

# Honoring Our Heritage

*Jon Reyhner, Northern Arizona University*

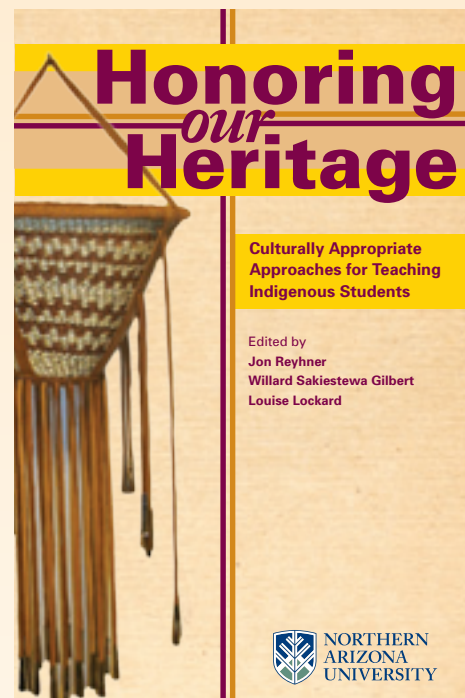
Northern Arizona University's College of Education has published a new book *Honoring Our Heritage: Culturally Appropriate Approaches to Teaching Indigenous Students* edited by Jon Reyhner, Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert and Louise Lockard. It is the seventh in a series of monographs related to teaching Indigenous students published by Northern Arizona University which are linked full text on-line at <http://nau.edu/AIE>. It is dedicated to the memory of Dr. William G. Demmert, Jr. (Tlingit/Ogala Lakota) who spent his life working to improve the education of Indigenous students, including helping found the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and serving as co-chair of the U.S. Department of Education's Indian Nations at Risk Task Force.

This collection of nine papers is intended to assist educators and policy makers understand how the education of Indigenous children can be improved through building on their cultural heritage and involving their families and local communities. The first two chapters by Bill Demmert and Navin Kumar Singh give an overview of culture-based education. Then examples are presented of how Indigenous students and teachers can be "turned on" to education and appreciate Indigenous knowledge through science, art and history. This section includes chapters on *Developing Culturally Based Science Curriculum for Native American Classrooms* by Willard Gilbert (Hopi), former president of the NIEA, and *Problem-Based Learning: Valuing Cultural Diversity in Science Education with Native Students* co-authored by MaryLynn Quartaroli and Frederick Sherman (Navajo). Then Pauline Chinn of the University of Hawai'i writes about developing an environmental ethnic among science teachers in Hawai'i, James Bequette and Kelly Hrenko write about a project that infused culture into teaching art, and Sandra Wolf (Ojibwe) describes how three junior high students became deeply involved in a history day project researching the American Indian Movement.

The last two chapters describe examples of community Indigenous educational involvement in Guatemala and Canada.

Leaders in the field of Indigenous education have noted that this new book is an important addition to the field of American Indian and Indigenous education. Dr. David Beaulieu, Professor Emeritus, Arizona State University and former President of the NIEA writes that it "is an informative and welcomed addition to the literature on culturally-based education illustrating engaging strategies for developing effective and meaningful education programs for Indigenous students."

Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore, Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley writes, "Honoring Our Heritage should be required reading for any educator who works with indigenous students—perhaps by all educators in our diverse society. Far too many children are turned off to school when they discover that all that they have learned from home, family and community counts for little at school—they must become someone other than themselves, speak a language that may not express their truest intentions, and behave like strangers to matter there." Dr. Teresa L. McCarty, Alice Wiley Snell Professor of Education Policy Studies and Co-director, Center for Indian Education, Arizona State University notes, "In this wonderful collection, the editors gather together "stories



of success" in Indigenous culturally based education. Combining theory with practice, and spanning multiple content areas, the book is rich with strategies and hands-on resources for inquiry-oriented, place-based instruction. With examples from South Asia to the Southwestern U.S., the Great Lakes to the Great Plains, readers will find clear pedagogical models that honor who Native students are by honoring their heritage and the contemporary contexts of their lives."

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