

Ideology, Power, and the Miseducation of Indigenous Peoples in the United States

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A. Introduction

This chapter illuminates the role that many white policy makers of Indian education have played in the design of education that is the *foundation of miseducation*. To help you process this story, this chapter has an overview, exercises, and reflective questions for you to consider and write about. Many of the exercises are group or partner activities designed for you to participate in collaboratively. However, if you are studying independently, you can always adapt them to suit your circumstances. I also invite you to personalize this chapter through journal keeping. Record your own reactions, reflections, confusions, and insights.

The objective of this chapter is to investigate the reasons behind the construction of colonial Indian education by examining the views, politics, and practices of the white policy makers (sometimes referred to as “white architects of Indian education”) who funded, created, justified, and refined colonial educational policies. Ultimately, a manufactured romantic image of Indigenous Peoples has been used to justify the control of entire tribal communities. More specifically, white policy makers of Indian education represented the

interests of Western expansion. White policy makers of Indian education designed educational strategies to foster the ideology of white supremacy.

Early Indian boarding schools have been used historically as educational instruments to ensure European domination through miseducation. The American educational system promotes a system-maintaining curriculum that perpetuates oppression through the strict control of all aspects of home living and the

adoption of official curriculum. Students need to know that colonial educational practices and philosophies are still supported by the dominant educational power structure in this country. For example most K-12 schools in this country have been consistent in their original design by graduating students with a value system that is basically Eurocentric, individualistic, competitive, and materialistic.

ACTIVITY:

Before reading any further, take a few minutes and reflect on where you grew up. Think about daily interactions and relationships in terms of your tribal or national identity, especially as it relates to K-12 schools. Think about the racial boundaries in your community. What did you learn from your family about people who looked and spoke different from yourselves?

As you explore these questions further during the exercises and discussions, return here to record any new memories or insights about growing up in multiracial schools.

B. Sociopolitical Analysis of Early "Indian" Education

Prior to the invasion of Indigenous communities in the Americas and the imposition of Euro-American educational systems, tribal nations had their own very diverse educational systems that were culturally responsive to their children. These traditional educational systems were culturally and linguistically designed to provide education informally through parents, extended families, elder members of the tribe, and religious and social groups. The focus of pre-European

Indigenous education was to facilitate the child's acquisition of the spiritual and cultural knowledge necessary to meaningfully contribute to the overall socioeconomic welfare of the group (also known as tribalism), while also sharing their values, appropriate behaviors, and language. Indigenous perspectives are rooted in Indigenous experiences, cultural and political. One of the starting points for discussion might be how Indigenous Peoples were educated and socialized before European colonization and after colonization.

ACTIVITY:

At this stage in your reading, ask yourself the following question:

From your tribal perspective, what did the tribal educational system look like before white policy makers of Indian education took over the education of Indigenous Peoples?

The newly arrived Europeans' overall educational mission was to coerce Indigenous students to forget and to dispossess their cultural identity and the historical significance of their people. This objective was later delegated to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the form of boarding schools located far from the students' ancestral homelands.

The BIA was established in the late nineteenth century when the United States government first negotiated its responsibility for educating Indigenous students. These early efforts at "civilizing" Indigenous Peoples involved attempts at deculturalization—the destruction of Indigenous cultures and languages and the replacement of Indigenous cultures and languages with Anglo-American Protestant culture and the English language.

Overall, the basic theme of this chapter is that Europe's colonial conquest of Indigenous Peoples focused on two fronts. One front involved the political and military strategy to drive Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral lands to make room for European settlers. Earlier in this chapter, this action was referred to as Western expansion. The second front involved the spiritual and cultural strategy pursued by the United States government as well as European and Euro-American missionaries of all denominations. Education was an important component of this second front of colonial conquest.

Throughout U.S. history, Indigenous Peoples have been characterized as "problems" and as having "cultural deficits" or having something wrong with them that shaped the theoretical rationale for educational and

curriculum policymaking. Such a description falls within the “deficit theory” model—the dominant position of Western research on minorities through the 1960s.

The conventional “deficit syndrome” as an educational practice has been used historically to address the needs of Indigenous students despite evidence suggesting that Indigenous learners have definite cultural values and traits that affect learning and academic achievement. For example, Lucien Levy-Bruhl’s (1926) *How Natives Think (Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inferieures*, which in French means “the mental functions within the inferior societies”) hypothesized that Indigenous Peoples came from undeveloped and uncivilized peoples; were inferior races; had primitive, savage, and unintelligible mentalities; and had simple and artless logical-reasoning processes.

This deficit perspective explored the “problems” faced by Indigenous learners and their family, including societal dislocation, poverty, and language acquisition, and saw in these deficits the origins of the unsatisfactory outcomes that Indigenous students experience primarily in mainstream, public schools as well as higher education. By using the Eurocentric schooling and curriculum, white policy makers have failed Indigenous Peoples by not providing the cultural foundation for authentic, natural learning. An example of this design was to leave out the essence of the “spirit” in the educational process of the children. White policy makers have relied on negative pathology theories regarding Indigenous students, such as being “uncivilized,” “culturally deficient,” “disadvantaged,” “at-risk,” and part of a “permanent underclass,” as theoretical rationale for educational policymaking.

“Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally.”

—Frantz Fanon

A curriculum of genocide has been a defining feature of Indigenous education. From the outset the white policy makers of Indian education understood the power of ideas. They carefully selected and sponsored teaching that contributed to obedience, subservience, and political docility. The strategy was not technical, but mostly political. For example, the creation of BIA boarding schools was a statement of political philosophy. It taught Indigenous Peoples the transition from a vocational and agricultural training to mechanical industrialization. It addressed the vexing questions of how Indigenous Peoples should fit into

the new social order without disruptions. The battle over content knowledge for which Indigenous Peoples learn has been longstanding and inextricably connected to tribal sovereignty, national politics, civil rights, labor economics, and social justice.

Why are there disproportionate numbers of ethnic

minority youth (Indigenous children included) in special education today? An article in the 2004 issue of *Multiple Voices* documents the ways special education is overrepresented by a large percentage of poor and ethnic minority students. I believe the major reason why there is an overrepresentation of poor and ethnic minority youth in special education is because there is a lack of appreciation for different cultural learning styles. Moreover, if Indigenous children cannot fit the norm, they are placed in special education. Many studies report that ethnic minority children are nearly twice as likely to be assigned to ineffective teachers. Moreover, many ethnic minority children who are referred to special education were very often coming from classrooms in which teachers exhibited poor behavioral management and instructional skills.

ACTIVITY:

Name individuals and/or books that challenged your consciousness in your lifetime (that is, knowledge that expanded the way you analyzed issues and problems) about Indigenous Peoples.

What are some possible reasons that some people have more cultural awareness and/or a more critical consciousness than others?

Conscientization is the ability to challenge current oppression and make reparations for past injustices based on the understanding that a just society is in the best interest of all people, not just the oppressed. Why would a just society be of benefit to all people?

C. White Architects of Indian Education

To begin this discussion, we might want to look at a few examples of white policy makers of Indian education. To start, one must ensure that the goal of Indigenous education and the tribal socialization process are important. Historically, the Western notion of education for Indigenous Peoples has been, for the most part, a curriculum designed to deculturalize (that is, destroy a people’s culture while replacing it with a new culture) and to disconnect Indigenous Peoples from a tribal perspective and worldview.

The following biographical sketches of white educators and researchers (also referred to as professionals) in no way exhausts the considerable list of policy makers of Indigenous education, but this is an ideologically representative group. I have tried to profile a few

professionals whose educational and research roles and impact have been obscured in the mainstream education literature.

General Samuel Chapman Armstrong

As a theorist and founder of Hampton Institute, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong (1839–1893) can be considered a classical example of a white policy maker of Indian education. Hampton Institute was a statement of political philosophy of the times. It first taught Africans the transition from agricultural slavery to mechanical industrialization. It was about nation building in the United States—carefully situating newly freed Africans together with Indigenous Peoples forced from their tribal homelands to form a new sociopolitical and economic order. It was about

reshaping delicate race relations. Finally, and most important, it was about forging a social order rooted in cultural genocide, apartheid, economic exploitation, oppression, and inequality. The Hampton model of education and societal development dramatically influenced 100 years of Indigenous schooling. Hampton education came to exemplify colonial education for African Americans and Indigenous Peoples in the United States and in the rest of the world.

Armstrong and Hampton displayed the same colonial mentality toward Indigenous Peoples as toward freed African American slaves. Even Hampton's African students were convinced that Indigenous Peoples were lower on the social ladder than themselves. The Hampton educational idea for Indigenous students was to become Richard Henry Pratt's Carlisle Indian School.

Richard Henry Pratt

In the seventeenth century, mission schools run by religious organizations were the first non-Indigenous schools to educate Indigenous children. Eventually, the U.S. government, from 1810 to 1917, financed these mission schools. In the 1860s the U.S. government created a federal school system for Indigenous children. In 1879 the U.S. government opened the first off-reservation boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It was called Carlisle Indian School and was founded by a U.S. Army officer, Richard Henry Pratt.

Pratt's theory and infamous motto for "taming" Indigenous Peoples was "Kill the Indian and save the man." He requested that the U.S. government support Carlisle Indian School with the goals of assimilating and acculturating Indigenous children by removing them from their tribal families and communities and submersing them in a totally Eurocentric learning environment. Carlisle Indian School was considered the premier model of schooling for Indigenous students by federal government officials. It also served as the idea model in the U.S. government's creation of BIA boarding schools in the nineteenth century.

Estelle Reel

According to Brenda J. Child and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, in "Part One: A Uniform Course of Study (Life at School)" of *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879–2000* (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), at the end of the nineteenth century, the Indian Service attempted to standardize the boarding school curriculum. The academic instruction was largely remedial and restricted to early childhood levels. The official curriculum, the Uniform Course of Student for the Indian Schools of the United States, was developed in 1901 by Estelle Reel (1862–1959). In 1898, President McKinley appointed Estelle Reel to superintendent of "Indian" schools, a position she held until 1910. Reel's goal was to train Indigenous students to meet the demands of U.S. citizenry, making them willing workers as well as good citizens of the United States. Child and Lomawaima report that Reel believed in the racist ideology of her time, that Indigenous Peoples (and other ethnic minority populations) were inescapably conditioned by heredity and environment to be inferior to whites. She believed that "Indians" were intellectually incapable of excelling in academic school programs—the deficit syndrome.

Estelle Reel's educational philosophy for Indigenous students was to design a curriculum that focused on trades and domestic training, military discipline, and regimentation of student life. White policy makers like Reel were from the outset horrified by the power and place of song, dance, and ceremonial activities in the spiritual lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Armstrong, Pratt, and Reel were all purporting to solve the so-called Indian question. Their educational ideologies and practices would transform how they perceived Indigenous Peoples as inferior to Euro-Americans and designed educational programs for their place in the new order of their times. Other white policy makers of Indian education worked feverishly in the field of science, trying to prove that Indigenous Peoples were intellectually and biologically inferior to European Americans.

ACTIVITY:

Strategies for Making Connections Between Colonization and Your Own Experience: Sitting with a partner, make a list of four examples of how you have been impacted by colonization in your own schooling experience. Then consider how you would undo (or decolonize) this effect of colonialism. (An example has been provided.)

Examples of Educational Colonialism

I was not taught my Indigenous language.

Decolonization Strategy

Learn the language.

D. The Mismeasurement of Indigenous Students

It is evident from the theories of the nineteenth-century intellectuals that the inhibiting influence of both Galen and the Catholic Church had been profound. Galen (second century CE) thought that memory and mental processes were part of the lower order of animal spirits. In the fourth century CE, St. Augustine accepted the Church's idea that memory was a function of the soul and that the soul was located in the brain. Practically all of these great thinkers accepted without question such unorthodox ideas on memory.

Europeans and European Americans have long debated the mental capacities of Indigenous Peoples, most of which positioned their rationale in racial hierarchy. At the turn of the twentieth century, many psychologists had a keen interest in scientifically proving that Indigenous Peoples had low mental abilities. Through intelligence testing, many researchers presented their studies as valid and objective assessments of Indigenous mental capacity. Based on the confluence of racist ideologies that included evolutionary anthro-

pology, eugenics, and psychometrics, intelligence testing promised to measure the differential distribution of traits and capabilities among racial groups. Early psychometric instruments suggested that intelligence was a single, fixed, and measurable entity.

The assault on Indigenous Peoples by the misuse of tools of psychometry and racist scientific theory is longstanding. As early as the turn of the twentieth century, white psychologists and educators were amassing their psychometric armaments to justify the continued oppression of Indigenous Peoples. Walter Ashby Plecker from Virginia was a fervent eugenicist. He detested the notion of racial and social mixing in any form. Moreover, the concept of Indigenous racial inferiority attained credence with a publication by Lewis Terman (who was appointed to Stanford University) in 1916 that stated that certain racial types would benefit from education minimally at best. In essence, Indigenous Peoples were reputed to be racially inferior. This presumption of inferiority was widely held by the general public and concomitantly in the public school systems. Consequently, schools in the United States have been used as a tool to prevent

ethnic minority educational advancement and to ensure white domination. Another misuse of tools of psychometry is the story of the Hiawatha Insane Asylum, and the Cherokee School for the Deaf, Dumb, Blind, and Insane Asylum.

In 1873 the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma created the Home for the Insane, Dumb, and Blind of the Cherokee Nation. Located south of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the home was established for the "insane and mentally defective." The building design for this insane asylum seemed also suitable for jail purposes. Therefore, in 1904 the Insane Asylum was converted into the National Jail at Tahlequah. The Hiawatha Insane Asylum was created in 1899 by the U.S. Congress, and its short but brutal existence ended in 1933. Located in Canton, South Dakota, the Hiawatha Insane Asylum became the first and only federally funded mental institution for Indigenous Peoples in the United States. Overall, both stories of these insane asylums are tangled in a horrific web of greed, political opportunism, and racist oppression.

New and expanded historical materials that formed scientific precursors to racial stereotypes and negative views toward Indigenous Peoples are also a critical part of the history of Indigenous Peoples' education. For example, scientist and physician Samuel George

Morton's conclusion about the inferiority of cranial capacity in Indigenous Peoples impacted the debates about westward expansion in early U.S. history. Morton rose to notoriety in mainstream academe of his time for his studies on human cranial capacity. He hypothesized that the bigger the skull, the bigger the brain. For example, Morton asserted that because American Indian brains were smaller than those of Malays and Mongolians, Indian intelligence must therefore be correspondingly inferior. This strategy is the ultimate in the process of dehumanization and cultural genocide. The heavy emphasis placed upon the categorization of races, and the subsequent psychological testing of various groups of people, often led to incorrect conclusions of the racial superiority of whites and the inferiority of people distinguished outside the role of whiteness.

Like Morton, Benjamin Rush's work had important political implications for he too worked to reinforce the notion that Indigenous Peoples were inferior to European Americans. Intellectually and politically opposed to slavery, Benjamin Rush nevertheless advocated a segregated America. Over the years, psychologists have issued disclaimers in an attempt to erase the interpretations made from mainstream psychological testing data.

ACTIVITY:

At this point in your reading, let's reflect on your thoughts about how early scientists used Western research to justify inferiority and superiority based on racial groups. Why do you think it was important to establish the inferiority of Indigenous Peoples?

What would the colonizers gain from such a project?

Give three examples of how this idea has been taught to you in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

E. Patterns of Miseducation

Historically, most Indigenous Peoples have encountered a Machiavellian model of teaching and learning. Attempts to defeat Indigenous Peoples were not so much by military force but by politically restructuring the institution of education to mold a colonial belief system. Colonialism that imprisons young minds with the concept of racial or ethnic inferiority is by far more tyrannical than brute force. As an outgrowth of explorers' observations and the deductions by some European philosophers, a concept emerged (circa 1730) arguing that, although nature is created innocent, all things degenerate when touched by civilization. The idea became a double-edged sword for Indigenous Peoples in that, while the concept suggests inherent evils of so-called civilization, it labels Indigenous Peoples as savage (that is, subhuman), thus lending them to Eurocentric investigations, measurements, and studies. The myth of the noble savage emerged and moderated somewhat the disapproving European attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples in general but did not prevent most Europeans from maintaining a view of Indigenous Peoples as barbaric and liable to genocide.

The ideas of superior and inferior races that permeated mainstream American thinking about continental and world mission also often permeated the thinking of the English and of Western Europeans in general by the mid-nineteenth century. Fabricated (civilized/uncivilized) ascribed identities are the results of multidisciplinary academic falsification of the

human record. Historians have denied, distorted, or ignored the history of subordinated groups, and magnified, embellished, and glorified, even deified, the histories of their own people. Western anthropologists fabricated savage and uncivilized people. Theologians in seminaries even debated the existence of whether Indigenous Peoples had souls. Biologists created races and ranks among races.

As an early educational practice with Indigenous students, deculturalization is one aspect of this strange mixture of democratic thought and intolerance that exists in minds of Euro-American policy makers. The concept of deculturalization demonstrates how cultural prejudice and religious bigotry can be intertwined with democratic beliefs. The mastery of such a Eurocentric curriculum by Indigenous children who have no knowledge of their tribal identity is merely an advanced form of programmed cultural destruction. Deculturalization combines education for democracy and political equality with cultural genocide—the attempt to destroy cultures.

In early BIA boarding schools, Indigenous youngsters were easily identifiable and were segregated. Boarding schools grouped Indigenous children along tribal lines that later facilitated intertribal comparison. The added variable of language differences offered still another dimension for educational psychologists in their discussions and debates of mental capacities; opinions expressing the need for Indigenous students to absorb the white culture in order to improve their "innate inferiority" (as measured by the tests) were

frequently discussed. The BIA boarding-school experience is just one example of how the educational system has not met the needs of Indigenous Peoples.

Overall, federal educational policy to educate Indigenous Peoples has largely ignored the fact that Indigenous Peoples had a sophisticated and powerful educational process prior to contact with Europeans. The ultimate proof of European superiority was not offered as subjective opinion or personal desire but "scientific fact." Thirty years of research in educational anthropology and sociology represent a legacy of deficit thought guided by assimilation ideology. Thus, the overall schooling of Indigenous children is a shameful history of domination by missionaries and the federal government. Young children taken from their families, stripped of their customs, and forbidden to speak their languages, passively withdrew within the hostile environments of BIA boarding schools and missionary domiciles.

The manufacturing of the history of any group of people causes them to forget their authentic histories. Indigenous Peoples were not ignorant "savages" or "pagans" as described in early U.S. history books. These were negative, stereotypical terms and concepts created by European American politicians and historians. Many Indigenous Peoples knew their creation stories from memory and could recite them in various types of ceremony. All were highly educated in their tribal perspectives and profoundly spiritual, sharing in a complex culture that had granted survival for thousands of years before 1492.

It took white policy makers of Indian education to construct an educational system, unparalleled in the history of the world to erase the tribal memories, to cloud vision, to impair hearing, and to impede the

operation of the critical capacities of Indigenous Peoples. Once creation stories were lost, Indigenous Peoples became programmed by white policy makers to follow a pattern of historical lies.

In general Indigenous Peoples need to understand the systematic miseducation of Indigenous Peoples. It makes no difference whether Indigenous educators were driven by Indigenous intellectual self-determination. The only education allowable was education for pacification, servitude, and inferiorization.

Teachers who want to teach Indigenous students must have an agenda for the transformation of Indigenous Peoples based on sound information. To set the agenda, however, we must ask and answer two questions.

- What happened to the independent Indigenous education process as a consequence of disturbances through invasion, colonization, and white supremacist ideology and behavior?
- What is the nature of Indigenous resistance to domination and interference and the nature of efforts to reconstruct tribal-based systems? In particular, what roles do Western education and socialization play in resistance to oppression and in the creation of solidarity?

When people are educated to respect the knowledge, the scholarship, and the history and the background of everybody except themselves, then those people are miseducated. It is important to remember that there have been many oppositional voices over the years. Unfortunately, the miseducation has not ceased. In fact, it has increased and we are now more highly miseducated than we ever were before. Why do you suppose I said this?

ACTIVITY:

Many K-12 schools, particularly public schools, have a feel-good approach to Indigenous education. For example, having an Indian week or month to celebrate Indigenous Peoples in schools is a very popular approach, especially in many schools' efforts to integrate multiculturalism into their curriculum. Think about the types of schools that you attended in your K-12 experience. Do you feel your schooling helped you to affirm your tribal identity as well as integrate your tribal histories into its official curriculum? Briefly explain your response.

F. Two Hundred Years of Indigenous Protest

There has always been a difference of opinions among Indigenous Peoples and European Americans regarding the nature of the education problem and the remedies that should be sought in schools. There has always been opposition to integration of Indigenous Peoples into the mainstream society.

Intercultural encounters between white policy makers and Indigenous educators have been the predominant characteristic of race relations for half a millennium. Indigenous theorists have been trying to explain what the invasion of this continent has meant to both Indigenous Peoples and white educators.

Current battles against the miseducation of the poor and people of color are being waged on different fronts. In local schools and communities, heroic teachers, involved parents, caring administrators, and students themselves reject the alienating formulas and rigidities of the past. Correspondingly, a new group of Indigenous scholars and researchers participate in this battle.

A persistent demand of Indigenous protest thought has been education. All understand that the future belongs to the young and that education is a necessity in the struggle for uplift and equality.

Historically, there have always been oppositional voices protesting how white policy makers designed educational programs for Indigenous Peoples. Racial uplift, improvement, and separatism continue as common themes in Indigenous protest.

A historical example may help us understand today's work. In the 1930s and 1940s, although Indigenous Peoples had long contributed to literature, fiction, poetry, and theater, the Reservation Period represented the coming together of a new and large group of Indigenous writers and artists. They told the story of Indigenous literature, music, plays, and so forth through the eyes of Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, we now have a renaissance of indigenizing and writing from an Indigenous perspective. History and time have rendered this new group of scholars, practitioners, and researchers distinct. Some are in a position to inform policymaking and the policy makers. Many have been in the classroom, many have been in the "movement," and many have been in both. All, without exception, have been tempered and shaped by the modern American Indian Movement (AIM) and accompanying struggles. This group has the advantage of all the great work that preceded them. They are able to stand on the shoulders of giants.

They (we) were weaned on militancy and the

discourses (that is, verbal interchange of ideas) and struggles for human dignity, social justice, and racial equality. There is a "post-AIM" scholarship and these are "post-AIM" scholars. Rejecting the canon of the academy, this scholarship is not "objective." Rather is it a discourse for Indigenous Peoples. This scholarship is unapologetically partisan. It opposes racism, colonialism, oppression, and inequality. It opposes any social system that desires to subjugate one people to another. It stands for the uplift of oppressed people.

Today's Indigenous scholar lives in a dynamic setting, unimagined by former generations. It is a

crossroads in history. If equitably shared, advanced technology and the creation of great wealth can reconfigure the world, improving the lives of all. If not, the continuation of racism, ignorance, privilege, and greed will condemn us all. If societies are judged by their lowest strata, then this workbook is important. Will we break through ethnocentrism, racism, and the colonial practices of the past? Can schools really change? Can teaching practices, the curriculum, and the school organization be made to serve Indigenous students and other underserved populations? These are the critical questions addressed in this chapter.

ACTIVITY:

Take a moment and write down the names of individuals you know as educational warriors (teachers, researchers, writers, and so forth) who have always been oppositional to European colonization.

How have these individuals inspired you to move forward in your decolonization work? Briefly explain.

G. Toward Traditional Models of Curriculum and Teaching

Indigenous Peoples' culture anchors them to reality and it must be the starting point for all learning. Therefore, beginning with a tribal-specific, tribal-centered education within the context of familiar cultural and social references, from their own historical settings, is key to fostering educational excellence.

The effects of colonization did not only occur to the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, but to other Indigenous Peoples throughout the world. Transformational researchers and educators have united and are working together to find solutions for improving the condition of Indigenous education. From this collaboration, many Indigenous populations are provided with strength and hope because of their shared history of survival.

Transformational researchers reject the "colonizing mission" of schools. Some of the most interesting recent research has explored the roles of teachers and culture. For example, Jeanette Haynes Writer focuses on teacher success and instruction delivery. The corpus of her work has broad curriculum implications, casting the teacher as central to the processes of learning. It explores the effects of cultural background and belief systems of teaching. Culturally responsive teachers are effective teachers who embrace Indigenous cultural norms; establish close personal ties with students, parents, and elders; are socially and politically conscious; and attempt to arm students for an alienating world, among other things. Culturally responsive appears more important and transcendent over partisan models (for example, direct instruction, experientialism, and so forth). Most effective teachers of Indigenous children utilize cultural referents to impact knowledge.

Other Indigenous researchers have been active in the prescriptive holistic curriculum discourse over the past three decades. Devon Mihesuah has taken up such

topics as suggesting research guidelines in higher education as well as indigenizing the academy, while Linda Tuhiwai Smith issues a clarion call for decolonization of research methods. Karen Swisher and Michael Pavel provide a literature review of learning styles, Karen Cornelius introduces culture-based curriculum, and Gregory Cajete introduces an Indigenous perspective to science teaching and learning. Duane Champagne and Jay Stauss examine the collaboration between universities and Indigenous nations. Finally, Eduardo and Bonnie Duran analyze intergenerational grief and suggest tribal psychological interventions.

These scholars (some in cross-cultural collaborations) are providing the next transformational steps for continuing pedagogical traditions and empowering communities. The remnants of this tradition remain to be seen in the form of culturally responsive teaching practices for Indigenous students. However, during the past five hundred years, white policy makers of Indian education have attempted to dismember many revolutionary Indigenous educational attempts and to defame and stigmatize anything that survives in order to disconnect Indigenous Peoples from the traditional teachings of their ancestors.

This chapter is intended to bring together the critical thinking of many Indigenous scholars in the educational field. These scholars believe that the educational achievement of Indigenous children will not be improved by narrowing the curriculum or achieving desegregation of schools, or through better funding alone. Rather, the best chance for significant improvement in the performance of low-achieving Indigenous students lies in innovations based on replacing constructs rooted in past white hegemony and its current vestiges, and building educational programs and communities consistent with children's ethnic, cultural, social, and developmental needs.

H. Additional Activities

ACTIVITY:

How can you begin to decolonize Indigenous education?

What do you bring to the work of decolonizing Indigenous education?

What do you hope to gain in the work of decolonizing Indigenous education?

ACTIVITY:

Individuals can be held back from transformational action in many ways as they begin the decolonization process. Now take some time to try to list all the barriers—external and internal—that can get in the way of decolonization struggle in your life. For example, “I’m overcome by all the things going on in my life right now,” “I don’t know what to do or where to start,” or “I’m afraid I’ll lose my job or lose respect from my family and friends.” Then strategize ways to move through them. For every barrier listed, identify at least one strategy for taking action. (An example is provided.)

Barriers to Action

I don’t know what to do.

Strategy for Taking Action

I will be willing to make mistakes.

ACTIVITY:

Thinking back to the readings, discuss with a partner the questions below.

Do you feel capable of the commitment to honesty that several educators believe decolonization struggle requires? What are some examples of honesty? (Remember, verbal honesty may not be the only kind of honesty.)

What is your reaction to being urged to celebrate and welcome tribal difference instead of looking for tribal commonalities?

Do you see a difference between personal and political action? Describe both political and personal action.

Do Indigenous Peoples have to come into conflict with other Indigenous Peoples in order to deconstruct colonization?

ACTIVITY:

What is your commitment to action? What changes could you make in your life over the next few months to continue the journey into understanding colonization and decolonization? For example, you could learn to read critically, noticing how non-Indigenous people are characterized in comparison to Indigenous Peoples. What are some larger actions you could take? For example, if you are Indigenous, hold a series of study groups with some non-Indigenous friends to discuss how to use decolonization to be better allies to Indigenous Peoples in your community. Make a list of the next possible steps in your journey.

Steps I Can Take

After completing your list, choose two actions—one small daily action and one larger action—to commit to.

Small Daily Action: _____

Larger Action: _____

State your commitments aloud to a friend to affirm your intention. Write the two actions down on a separate piece of paper and post them where they are visible to you every day. Revisit your list regularly and continue to incorporate other actions into your daily life.

FINAL ACTIVITY:

Having nearly completed the questions in this chapter, think about the following questions and make some notes. What did this journey stir up in you?

Which of the issues that you read about and reflected on do you need to explore more deeply?

What are some ways you can work to deconstruct colonization in your personal relationships as a social activist?

I. Conclusion

White policy makers of Indian education created educational programs to miseducate as well as implement white-supremacy structures of domination. Indigenous Peoples and their independent systems were and are part of a genocidal process—the American holocaust. Colonial and slave structures as well as apartheid and general white-supremacy structures were created, including BIA boarding schools to separate Indigenous children from their parents and tribal communities and cultures, especially mission schools that sought to destroy tribal worldviews. This provided the theological base for the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and served to stigmatize Indigenous Peoples as savages, primitives, and pagans. As a law school dean, Rennard Strickland regrets that this holocaust was, too often, a “genocide-at-law.”

In this chapter I wanted to demonstrate how powerful forces influenced education of Indigenous Peoples. The selected policy makers indeed possessed the colonial mentality, and their ideological stance can be attributed to the sociopolitical history of this country.

White policy makers of Indian education have been training primarily to reinforce the deculturalization of Indigenous Peoples and ultimately to disconnect us from the power of the holistic mind. Moreover, it is important to understand the systemic miseducation of a tribal-centered philosophy and thought—an externally imposed European education based in pedagogical fear tactics. The overall schooling production becomes a manufactured monocultural reality. The failure to acknowledge and to respect the multiple cultures of others, as well as the multitribal realities, is at the base of the newest forms of inequality.

Ultimately, the strategy of Indigenous Peoples against colonization should be to deconstruct it (through the decolonization process) and replace it with the struggle for tribal community. Many Eurocentric educational systems are set up to detach us from our tribal communities. Exerting self-determination today is building nationhood. Building tribal nations opposes European domination and injustice. In this effort, we can also find allies and build cross-cultural coalitions of

friends and colleagues who will join us in the struggle for self-determination. In essence, coalitions become critical for cultural survival as Indigenous Peoples. Countering white policy makers and their ideology about how to educate Indigenous Peoples today makes this chapter very dynamic as well as politically charged, because it deconstructs an externally imposed educational system that caused a five-hundred-year-long miseducation of authentic Indigenous Peoples’ teaching and learning practices.

J. Glossary

deculturalize: To destroy a people’s culture while replacing it with a new culture.

deficit theory model: This model shaped the theoretical rationale for educational and curriculum policymaking and was the dominant position of Western research on minorities through the 1960s. It is based on the notion that Indigenous Peoples may be characterized as having “problems,” “cultural deficits,” or something wrong with them.

Indian education: It is important to understand that the term “Indian education” is an externally imposed concept that was created and sustained by white architects of Indigenous education. This refers to the dominant society’s educational system as applied to Indigenous Peoples rather than the Indigenous forms of education existent in Indigenous societies prior to colonization.

Indigenous Peoples: This is my preferred term for describing ourselves and our nations. Previous research focusing on aboriginal peoples in the United States has used the terms *American Indian*, *Indian*, and *Native American* as the primary nomenclature for this population. This chapter subverts this tradition by instead using the terms “Indigenous Peoples” or “Indigenous.” These terms are capitalized to signify and recognize the cultural heterogeneity and political sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples in the Western hemisphere.

Machiavellian model: This is used here to refer to the idea that people feel good about doing well at whatever position or employment they occupy without asking why and what—not asking critical questions and challenging authority.

white architects of Indian education: These are the white policy makers who funded, created, justified, and refined colonial educational policies.