

September 2015

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk on **key issues and related strategies to address Native teacher education, preparation and retention in Native American communities**. Ask REL Southwest is part of a collaborative Ask-A-REL reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (RELs). This service functions much in the same way as a technical reference library, by design, providing references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations for research-based education questions.

Please note that REL Southwest has not done an evaluation of the resources themselves, but offers this list to you for your information only.

QUESTION

What are recommended key issues and related strategies to address Native American teacher education, preparation, and retention in Native American communities?

Austin, R. D. (2005). Perspectives of American Indian Nation parents and leaders. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 41-48.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource might be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: The author offers insights into perceptions and expectations that tribal leaders and Native American parents have of higher education.

From the text of the article: The field of American Indian education is chronically short of American Indian teachers, principals, and superintendents. American Indians with degrees in education are needed to move American Indian education forward. Those graduates have knowledge of American Indian cultures and languages that make them ideally suited for working with schools that educate American Indian children, with American Indian pupils and their parents, and with the local American Indian communities. Hiring more American Indian teachers and administrators who know their cultures and apply them in the schools and tribal communities is the key to local control of schools and American Indian education shedding its assimilationist practices.

Beardslee, L. (2004). Arguments for integration in the field of education in Northern Michigan. *Multicultural Education*, 11(3), 29-35. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ783079.pdf>

From the Education Source abstract: The writer discusses the need to integrate Native Americans into the field of education and outlines her own experience of race-based exclusion as a Native American educator in Michigan. She maintains that schools and colleges in the state continue to model a cultural pattern of discrimination and segregation that remains unsurpassed in other employment fields. Moreover, she contends that Native American students and parents will continue to feel like outsiders in Michigan public schools until educational institutions integrate Native Americans as role models on an equal socioeconomic footing.

Beaulieu, D., & Figueira, A. M. (Eds.). (2006). *The power of Native teachers: Language and culture in the classroom*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, Center for Indian Education. Available from https://www.academia.edu/14886402/The_Power_of_Native_Teachers-Language_and_Culture_in_the_Classroom

From the book's overview: In the introductory chapter to this volume, David Beaulieu, who is the current principal investigator of the Native Educators Research Project, shares his unique perspective on the historical and political climate that gave rise to initiatives to increase the numbers of indigenous teachers during the period of time when he served as director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Indian Education. Chapter Two by Anna Figueira, coordinator of research for the project, examines the role of indigenous teachers and the importance of Native languages and cultures in schooling and provides an overview of the project. In the third chapter, Jon Reyhner presents an analysis and synthesis of issues that new teachers face when they take their place in classrooms and asks: "How realistic is it to expect new teachers to be 'transformative educators' who change the environments of the schools within which they teach so that Indian students have more successful school experiences?"

Working with data from both phases of the study, Timothy Begaye offers an analysis of the meaning of "culture" as it is understood by the participants in the study in Chapter Four. In the fifth chapter, David Beaulieu assesses what we have learned from the Native Educators Research Project and suggests a re-envisioned Native teacher education program focused on building resilience and relationships and enriched in both content and pedagogy. The final chapter of the book is directed to Native teachers from a Native teacher. Having been a member of one of the Native teacher education program cohorts, Jennifer Johnson became a graduate research assistant for the project while pursuing her master's degree. Currently a fourth grade teacher in a tribal school, Jennifer has the advantage of multiple perspectives as she speaks of the real power of Native teachers.

Bird, C. P., Lee, T. S., & Lopez, N. (2013). Leadership and accountability in American Indian education: Voices from New Mexico. *American Journal of Education*, 119(4), 539-564.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: How do American Indian students, parents, and teachers conceptualize leadership in New Mexico public schools? How do they negotiate power dynamics within this context? The objective of this study was to investigate how leadership and accountability in American Indian schools and communities in New Mexico is recognized, characterized, contested, and envisioned by students, teachers, and community members. We contend that American Indian communities are uniquely positioned to provide insights for understanding leadership and visions of decolonized and empowering education for American Indian communities. Our data come from focus groups and interviews with American Indian students, parents, and community members, as well as teachers in seven public school districts in New Mexico. Participants described how they observed leadership enacted and how they participated in New Mexico public schools. We found participants describing unequal power relations, yet they also held visions of school leadership embedded in the values and definitions of leadership traditionally and historically held in American Indian communities. These visions of leadership centered around the importance of sustaining and strengthening American Indian communities and self-determination.

Brayboy, B. M. J., & Maughan, E. (2009). Indigenous knowledges and the story of the bean. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(1), 1-21. Retrieved from http://www.jenjenson.com/courses/literaciesandculture/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/BrayBoy_Maughan.pdf

From the ERIC abstract: In this article, the authors explore epistemic tensions within an indigenous teacher preparation program where students question Western systems for creating, producing, reproducing, and valuing knowledge. Grounding their argument in a rich understanding of indigenous knowledge systems, the authors advocate for an approach to training indigenous teachers that recognizes the power of indigenous knowledge systems, considers diverse knowledge systems equally, and equips teachers to make connections between various schooling practices and knowledge systems. Through the "story of the bean," in which an indigenous student teacher reconceptualizes a science lesson from a more holistic perspective, the authors illustrate the wealth of understanding and insight that indigenous teachers bring to the education of indigenous students, and they depict the possibilities for preservice teaching programs in which university staff honor the inherent value of indigenous perspectives.

Chavers, D. (2000). Indian teachers and school improvement. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 39(2), 49-55. Retrieved from <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/28703683/indian-teachers-and-school-improvement-journal-of-american->

From the Education Source abstract: A need exists for innovation and change in Native American schooling. The need for change in many schools serving Native American students is not only reflected in an outdated curriculum but also in the very poor academic performance of their students, problems related to staffing and socialization of non-Native teachers, the separation of the dynamics of schooling from

the family and the community, and the expectations of Native American parents versus teachers and schools. In order to bring about change, a major increase in the number of Native American teachers and administrators is required, schools and teachers must be integrated with the Native American community, and sources of new Native American teachers, such as Native paraprofessionals currently working in the schools, must be tapped. This process requires leadership. A model teacher education program and innovations that work in Native American schools are outlined.

Exton, V. N. (2011). Creating an education pipeline: Training American Indian teachers. *Journal of Indigenous Research*, 1(1), 1-3. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=kicjir>

From the article abstract: The findings from this case study add to the research on effective teacher education programs. The researcher found six factors that contributed to developing teacher identity among secondary teachers who participated in an American Indian teacher education program. The first three factors (personal, home, and community beliefs) were: 1) giving back to American Indian communities; 2) serving American Indian students; and 3) becoming empowered as American Indian teachers. The next three factors (school-based experiences) were: 4) cohort-based peer support, 5) preparation for content area expertise, and 6) teachers as role models. One of the most significant lessons from Exton's research is about program continuity: there will be gaps in the pipeline of American Indian teachers as long as tribes are dependent on competitive government grants to support teacher education programs. The take-away message is that community partnerships between tribes, school districts, colleges and universities, and business leaders need to be maintained for long-term educational goals. Training American Indian teachers is an investment in the diversity of all communities.

Figueira, A. (2006). The Native Educator Research Project. In D. Beaulieu & A. Figueira (Eds.), *The power of Native teachers: Language and culture in the classroom* (pp. 7-59). Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, Center for Indian Education. Available from https://www.academia.edu/14886402/The_Power_of_Native_Teachers-Language_and_Culture_in_the_Classroom

From the chapter's conclusion: Each of the new teachers in the study entered their respective teacher education programs with preconceived notions about teaching and with predispositions as to the importance of Native languages and the influence of culturally based schooling on student learning. Their academic and field experience during professional development in the diverse programs they attended served to strengthen many of their biases and to mitigate others. Most importantly, it outfitted them with the skills and professional knowledge they would need to make a difference for their students in their classrooms. When they ultimately entered their classrooms as teachers, however, the real test of their power began. Many were met with support for their ideas and acceptance of their fresh energy and vision. Others were presented with roadblocks and hurdles, "reality checks" that served to check their power to change things in any meaningful way.

Fox, M. J. T. (2005). Voices from within: Native American faculty and staff on campus. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 49-59.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: What is the role of Native American faculty and staff in majority institutions with relation to Native American students?

From the text of the article: Faculty and staff in higher education play a vital role in student development and student learning, and faculty and staff from underrepresented groups can play a particularly important role in the development and learning of students from those groups in majority institutions. What impact do Native American faculties have on the experiences of Native American students in such institutions? How can having Native Americans as faculty and staff in positions within majority institutions assist non-Native student affairs professionals in serving Native American students? How do the experiences of Native American faculty and staff at majority institutions affect their ability to provide support for Native American students either directly or in partnership with non-Native allies? These are important questions given the critical human resource needs in Indian country, the growing number of Native American students entering majority institutions of higher education, and the far more modest increase in the number of Native American faculty and staff at such institutions. Despite their importance, these questions have been the subject of little research or discussion in higher education. This chapter seeks to address these critically important questions. In doing so, it is intended to serve as the beginning of a conversation about Native American faculty and staff in mainstream institutions of higher education, the role they can play in supporting Native American students, and the ways in which they can collaborate with non-Native faculty and staff in supporting those students. It is a conversation that needs to occur among students, parents, faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni who are serious about supporting Native American students.

Fox, M. J. T., Lowe, S. C., McClellan, G. S. (2005). Serving Native American students: Symposium. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 5-104.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: A special issue focusing on serving Native American students in higher education is provided. Articles discuss the history of Native American higher education; Native American student retention in U.S. postsecondary education; the experiences of Native American students in higher education; tribal leaders' and parents' perceptions and expectations of higher education; the experiences of Native American faculty and staff in mainstream higher education institutions; Native American identity; American Indian epistemologies; how tribally controlled colleges work to serve the needs of their students and tribal communities; and American Indian Student Services at the University of North Dakota.

Heimbecker, C., Medina, C., Peterson, P. (2002). Reaching American Indian special/elementary educators through a partnership with a Navajo Nation school district. *Remedial & Special Education*, 23(6), 372-378.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: This article describes the Reaching American Indian Special/Elementary Educators (RAISE) program, a community-based native teacher education program located on the Navajo reservation in Kayenta, Arizona. The RAISE program is a preservice teacher preparation partnership program between Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Kayenta Unified School District (KUSD). RAISE is designed for two groups of students: uncertified Navajo special and elementary education preservice students who work with the local school district, and traditional teacher education students recruited from the main campus of NAU. The RAISE program prepares students to teach in impoverished rural and remote areas and to work in inclusive schools with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. On completion of the program, the students earn a dual teacher certification in special and elementary education.

Huffman, T. (2014). *American Indian educators in reservation schools*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.

From the publisher's book description: The role of Native American teachers and administrators working in reservation schools has received very little attention, although their work is critical to preparing their students for the future. Utilizing numerous interviews and extensive fieldwork, Terry Huffman shows how they define their roles and evaluate their performance. He examines how they address the complex issues of Native cultural identity that affect their students and themselves and how they cope with the pressures of teaching disadvantaged students while meeting the requirements for reservation schools, including the No Child Left Behind Act. Personal accounts, including candid comments about their choice of profession and the sometimes-harsh realities of reservation life, offer unique insights into the frustrations and rewards of providing a viable education for Native American students. *American Indian Educators in Reservation Schools* demonstrates that these teachers and administrators meet daunting challenges with persistent optimism. Huffman's study will help educators in other communities whose students are navigating a difficult path out of poverty and discrimination toward a better future.

Kawai'ae'a, K. (2008). Ho'i hou i ke kumu: Teachers as nation builders. In M. K. P. Ah Nee-Benham (Ed.), *Indigenous educational models for contemporary practice: In our mother's voice* (Vol. II, pp. 40-45). New York, NY: Routledge.

From the book's description: The book challenges teachers, researchers, educational leaders, and community stakeholders to build dynamic learning environments through which indigenous learners can be "Boldly Indigenous in a Global World!" Three days of focused dialogue at the 2005 World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education

(WIPCE) led to the charge to create Volume II of *Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice*.

Kidwell, C. S. (2009). American Indian studies: Intellectual naval gazing or academic discipline? *American Indian Quarterly*, 33(1), 1-17.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: This article discusses the field of American Indian studies, examining the political nature of the discipline and the attitude of the U.S. government toward American Indians. Details about the history of American Indian studies programs in the U.S. are provided, and information about the activism among Indian communities is presented. The activism efforts of American Indian college students are discussed. The presence of American Indian teachers in U.S. colleges and universities and other factors contributing to the growing field of American Indian Studies are also explored.

Ledward, B., & Takayama, B. (2008, February). *Ho'opilina kumu: Culture-based education among Hawai'i teachers* (Culture in Education Brief Series). Honolulu, Hawai'i: Kamehameha Schools, Research & Evaluation Division. Retrieved from http://www.ksbe.edu/assets/spi/pdfs/reports/k-12/hoopilina_kumu_200802.pdf

From the report's overview: At the state, national, and international levels, culture-based educational (CBE) strategies are increasingly seen as a promising means to address the educational disparities between indigenous students and their peers. Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (HCIE) is a joint research project of Kamehameha Schools, the Hawai'i Department of Education (HiDOE), and Nā Lei Na'auao, an alliance of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, and seeks to understand and share best practices of culturally relevant education in Hawai'i's classrooms.

Locke, S. (2004). Reflections of Native American teacher education on Bear Ridge. *Rural Educator*, 26(1), 15-23. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ783810.pdf>

From the ERIC abstract: This study examines an elementary teacher education certification program delivered by a state university to Native American teacher aides on the reservation. Data were collected over two semesters using a Freirean critical theory framework to analyze the data and to explicate the problematic nature of Native American education. Analysis of the data indicated that the program reproduced Euro-American cultural values, was insensitive to Native American history or values, and did little to support individual teachers. Suggestions include the need for the program to acknowledge and address the historical cultural genocide that occurred in the education of Native Americans and the cultural and political hegemony of the teacher education program. More focus needed to be placed on supporting individual participants and their academic and cultural struggles in becoming teachers.

Locke, S., & Lindley, L. (2007). Rethinking social studies for a critical democracy in American Indian/Alaska Native education. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 46(1), 1-19. Retrieved from https://jaie.asu.edu/sites/default/files/461_2007_1_locke_lindley.pdf

From the ERIC abstract: This investigation examines an elementary social studies methods course taught on an American Indian reservation through a state university. Data were collected from American Indian preservice teachers over four years through taped interviews, classroom observations, and a review of homework and in-class assignments. A Freirean critical pedagogy framework was utilized to analyze the data. Analysis revealed that the course replicated and reproduced dominant cultural values and knowledge of the state university and was insensitive to American Indian history, values, and pedagogy. Suggestions include the need for the course to interrogate historical interpretations and the economic and social structures of the local Indian community. The course also needed to emphasize the cultural strengths of the local community and its contributions and place in the context of state and national history.

Martin, K. J. (2000). "Oh, I have a story": Narrative as a teacher's classroom model. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 16(3), 349-363. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=eth_fac

From the Education Source abstract: This paper examines the teaching practices of one American Indian teacher in a high school literature class. It explores the teacher's use of narrative as an instructional strategy designed to convey abstract concepts through concrete experience. The narratives engage students in critical thinking and personal reflection and provide them with the opportunity to make connections between social and historical contexts. In addition, the teacher uses stories to contrast multiple contexts with personal experiences, which reflects teaching strategies previously identified as those used by effective teachers. There is evidence that sharing ideas and concepts through story is an important way of encouraging social relations and helping students make connections between what they are learning in school and what they know of the world. Based on data analysis, this study presents a model of the teacher's use of narrative as a strategy to pose critical questions, frame a context for discussion, encourage students to reflect on personal perspectives, and introduce ideas and concepts. The model provides a visual representation of the teacher's use of narrative as a way of clarifying course content, contextualizing meaning, and reinforcing understanding.

Morrison, K. (2009). Lessons of diversity learned the hard way. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(5), 360-362.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the Education Source abstract: The writer discusses her experience of educating Native American teachers at a workshop at a Bureau of Indian Affairs school

on a Navajo reservation in Arizona. She explains how adapting to another culture taught her lessons in tolerance and in diversity.

Nelson, M. K. (2011). The future of Native studies: A modest manifesto. *American Indian Culture & Research Journal*, 35(1), 39-45.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the ERIC abstract: In the author's presentation at the gathering and celebration of 40 years of the American Indian Studies Center, she focused on emerging, positive trends and developments in Native American/American Indian/indigenous studies (NAS) and on areas to move toward as educators expand the field in order to make it more current and relevant to the lived experiences of Native Americans today. The author summarizes these trends and encourages further exploration and development of other themes in the unfolding field of NAS. She offers these observations as an Anishinaabe/Metis woman who has served as a professor of American Indian studies in California for eight years and as the executive director of a Native American indigenous rights nonprofit organization for 17 years.

O'Dell, C. G. (2010). *An investigation of the phenomenon of shortages of Indian teachers as described by tribal college leaders in teacher preparation* (Doctoral dissertation). Missoula, MT: University of Montana. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2340&context=etd>

From the author's abstract: In Montana, less than 3 percent of K-12 teachers are American Indian. The lack of Indian teachers, which was the problem identified for this dissertation, is of great concern to educational leaders. The shortage of Native American teachers can be correlated to problems in the education of K-12 students as evident in the data on achievement gaps, dropout rates, and participation in higher education. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of tribal college leaders in preparing Indian preservice teachers through the lens of the phenomenon of shortages of Indian teachers. It was hoped that such descriptions could inform educational leaders on possible, efficacious means to increasing the number of highly qualified Indian teachers in Montana.

The results of this study suggested that (a) there still exists a need among various educational entities to recognize the value of Indian teachers and to allocate financial support for this valued resource through teaching salaries, and various forms of postsecondary aid; (b) tribal colleges do not typically receive adequate funding or state support for their teacher education programs; (c) there is a perception that Indian teacher candidates are not always welcomed into schools for field work; (d) there is a need for leadership and data from multiple sources to support tribal colleges in preparing Indian teachers; and (e) tribal college teacher preparation programs often work with limited partnerships that are mainly based on convenience. Ongoing work to address Indian teacher shortages may keep the state's attention focused on its most serious educational need, improving the quality of American Indian education.

Pavel, M., Banks, S. R., & Pavel, S. (2002). The Oksale story: Training teachers for schools serving American Indians and Alaska Natives. *Journal of American Indian Education, 41*(2), 38-47.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the ERIC abstract: Oksale Native Teacher Preparation Program is a collaboration between Northwest Indian College and Washington State University born out of the need for Native American teachers in the Pacific Northwest. Excerpts from student interviews describe the culturally relevant approach, constructivist teaching methods, and sense of family that result from the course taught by Native teachers on the Lummi Reservation.

Pavel, D. M., Inglebret, E., & Banks, S. R. (2001). Tribal colleges and universities in an era of dynamic development. *Peabody Journal of Education, 76*(1), 50-72.

Note: Although we typically limit our referrals to publicly available resources, based upon the abstract, we determined that this resource may be of interest to you. It may be found through university or public library systems.

From the ERIC abstract: This article discusses the development of tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), highlighting how they have dramatically changed higher education for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Selected institutional portraits demonstrate the intersection between culture and community in TCUs. The paper concludes that TCUs are promoting a new mindset that is leading to renewed economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual vitality through education.

Smiley, R., & Sather, S. (2009). *Indian education policies in five Northwest Region states* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009 No. 081). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from:

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2009081.pdf

From the authors' abstract: The report categorizes the Indian education policies of the five Northwest Region states, based on 13 key policies identified in the literature, and describes the legal methods used to adopt them. This study examines state policies that govern the education of American Indian and Alaska Native (referred to collectively as Native American) students in the five Northwest Region states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. This investigation is the most comprehensive effort to date to study Indian education policies. The study focuses on three dimensions of Indian education policies: 1) identification of key Indian education policies in the literature; 2) adoption of key Indian education policies by the five Northwest Region states; and 3) specific mechanisms states have employed to adopt Indian education policies. The goal of the study is to provide state policymakers and organizations representing Native Americans with a comprehensive summary and analysis of state-

level policy initiatives. Policies common to all five states included academic standards addressing Native American culture and history; Native language being learned by Native students as part of the education program; Native American history and culture being part of the school curriculum; Native communities being involved in advisory boards; and the promotion of teacher certification for speakers of Native American languages.

White, C. J., Bedonie, C., De Groat, J., Lockard, L., & Honani, S. (2007). A bridge for our children: Tribal/university partnerships to prepare Indigenous teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(4), 71-86. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ795188.pdf>

From the ERIC abstract: This article is about bridge building: building cultural bridges of authentic collaboration between the university and the Navajo and Hopi nations; building curricular bridges between the White, European culture and the cultural worlds these nations seek to preserve; and building bridges between languages, the language of the colonizers—English—and the Navajo and Hopi languages that are vulnerable to extinction. As bridge builders the authors locate their work between the future—with a commitment to the students their students will teach—and a distant past, prior to Contact, when American Indian communities effectively educated young people into their tribal history, language, values, science, and all other forms of knowledge necessary to maintain their way of life. While there is much scholarly conversation about the importance of culturally responsive teachers, the authors find minimal attention to the particulars of programs like theirs that are focused specifically upon increasing the number of culturally responsive indigenous teachers through tribal/university partnerships, and insufficient appraisal of what is working within such initiatives. In this article, the authors help fill this gap and encourage others to engage in similar bridge building initiatives.

Yazzie-Mintz, T. (2007). From a place deep inside: Culturally appropriate curriculum as the embodiment of Navajo-ness in classroom pedagogy. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 46(3), 72-93. Retrieved from https://jaie.asu.edu/sites/default/files/463_2007_6_yazzi-mintz.pdf

From the ERIC abstract: Three Navajo teachers' conceptions of culturally appropriate curriculum and pedagogy highlight the benefits of reflective practice within different educational and school contexts. Each teacher provides a way of thinking about culturally appropriate curriculum and its implementation in classroom practice for different Navajo students. The ways in which these teachers acknowledge the influence of being Navajo allows us to see why each chooses to teach and to know from where her inspiration comes. This study of the three Navajo teachers brings to the larger discussion of culturally appropriate pedagogy the need to consider the cultural knowledge, referred to as "Navajoness," that the teacher brings to the classroom context. Navajoness, a way of being or familiarity with being a Navajo person, appears to provide Navajo teachers with the knowledge and ability to make immediate connections between knowledge in school and home contexts. Further, Navajo teachers have an initial foundation from which to build strong content and cultural knowledge with

students, bridging a perceived knowledge gap between home and school. At the center of the research are the following questions: Can any teacher just teach without acknowledging and responding to the teaching and learning context? What does a teacher have to know and what actions must be taken in order to create an engaging learning opportunity for students? Exploring the concept of Navajoness is an important part of considering what might be culturally appropriate for building an educational program that responds to the knowledge that students and teachers bring with them to the classroom context. Researchers and educators are asked to examine more deeply the conceptions that teachers hold in the areas of content, Navajo culture, and mainstream culture, and are encouraged to make frequent links between what is theorized and what occurs in everyday classroom pedagogy.

Additional Organizations to Consult:

[American Indian Higher Education Consortium](http://www.aihec.org) (<http://www.aihec.org>)

[Bureau of Indian Education](http://www.bie.edu) (<http://www.bie.edu>)

[National Indian Education Association](http://www.niea.org) (<http://www.niea.org>)

[Northwest Tribal Educators Alliance \(NW TEA\), REL Northwest](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/index.asp)
(<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/index.asp>)

METHODS

Search of Databases and Websites

[Institute of Education Sciences \(IES\) website](http://www.ies.ed.gov) (<http://www.ies.ed.gov>)

[ERIC database](http://www.eric.ed.gov) (www.eric.ed.gov)

EBSCO's Academic Search Premier database

EBSCO's Education Source database

[Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com) (scholar.google.com)

[World Cat](http://www.worldcat.org) (<http://www.worldcat.org>)

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches

(Native American teachers OR American Indian teachers OR indigenous teachers)

Criteria for Inclusion

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on key issues and related strategies to address Native American teacher education, preparation, and retention in Native American communities in peer-reviewed resources. When REL Southwest staff reviewed the resources, we considered—among other things—three factors:

Date of Publication: The most current information (published from 2000 to September 2015) is included.

Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article: Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports produced by well-known research and government organizations.

Methodology: Sources include literature reviews, a monograph, and government reports.

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