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Using Indigenous Language & Culture in Early Childhood Emergent Literacy Instruction

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- ☞ 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

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Sacred Little Ones

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- ☞ 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

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## The path to culturally responsive teaching



- ☞ 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.

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## What's the research and what to do



- ☞ 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 a 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.

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## What's the reality and what to do



- ☞ 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.

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### What CMN used as a focus



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.

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### What CMN/TCUs can

do

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.

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### How to do this?



Culturally Responsive Pedagogy begins to assess ways of:

- Knowing,
- Understanding, and
- representing our Tribal groups in :
  - teaching academic subjects,
  - learning processes and
  - skills.

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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>

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# Website



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