

Learn
In
Beauty

Indigenous Education for a New Century

edited by
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**Papers Published In Honor Of
Regents' Professor Dr. Gina Cantoni
Upon Her Retirement From**



**Flagstaff, Arizona
2000**

Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education has published a series of monographs on indigenous issues. These include *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages* edited by Gina Cantoni (1996), *Teaching Indigenous Languages* edited by Jon Reyhner (1997), and *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages* edited by Jon Reyhner, Gina Cantoni, Robert St. Clair, and Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (1999). *Learn in Beauty: Indigenous Education for a New Century*, a fourth publication in this series, is a compilation of papers submitted for the Second Annual Learn in Beauty Conference on June 23 and 24, 2000 at the University Union at Northern Arizona University along with some additional papers submitted in honor of Dr. Gina Cantoni's retirement from Northern Arizona University.

Copies of these Northern Arizona University publications can be obtained from Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University, Box 5774, Flagstaff, Arizona, 86011-5774. Reprinting and copying on a nonprofit basis is hereby allowed with proper identification of the source. These publications are also available on the world wide web at <<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL.html>>. For more information contact Jon Reyhner at 520 523 0580 or <Jon.Reyhner@nau.edu>.

Learn in Beauty Conference Chair

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Contents

	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	v
<i>I. Language, Culture, and Teaching</i>	
1. Teaching Diné Language and Culture in Navajo Schools <i>Ann Batchelder</i>	1
2. Language Revitalization in Navajo/English Dual Language Classrooms <i>Mary Ann Goodluck, Louise Lockard, Darlene Yazzie</i>	9
3. A Report on the Leupp Navajo Immersion Project <i>Michael Fillerup</i>	21
4. Community-based Native Teacher Education Programs <i>Connie Heimbecker, Sam Minner, Greg Prater</i>	35
5. Measuring Bilingual Proficiency of Tarahumara Children <i>Carla Paciotto</i>	45
<i>II. Indigenous Perspectives</i>	
6. Post-colonial Recovering and Healing <i>Angelina Weenie</i>	65
7. Response to Indigenous Cultural Perspectives in the Classroom <i>Stephen Greymorning</i>	71
8. Visual Metaphor, Cultural Knowledge, and the New Rhetoric <i>Robert N. St. Clair</i>	85
<i>III. Issues Surrounding Indigenous Pedagogy</i>	
9. Western Influences on Indigenous Language Teaching <i>J. Dean Mellow</i>	102
10. Teaching English to American Indians <i>Jon Reyhner</i>	114
11. Charter Schools for American Indians <i>Brian Bielenberg</i>	132
<i>Contributors</i>	151



Dr. Gina Cantoni

Northern Arizona University Regents' Professor Dr. Gina Cantoni was honored for her over quarter century of service to the university at a luncheon on June 23, 2000.

Introduction

The title of this monograph, *Learn in Beauty*, is adapted from a traditional Navajo prayer that calls for listeners to “walk in beauty” and live in harmony with their world. Dr. Louise Lockard wrote a Title VII bilingual education “Learn in Beauty” teacher training grant in 1999 that was funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). This grant provides advanced training for teachers from seven public school districts in the Navajo Nation and sponsors “Learn in Beauty” summer conferences. Most of the papers included here were presented at the second annual Learn in Beauty conference held on June 23 and 24, 2000 in Flagstaff, Arizona. At this conference, Northern Arizona University (NAU) Regents’ Professor Dr. Gina Cantoni was honored for her many years of service to NAU and to the many students she taught over the years, and this monograph is dedicated to her.

Much of the coursework being delivered through the Learn in Beauty grant was originally designed by Dr. Cantoni during her 16 years at NAU’s Center for Excellence in Education. Dr. Cantoni received her doctorate in Letters and Philosophy summa cum laude from the University of Rome in 1943. From 1963 to 1968 she taught French and ESL at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and from 1968 to 1972 she taught education and English courses at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She came to NAU in 1972 as Professor of English and Chair of the Committee on Teaching English as a Second Language. In 1984 she moved to NAU’s Bilingual/Multicultural Education Program where she developed masters and undergraduate endorsement programs in bilingual multicultural education (BME) and English as a second language (ESL).

While NAU now delivers courses throughout Arizona through Interactive Instructional Television (IITV) and most recently through the World-Wide Web (WWW), Dr. Cantoni from the 1960s through the 1980s drove thousands of miles delivering courses and workshops on-site to teachers. In addition to her teaching and program development, she has written and edited extensively on BME and ESL topics. For example, she edited the Arizona TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages) newsletter from 1974 to 1979, wrote *Content Area Language Instruction: Approaches and Strategies* published by Addison-Wesley in 1987, and edited *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages* published by NAU in 1996. From 1972 to 1975 Dr. Cantoni directed the annual “Navajo Summer Institutes in Linguistics and ESL for Teachers” and from 1972 to 1975 co-directed national seminars on Indian education. From 1988 to 1995 she ran bilingual teacher training programs for hundreds of teachers of Indian students, and in 1994 and 1995 she and Dr. Dick Heiser held the first two Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums to help implement the Native American Languages Act of 1990, which made it U.S. Government policy to support, protect, and promote Native American languages.

Learn in Beauty

Assimilationist versus culturally responsive education

As this book goes to press Proposition 203 “English for the Children” is going before Arizona voters. While it is hard to quarrel with its title, the passage of this proposition will largely ban bilingual education in Arizona’s public schools. Patterned after California’s Proposition 227 passed in 1998, Arizona’s Proposition 203 is a throwback to an assimilationist educational agenda that Dr. Cantoni has effectively taught and written against, and the Navajo Tribal Council has unanimously condemned it.

Cultural assimilation, based on the idea that Indian cultures contained nothing of value, was the dominant theme of efforts to school American Indians throughout the last four centuries (see e.g., Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999). American Indian schooling was largely a Christian missionary effort in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Christianity was taught not just as a theology but as a way of life that included dressing and speaking like White Americans. In the nineteenth century the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began building an extensive school system of on- and off-reservation schools. As the twentieth century progressed, a greater percentage of Indian children attended school and more and more attended public schools. While there are exceptions (see Reyhner, this volume), throughout most of its history the goal of BIA schooling was to assimilate Indians into the mainstream English-speaking culture with little or no attempt to provide either culturally sensitive education or to maintain the strengths of Indian cultures. This cultural insensitivity has contributed to the poor performance of American Indian students in schools and sometimes has led to the outright rejection of schooling by Indian children and their parents.

As we enter the twenty-first century with Indigenous education, the question is will the United States, Canada, and other countries move back towards forced assimilation for American Indians as Proposition 203 suggests or will they move forward in a post-colonial direction that the papers collected here advocate. The papers in this volume are indicative of the increased cultural sensitivity being attempted in the schooling of American Indians and other indigenous peoples with the end of colonialism.

Learn in Beauty

The first section of this monograph focuses on *Language, Culture, and Teaching*. Ann Batchelder’s paper on “Teaching Navajo Culture and Language in Navajo Schools” describes how members of one of the largest tribes in the United States are ambivalent about the role of schools in keeping their language and culture alive. Elders are distrustful of schools based on past experience, and parents are worried about the future of their children. In the second paper on “Language Revitalization in Navajo/English Dual Language Classrooms,” Mary Ann Goodluck, Louise Lockard, and Darlene Yazzie provide Navajo teachers’ voices on the effects of past assimilationist English-only education policies and their hopes for culturally appropriate education in the future. In the third paper titled “Racing Against Time: A Report on the Leupp Navajo Immersion Project,”

Michael Fillerup describes a Title VII funded bilingual program designed to promote both an indigenous Navajo education and mainstream academic success. The fourth paper on “Community-based Native Teacher Education Programs” by Connie Heimbecker, Sam Minner, and Greg Prater describes two community-based indigenous teacher education programs designed to prepare new indigenous teachers. The last paper of this section on “Measuring Language Dominance and Bilingual Proficiency Development of Tarahumara Children” by Carla Paciotto is an example of how researchers are trying to understand better the influence of bilingualism on indigenous children.

In the second section on *Indigenous Perspectives*, the authors give various views on indigenous education. Angelina Weenie describes her need for post-colonial recovering and healing from the effects of centuries of discrimination and repression. In the second paper, Stephen Greymorning gives his experiences with the resistance exhibited by mainstream university students to post-colonial efforts to restore balance in regard to teaching about the centuries of colonialism. At a more abstract level Robert N. St. Clair in the last paper in this section on “Visual Metaphor, Cultural Knowledge, and the New Rhetoric” describes how teachers need to be aware of the way oral and written cultures view our world differently.

The third section considers issues surrounding teaching methods. In the first paper, J. Dean Mellow defends a centrist position where indigenous educators are encouraged to make informed pedagogical decisions about their teaching methods without going to either extreme of unconsciously perpetuating mainstream Western approaches or blindly rejecting them. In the second paper of this section, Jon Reyhner documents how not all the Indian education of the past has been misguided and repressive, and in the last paper Brian Bielenberg documents the persistence of traditional mainstream teaching methods even when indigenous educators take control of their schools.

Together, the papers collected in this volume indicate some of the new directions that indigenous education is taking in North America. Since the 1970s the United States Government has had an official policy of self-determination for American Indians and Alaska Natives. The efforts by various Native groups to chart their own destinies have resulted in both successes and failures, and education is just one aspect of their efforts. The editors hope that the discussion of indigenous education in this volume contributes to the progress of indigenous education in Arizona, the United States, and the world.

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Learn in Beauty

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