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TRUSTING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Education for the Seven Generations

Curriculum



"If one tree fruits, they all fruit. - there are no soloists. Not one tree in a grove, but the whole grove; not one grove in the forest, but every grove, but the whole grove; not one in the forest, but every grove; all across the country and all across the state. These trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective. Exactly how they do this, we don't yet know. But what we see is the power of unity. What happens to one happens to us all. We can starve together or feast together. All flourishing is mutual."

Excerpt taken from Robin Wall Kimmerer "The Council of Pecans";
Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants

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NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

- As global warming and the environment becomes a call to action for us all, amplifying the environmental justice movement and the importance of ...

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Key Term / Definition

Relational accountability is defined below:

"Critical to Indigenous methodologies is the concept of "relational accountability," or what is most "important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations in the research relationship—that is, being accountable to your relations". Creating and maintaining respectful and mutually beneficial relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities is of utmost importance, in part because Indigenous peoples have sometimes been mistreated and misled by academic researchers in the distant and recent past" — [Eve Tuck, "The Promise of Indigenous Research"](#)

Learning Objectives

These pieces have been selected as a way for students to:

- Invite self-reflection and contextualized knowledge around the sense of place, the wisdom of indigenous communities since time immemorial whose shoulders we stand on and walk alongside, and how we can grow in harmony to be better relatives.
- Engage critical consciousness inviting heart and mind alignment.
- Understand the disproportional environmental impacts in our communities. Environmental issues such as clean air, water, and toxicity levels in order to work toward creating a sustainable way of life.
- Heal generational trauma by imagining new ways of knowing and being by working toward sustainability in our values systems, in alternate economies, in our communities and within ourselves.
- Understand that there is a difference between having distant/unknown Indigenous ancestry and living as an Indigenous person today.
- Recognize and value elder wisdom and intergenerational knowledge as personal and academic methodology.
- Embrace and practice traditional indigenous modalities such as: orality, storytelling, land attribution (the self in relation to the land*) as fundamental learning strategies for building community, nurturing community, healing the self, and cultural preservation.

Essential and Guiding Questions

- What plant, tree, agriculture was here before us? What did our ancestors believe?
- What cultural knowledge has been lost due to colonization, migration, and/or displacement?

- What are the histories of Indigenous peoples in this country and what is my relationship to them?
- How can I engage in ethical, relational behavior with others in my community?
- What is the story of the place that I am living and what is my intimate, relational identity to said place?

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Suggested Activities

- **Ethical Ethnography:** Have students develop an interdisciplinary ethnographic piece focusing on students' cultural lineages with an attention to gathering stories from family and/or community elders. Before students conduct interviews, review the points of [establishing ethical relationships with interview subjects](#). Discuss as a class why it is important to treat people's stories/memories/emotions with care in the research process. (MS, HS, CC)
 - Remind students that ethical ethnographic research means that the interview subjects are involved in as many stages as they desire and the final product should be approved by and shared with the interview subjects in some way. Consider developing this discussion into an entire unit based on the book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* by Shawn Wilson (linked below).
- **Podcast:** Have students translate salient points from the above ethnographic assignment and turn into a podcast. If students obtain permission from their interview subjects, they may include the interview recordings in the podcast. Encourage students to come up with a podcast name and tagline and a narrative introduction/conclusion to the interviews. Encourage students to add additional podcast elements such as transitional music from the [Public Domain](#). (MS, HS, CC)
- **Little Known Histories:** Inform students that you are going to have a discussion as a class about hidden, erased, and little known histories. You may want to read a little on the Dakota 38 so you can contextualize the [Dakota 38 Documentary Film](#) before showing it to your students. After the screening, have students read the poem "[38](#)" by [Layli Long Soldier](#) and discuss. (MS, HS, CC)
 - Discuss as a class: Why might the filmmakers have made the film available for free instead of for sale? How might that be in line with anti-capitalist, Indigenous ways of thinking? How does this film encourage healing through telling the truth about what happened to the Dakota 38? Why was this history hidden from us? Why does Long Soldier not think her poem is of great imagination? What is Long Soldier's message in the poem "38"? How does Long Soldier use punctuation and syntax to convey her message?
 - As a follow-up project, have students create an interdisciplinary class zine on little-known historical events. Ask them to conduct research on a little-known historical figure or event and create a poem, narrative, persuasive article, political cartoon, or artwork telling the story of that historical figure or event. Collect all the pieces for the zine and have students design a print or digital zine using [Canva](#). Suggested topics:
 - Native residential schools
 - Indian Citizenship Act
 - Iroquois Confederacy and the Great Law of Peace
 - American Indian Movement
 - Aztec military conquest of other Indigenous peoples in Mexico
 - Land grant universities
 - Garifuna people
 - California missions
 - Comandanta Ramona
 - Rigoberta Menchú
- **All My Relations:** Read Braiding Sweetgrass [youth](#) or [adult](#) version by Robin Wall Kimmerer.
 - Consider using this text to teach [Indigenous Science in the Classroom](#). As a class, discuss what makes Indigenous approaches to science different than what they might have previously experienced. What can we learn from Indigenous peoples' approaches to land, science, and the natural world?

- Have students respond to these [guiding questions](#) via class discussion, reflection paper, or other appropriate assignment for their grade level. (MS, HS, CC)

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- **Home Remedies/Remedios:** Encourage students to consider the value of [home remedies](#) passed down by their families, community members, and peers via this Remedios Assignment. Encourage students to discuss how these ways of knowing differ from medical industry knowledge and the pros and cons of each. Ask students to discuss how the knowledge of home remedies is similar to Indigenous knowledge. (MS, HS, CC)
- **Relationship to Land:** Have students choose one of the following geographic locations: the street they currently live on, the neighborhood they currently live in, or the city they live in. Let students know they are going to create an ethnography project based on their relationship to the geographic location they have chosen. (MS, HS, CC)
 - First, have students look up whose land they are on using [Native Land Digital](#). For community college students, demonstrate how to conduct library research and ask them to find 10-20 facts about the Native people(s) whose land they are on. If students cannot find reliable information on the Native people(s) they wish to study, encourage class conversation about the erasure of Native histories due to [Indian boarding schools](#) and the myth of the "[vanishing Indian](#)."
 - Second, have student complete an ethnographic assignment about people's relationship to the land they are on using [these guidelines](#), incorporating historical research, direct observation, interviews, and writing.
- **Appreciation vs. Appropriation:** Lead students in a conversation about the difference between Indigenous appreciation vs. Indigenous appropriation. Be open about your teaching process and your intentions and relationship to Native folks and wisdoms. Discuss your teaching process in alignment with the guidelines of [Indigenous Knowledge: Understandings & Considerations](#). Conclude with discussion questions on pages 2-3 of the document.
 - Consider asking students to create a research project or presentation on Native cultural appropriation. Students may find examples on the blog of Indigenous photographer and podcaster Adrienne Keene called [Native Appropriations](#). (MS, HS, CC)

Text Selections

VISUAL MEDIA

- Bustamante, Jayro. (2015). [Ixcanul](#) (Movie) (HS, CC)
- Dark Sky Films. (2017). [Mohawk](#) (Horror Movie) (CC)
- Diamond, Neil (filmmaker). (2009). [Reel Injun](#) (Documentary Film) (MS, HS, CC)
- Fresh Air. "[Louise Erdrich On Her Personal Connection To Native Peoples' 'Fight For Survival'](#)" (Podcast Episode) (HS, CC)
- Gould, Corrina. "Buried" on Injunuity (others include "Anthem," "Great Law," and "Two Spirits") (Video) (MS, HS, CC)
- Indian Country News. (2023). Indigenous people leading the way (Video) (MS, HS, CC)
- Jetnil Kijiner, Kathy, Marshal Island poet, performer, and climate change activist, Dear Matafele Peinem (poem performed at UN Gathering, 2014). (MS, HS, CC)
- MEDIA INDIGENA. (2021). "The Battle to Belong" (Podcast Episode) (CC)
- PBS Newshour. (2019). "'Writing out of a loneliness,' novelist explores the range of native experiences" (Interview w/ Tommy Orange) (MS, HS, CC)
- Rawal, Sanjay (director). (2020). Gather (Documentary) (MS, HS, CC)
- Schools for Chiapas. (2022). "Who are the Zapatistas?" (Video) (MS, HS, CC)
- Starks, Amber. (2022). "Envisioning Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty" (Video) (CC)
- The Red Nation Podcast. (2020). "How do you say Two-Spirit in Ojibwe? w/ Kai Minosh Pyle" (Podcast Episode) (CC)

- The Young and the Woke. Indigenous Ways of Knowing (Podcast Episode) (MS, HS, CC)

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POETRY

- Diaz, Natalie. (2012). "Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation" (Text) (HS, CC)
- Drake, Kinsale. (2022). "In the National Museum of the American Indian" and "Creation Story Blues" (Text) (HS, CC)
- Erdrich, Louise. (2003). "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways" (Text) (MS, HS, CC)
- Lindwall, Courtney. (2021). Five Indigenous Poets Explore Loss and Love of Their Native Lands (Article, Poems, Videos) (MS, HS, CC)
- Long Soldier, Layli. (2017). "38" (Text) (HS, CC)
- Long Soldier, Layli. (2017). Whereas (Book) (CC)
- Ortiz, Simon J. (2000). From Sand Creek (Book) (HS, CC)
- Pelaez Lopez, Alan. (2020). To love and mourn in the age of displacement. (Book) (CC)
- Simpson, Jaye. (2021). It Was Never Going to Be Okay. (Book) (HS, CC)
- Skeets, Jake. (2019). Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers: Poems (Book) (CC)
- Tilsen, Mark. It Ain't Over Until We're Smoking Cigars On The Drill Pad: Poems from Standing Rock and the Frontlines. (book) Mark Tilsen is an Oglala Lakota Water Protector and an activist/poet who participated in the protests at Standing Rock. (HS, CC)
- Winder, Tanaya. (2021). "Being" (Text) (MS, HS, CC)
- Wood, Karenne. (2001). "My Standard Response" (Text) (MS, HS, CC)

FICTION

- Belin, Esther G. (Ed.) (2021). The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature (Anthology) (HS, CC)
- Bouley, Angeline. (2021). Firekeeper's Daughter (Novel) (HS, CC)
- Day, Christine. (2019). I Can Make This Promise (Novel) (MS)
- Dimaline, Cherie. (2017). The Marrow Thieves (Novel) (MS, HS, CC)
- Hokeah, Oscar. (2022). Calling for a Blanket Dance (Novel) (MS, HS, CC)
- Jensen, Toni. (2010). From the Hilltop (Short Stories) (HS, CC)
- Jones, Stephen Graham. (2017). The Only Good Indians (Novel) (HS, CC)
- Little Badger, Darcie. (2020). Elatsoe (Novel) (MS, HS, CC)
- Leitch Smith, Cynthia. (2020). Hearts Unbroken (Novel) (MS, HS, CC)
- Orange, Tommy. (2019). There There (Novel) (HS, CC)
- Rogers, Andrea. (2022). Man Made Monsters (Short Stories) (HS, CC)
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. (2007). Ceremony (Novel) (HS, CC)
- Sorell, Traci. (2018). We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga (Picture Book) (MS, HS, CC)
- Various Authors. (2019). This Place: 150 Years Retold (Graphic Novel Anthology + Teachers' Guide) (MS, HS, CC)
- Whitehead, Joshua. (Ed.) (2020). Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction (Anthology) (HS, CC)
- Willing McMannis, Charlene and Traci Sorell. (2019). Indian No More (Novel) (MS)

NON-FICTION

- Avila, Elena. Woman Who Glows in the Dark (HS, CC)
- Anzaldua, Gloria Borderlands/La Frontera (Book Chapter) (HS, CC)
- Anzaldua, Gloria Light in the Dark, Luz en lo Oscuro (CC)

- Brody, Jane. (1991). To Preserve Their Health and Heritage, Arizona Indians Reclaim Ancient Foods (Article) (MS, HS, CC)
- Buchanan, Shonda. (2019). Black Indian (Memoir) (HS, CC)
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States. (print and audio book) (CC)
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People. (book) (MS, HS)
- Goodyear Ka'opua, Noelani. (2013). The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School (Book) (CC)
- Jamail, Dahr. (2022). Natalie Diaz on the Mojave Language and Where English Fails Us (Interview) (HS, CC)
- Keene, Adrienne. (2021) Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers, and Changemakers from Past and Present (Book) (MS, HS, CC)
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. (2015). Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants (Book) (CC)
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall, Monique Gray Smith & Nicole Neidhardt. (2022). Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. (book) (MS, HS, CC)
- Krawec, Patty. (2022). Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future (Book) (CC)
- Laenui, Poka. Process of Decolonization (Essay) (HS, CC)
- Mays, Kyle T. (2021). An Afro-Indigenous History of the United States (Book) (CC)
- McMater, Meryl (artist interviewed by Samuel, Clare). "As Immense as the Sky" (Interview with an Artist) (HS, CC)
- Miranda, Deborah A. (2013). Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir (Memoir) (MS, HS, CC)
- Ortiz, Elena. (2021). "The Solutions and Answers we Seek Exist with We, the People" (Article) (MS, HS, CC)
- Pike, Ursula. (2021). An Indian Among Los Indígenas: A Native Travel Memoir (Memoir) (HS, CC)
- Pokiak-Fenton, Margaret-Olemaun. (2020). Fatty Legs (Graphic Memoir) (MS, HS, CC)
- Priest, Rena. (2020). "The Kind of Heroes We Need to Save the World" (Article) (MS, HS, CC)
- Rueda Esquibel, Catriona. (2016). Decolonize Your Diet: Notes toward decolonization (Article) (HS, CC)
- San Diego Union Tribune. (2022). "Preserving Kumeyaay culture and language beyond borders." (Article) (MS, HS, CC)
- Sherman, Sean. (2017). The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen (Cookbook) (HS, CC)
- Shiva, Vandana. (2012). "Everything I Need to Know, I Learned in the Forest" (Article) (HS, CC)
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Decolonizing Methodologies (CC)
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai et al, Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education (Chapter 1) (CC)
- Starks, Amber. (2021). "Envisioning Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty" (Article) (HS, CC)
- Starks, Amber. (2021). "It's a Good Month to Be Indigenous" (Essay) (MS, HS, CC)
- Tello, Jerry Recovering Your Sacredness (Book) (HS, CC)
- Terry, Jim. (2020) Come Home, Indio: A Graphic Memoir (Graphic Memoir) (MS, HS, CC)
- Trask, Haunani-Kay. (1999). From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii (Book) (CC)
- Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. (2012). "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor" (Article) (CC)
- Valdes, In Lak'ech (Mayan Greeting)
- Washuta, Elissa. (2021). White Magic (Essays) (CC)
- Wilson, Shawn. (2008). Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods (Book) (CC)
- Wolfson, Sarah (2021). Revitalizing Indigenous Foodways (Article) (MS, HS, CC)
- Zapata, Natasha Hakimi. (2021). "America is a Myth": A Conversation with Natalie Diaz (Interview) (CC)
- Zapatista Army of National Liberation, "How We See the World" - Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona (Open Letter) (CC)

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- [Las Maestras Center](#)
- "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education"

<https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2018/04/Toward-a-Tribal-Critical-Race-Theory-in-Education.pdf>

[Native Appropriations: blog and resources](#)

- [Native Land Digital](#)
- [CIELO: Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo](#)
- Watch video to understand the struggle:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNi_fnadTM

NEXT CHAPTER: Mind, Body, and Spirit

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