Using Indigenous Language & Culture in Early Childhood Emergent Literacy Instruction

- Sacred Little Ones Project
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Sacred Little Ones Culturally Responsive Books
- Sacred Little Ones Website
- Questions and Answers
- Dr. Candy Waukau-Villagomez, Leslie Teller, Sam Corn, Carol Sanapaw

Sacred Little Ones

- Research project that is Literacy based.
- Underlying belief that children learn best within their culture.
- Three pronged approach:
  - Pre-service Teacher Education students
  - Three community Early Childhood schools: Tribal School, Head Start and WI Public school
  - Development and production of cultural curriculum, materials and books
If culturally responsible teaching is to be realized then widespread instructional reform is needed.

Changes need to begin for educators of Native children in Teacher Education preparation programs.

This should optimally happen at Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).

The American Indian College Fund shared this vision.

Large quantity of research on CR instruction and curriculum, very little of it actually examines which strategies prepare strong teachers.

Most focuses on addressing the attitudes and lack of knowledge of White preservice students.

This is an important problem needing to be addressed but only part of the issue.

It is not the same as populating reservation/larger Native communities with excellent multicultural and culturally responsive teachers.

Historic patterns of marginality within and limited access to educational contexts have silenced Native communities' voices.

There is now a very limited community presence in the structure and curriculum of schools.

Curriculums, to be scientifically based, are purchased from large publishers.

Cultural curriculums need to be the source, books and specific activities, for learning.
Three areas of culturally responsive teaching in our teacher education program:
(a) establishing infrastructures for incorporating Native voices and participation in the educational process;
(b) institutionalizing culturally responsive norms for curriculum and instruction; and
(c) increasing the knowledge base concerning Native education through reflection course assignments on the complexities of teaching and learning within Native communities.

What CMN used as a focus

The CMN Teacher Education program through the SLOG provides:
- access to all CMN resources;
- engages members of the Menominee community in developing curriculum and instruction strategies based on Tribal knowledge;
- immerses student teachers in authentic, diverse cultural settings within local schools; and
- models culturally responsive teaching practices for pre-service teachers in all Teacher Education classes.

What CMN/TCUs can do

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy begins to assess ways of:
- Knowing,
- Understanding, and
- representing our Tribal groups in:
  - teaching academic subjects,
  - learning processes and
  - skills.
Way to higher level learning

- Build bridges between the cultural experience of Tribal children and the curriculum content of each academic subject.
- Scaffold instruction
- Facilitate higher level learning

Five Requirements for Culturally Responsive Teachers

- Knowledge of tribes/Native groups served
- Courage to admit something is wrong in educational system
- Will to rethink traditional assumptions of culture in teaching and learning
- Skills to be knowledgeable and sensitive within culture diversity
- Tenacity to relentlessly pursue high performance for Native children and underachievers

Sacred Little Ones Books

Piloted in EDU 315 – Cultural Images in Children’s Books
Instructor: Dr. Candy Waukau Villagomez (Menominee)
http://www.cmnsacredlittleones.com/books/default.aspx
Website

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