnected from the physical universe in Cajete's

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(1994) metaphor. Wildcat (2001b) described the problem with disconnection in schools this way.

Today what counts as knowledge in mainstream education is too often short-term memorization of “facts.” What counts as understanding is specialization in a narrow topic within a field or discipline. Understanding is so narrowly framed that it is often difficult for the specialists, let alone students, to effectively connect or relate their knowledge and understanding to the everyday lives of nonscientists. Because people desire just the “facts” without any understanding of the relations and connection between the “facts” and the rest of the world, we have the search-engine model of education. (p. 29)

This emphasis on discrete points of a topic plays a role in literacy failures as well. Heath’s (1982) study of three communities in the Piedmont area of the Carolinas, highlighted the need to teach children how to connect meaning in text to meaning in real life in order for them to be successful in school. More importantly, students of all ages need to be able to connect what they read to their lives. Yet children are rarely asked to apply what they have read. Instead they are asked to provide discrete answers on exams, thereby rewarding “glib” students—those who are good with words but cannot really do anything.

Real objects are also an integral part of two effective immersion language teaching methods: The Silent Way (Gattegno, 1963) and Total Physical Response (Asher, 1977). Since words represent real objects, actions, and ideas, language learners need real objects and real activities they are learning to name (Vygotsky, 1986). The idea that anyone can or should learn something without the tools or the real objects involved is ludicrous. No one wants to go to a surgeon who has never held a scalpel or send an astronaut into space who has never worn a space suit. No professional works without his/her tools, without the real objects necessary for the trade. This is true for traditional activities as well. No one learns to weave by just reading a book. A weaver needs a loom and some yarn. This idea is also true for reading. One thing that helps students become readers is books and things to read. In the field of literacy, books, paper, pencils, word processors are the tools—the real objects—necessary to achieve professionalism in literacy.

To prepare a child to become a contributing member of any community, s/he needs tools—the real objects of what is being learned—and a chance to actually use what s/he is learning. This is just as true for making piki bread as it is for creating chemical formulas in a lab. In an educational context, students of all ages need to relate the skills learned in school, whether they are academic or non-academic, to each of the circles outlined by Armstrong (2008): how to develop self, to build better families, to contribute to community, to become better stewards of the land, and to develop the world. “If we were to construct our educational plan around how to answer these questions, schools would look very different” (Armstrong, 2008, p. 40). And in today’s world, children need many tools to survive.

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Internships also provide a meaningful way for students to use what they have learned and can be used to bring students back into community. Wildcat (2001d) referred to the same idea when he suggested that “our young scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs would serve required year long internships in communities, working on problems people are facing” (p. 118). Consequently, effective classrooms do not have children sitting quietly in rows of desk—effective classrooms are busy places full of tools that children are using to create.

Apprenticeship/Working with a master

In addition to having real objects and having a goal of professionalism in an activity, children/students should be allowed to apprentice with a master. This method is used for learning traditional medicine ways and also among certain professions, such as lawyers and medical doctors. And more recently, some school districts have implemented such an apprenticeship program, having people with non-education degrees and professional backgrounds work with a “master” teacher for a few years, and one such program has an 80% retention rate (Boston Public Schools, n.d.). These programs have been very successful in preparing already well-qualified individuals to teach by having them learn pedagogical methods within the context of real classrooms.

De Munck and Soly (2007) have pointed out that apprenticeship or “‘learning by doing’ is not a practice of bygone days.” Indeed, many modern industries, such as brewing, wine-making, and glass blowing, still rely on this tried and true method. Additionally, many popular practices incorporated from Asia, such as Tai Chi, Qigong, and the martial arts, require working with a master. And while schools are turning out graduates of culinary arts schools, master chefs still take on apprentices, who in turn then become their own masters. And the Bureau of Labor predicts that jobs requiring apprenticeships will be among the fastest growing areas. This system also comes full circle to giftedness inasmuch as one way to give back one’s gift is to share it through teaching. In fact, one failure of elementary education is that teachers are not masters of most of what they teach, and this sometimes includes reading, writing, math, and science: “the instructor should know more than the student” (Bourque, 2010).

Traditionally, the one activity that still demands an apprenticeship is medicine making. These traditions vary from nation to nation, but the constant is that they must be learned with an actual medicine person, generally in a one-to-one relationship although more recently some medicine people have adopted a more European American approach of offering workshops. Other traditional activities learned through doing are pottery making, silver smithing, weaving, bread making, lodge making, and building hornos (Pueblo ovens). In past times among the Cherokee, once a boy was of a certain age, he could enter the men’s house (see Perdue, 1998, for Cherokee gender roles) where he could “apprentice” with a gifted hunter or warrior. Similar systems may have existed in other nations. Apprenticeships utilized real tools and require the application of skills (Grill, 2008).

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Hence, children, and later young people, are deprived of the opportunity to work with a master, preventing them from discovering their gifts and achieving a level of professionalism to be successful contributing adults. In the Apprenticeship Perspective (Pratt & Collins, n.d.), teachers “believe, rather passionately, that learning and teaching are most effective when people are working on authentic tasks in real settings of application and practice” (p. 3). While they are referring to adult education, this approach ties in nicely with the work of Graves (1983) and Calkins (1994) in the area of writing, but could just as easily be applied to any field, including reading. Teachers could demonstrate how they read and then apply reading to real settings. As Bourque (2010) noted, any subject is sufficiently complex that it requires an apprenticeship to master it. Whether applied to traditional activities, literacy, or European American technologies, the principle and workability remains the same.

Treasures

Charles Royal (2005) referred to elders as treasures, and, in many Native American cultures, elders were the first “masters” with whom children served their “apprenticeships.” Since able-bodied adults were generally involved in everyday living activities, children learned from older children or elders. This was particularly true in communities of agrarian groups where there were “cousins” of various ages with whom to interact and the women were working in the fields (Perdue, 1998) or gathered together to prepare food for family or community ceremonies: Older children, more often girls than boys, were put in charge of younger children. Leslie Marmon Silko (1989) is a product of this particular type of apprenticeship. She was one of the many children who gathered at Susie Reyos Marmon’s house during storytelling time (Harriet Marmon, personal communication, 16 July 1994). Later Silko incorporated the Marmon stories into her own writing.

Deloria (2001a) saw elders as “the best living examples of what the end product of education and life experiences should be” (p. 45). Additionally, elders have a strong sense of history because they have lived it, having seen many changes in the world. I recall that as a young person my great-grandfather predicted today’s economic “depression,” pointing out that people no longer grew their own food. Royal (2005) also points out that “it is good for us to be inspired by the wisdom of our ancestors, but at the same time it is almost important to recognize that we live in a world that is vastly different to that experienced by our ancestors (p. 3). Today’s children need the mastery represented by elders and to use the principles involved in that education while being prepared for tomorrow’s technology.

In a decile one school—“decile one” schools serve the poorest children—in Hamilton, New Zealand, I saw an example of older children teaching younger children. Older children, mid-schoolers, were teaching mau rakau, Māori martial arts, to younger children. An extension of this traditional practice was carried out with reading as well. Older children came in and had younger children read to them. A similar program existed in Gordon, Nebraska, in my son’s first grade

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class in 1990 for Lakota children, whose older siblings came in after school so that their younger siblings could read to them to earn their Pizza Hut Bookit personal pan pizza.

In an after-school, summer literacy program in an Albuquerque neighborhood generally known as the “War Zone” for its high level of violence and gang activities, older elementary, mid-school, and high school students were trained in a reading tutoring method, simply called “Read Aloud.” In this method, both the learner and the tutor have a copy of the same material. The learner reads, and, whenever s/he stumbles, hesitates, or requests help, the tutor says the word and what the word means. This method reduces the stress of reading for poor readers while ensuring that the reader is actually getting the meaning of the text. Most of the teens in the program were there doing community service for truancy and two teens were convicted felons. In this manner, younger children learned to read while the tutors learned to contribute to their community.

The participants in this program were Native American, Hispanic—mostly Mexican, and African American. The two convicted felons did not re-offend, and one went on to complete an AA degree at the local community college. Three of the Mexican students ran their own tutoring program for one summer. And most of the tutors went on to graduate high school. The program was called Learning Circles to indicate how the learning circled around to include all the participants. Elders were also a source of learning for younger children. As opposed to the current model of segregating people by age, traditional education included “multiple generations” (Cherrington, 2008, p. 31). Elders were a key part of Māori language revitalization efforts during the 1980’s in the kohanga reo movement and language camps for adults. Most importantly, elders are important to real learning because they hold the knowledge of the past. And having interaction with elders provides continuity to a culture and ensures that children do not have to invent themselves in a vacuum.

Observation

While much has been stated about the need for students to listen, little has been written about the importance of learning to observe, and observation is the basis for traditional knowledge.

The Indian method of observation produces a more realistic knowledge in that sense that, given the anticipated customary course of events, the Indian knowledge can predict what will probably occur.... Indian accumulation of information is directly opposed to the Western scientific method of investigation, because it is primarily observation. (Deloria, 2001b, p. 27)

Observation, the first step in learning, was used to gain the information necessary for when to plant, when to gather medicinal herbs, and when and where to hunt or trap. Cajete describes its importance this way: “The cultivation of all one’s senses through learning how to listen, observe, and experience

holistically by creative exploration was highly valued” (1994, p. 33). While Cajete appears to limit observe to its meaning of “watch,” observing in its most common usage is “perceive,” which can involve many senses including hearing, smell, and kinesthesia.

When I taught at Oglala Lakota College, one of the Lakota instructors shared this story with me. He had invited an elder to come to his class to show the class how to make a traditional bow. The elder instructed him in what materials to have, and the instructor had the materials all laid out on the desk in front of the class. The elder walked in, and the instructor walked to the front of the class to get the class started and introduce the speaker. When the instructor turned around, the elder had the bow strung, stated “that’s how to make a bow,” and walked out. The Lakota instructor, a man in his thirties, reflected that is when he learned the importance of observation.

Schools do not train children to observe, but to obey authority. Indeed, teachers are not trained to observe. Observing means to use all senses and to see the world as it actually is. Royal (2005) described this process as removing the lenses of his/her thoughts of what the world is to “see the world as it actually is” (p. 12). And one of the first lessons any traditional Native American children learned was to observe: It was necessary for survival. Observation is just as necessary for survival today as it was for our ancestors. The inability to observe places modern children in constant danger.

Additionally, no scientific or technological advances can take place without observation. Being a good scientist or inventor has nothing to do with memorizing dates of important discoveries. It is really only necessary to know that certain things have been discovered—planets, chemical elements, gravity, for example—and to observe that these things are true. Indigenous people were able to accumulate environmental knowledge—“40,000 years of continuous relationship with special environments” (Cajete, 1994, p. 78)—through observation. Modern children and youth, as much as their traditional counterparts, need to learn how to just be some place comfortably and observe sounds, smells, temperatures, textures and all the myriad of phenomenon available to observation.

Community schools

Before education became the big business it is today (Deloria, 2001a), communities had control of schools and their curriculums. In fact, the Choctaw were among the first to create community schools that educated both boys and girls and taught adult Choctaws to read and write Choctaw (Morrison, 1978). And Cherokee literacy in Sequoyah’s syllabary was completely achieved through community efforts (Cushman, 2011). European Americans had the common school, schools during the nineteenth century intended to serve all social classes and religions. One primary purpose of the common school was literacy and teaching cultural values. As more and more immigrants poured into the expanding United States, many educators saw a great need to instruct the new immigrants in the proper, mostly Protestant and English-based, cultural values. “The common school itself was seen as the guarantor of a particular cultural system—that is,

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as the institution which could guarantee that a particular cultural outlook would be perpetuated through literate future generations” (Soltow & Stevens, 1981, p. 21). And local school boards using teachers from the community determined the cultural outlook.

A conversation with Hispanic teachers in the Española School District in Northern New Mexico revealed an interesting change. Española is located just outside of Oye Owingah Pueblo just a little south of the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico. It is one of the oldest Spanish speaking villages in New Mexico. In the 1990’s, Española was under a court order to improve the test scores of its Hispanic students. Many of the teachers in the class had been born and raised in Española. They asked me “why bilingual education?” Their reasoning was that they had grown up speaking Spanish and had learned how to read and write in English. The change that was revealed is that now “outsiders” were dictating the curriculum and many of the new teachers were not from that community, and, as a result, did not have the same cultural values as those from that community. There was the additional problem that the Spanish being taught in the classrooms did not match the Spanish spoken locally, thereby further alienating the native New Mexican youth from their own community.

Conclusion

Reinstatement of community must play a role in reinstating the wholeness of an educational system that not only prepares children with skills but also prepares them for an adulthood that includes contributing to family and community. Wildcat describes the current state of disconnectedness of schools to homelessness.

A modest estimate would place three-fourths of U.S. citizens in a condition of homelessness: a technology-induced condition of homelessness.... the problem of homelessness demanding attention concerns the vast majority of Americans today living in houses, condos, and apartments, residences with addresses, who have taken advantage of our society’s modern education systems and technologies and still feel lost, disconnected, ungrounded, or what we call homeless. (2001c, p. 67)

King and Gregory (2011) found that, at least in terms of language revitalization, that people perceived three different types of communities: the tribe, the school, and like-minded people. Examples of these three types of communities exist for educational purposes as well. For example, Deloria and Wildcat (2001) often use community in this sense. School as community is exemplified by the Native American Community Academy in Albuquerque. La Plazita Institute in the South Valley of Albuquerque represents a community of like-minded people: It is a place where people from different tribes, including Mexican tribes, come together to engage in a variety of activities, including sweats, cunanderas, computer training, and language classes. Once communities regain control of elementary

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schools, then they need to also influence the methodologies of middle and high schools. Finally, academia needs to be indigenized. As Taiaiake Alfred writes,

What is “Indigenizing the academy?” To me, it means that we are working to change universities so that they become places where the values, principles, and modes of organization and behavior of our people respected in, and hopefully even integrated into, the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university itself. In pursuing this objective...we as Indigenous people immediately come into confrontation with the fact that universities are intolerant and resistant to any meaningful “Indigenizing.” (2004, p. 88)

In this area, the Māori may be a little ahead of us in Native America. They have established several Māori universities, including Te Wānanga Aotearoa, Te Wānanga o Raukawa (a tribal university of three confederated iwi), Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiārangi (to provide positive Māori pathway), and Te Wānanga Takiura (a Māori tertiary training institution). Communities need to reinstate the basics of workable education that include the principles previously outlined.

The basics of indigenous education need to be implemented for all children. As Cajete pointed out, “Education is in crisis as America finds itself faced with unprecedented challenges in a global community of nations desperately struggling with massive social, economic, and cultural change” and this crisis has been brought about through the disconnection of people from the “natural world” (1994, pp. 25 & 26), causing alienation, loss of community, and a sense of incompleteness. Implementing indigenous principles can remedy these losses. Moreover, Royal sees a role for traditional knowledge in contributing to the survival of indigenous people and their nations: “It [the revitalisation and rejuvenation of the traditional knowledge bases of indigenous communities] is also concerned with understanding ourselves as a destructive people and what we can distinctively contribute to a wide range of activities within the nations in which we live” (2005, p. 4). Again there is an emphasis on contributing.

Now is the time for indigenous people to share the principles of successful practices with others. Some basic principles should include observation, finding each person’s gift, professionalism, using tools and real objects in appropriate contexts—“education is learning about life” (Cajete, 1994, p. 26), apprenticeship. Implementing these principles should be done within the context of community. Wildcat believes that community is key to indigenous success and admonished that “community service ought to be expected, and I can think of no better services than holistic learning experiences” (2001c, p. 118).

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