

RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: PERSONAL ~ PASSIONATE ~ PARTICIPATORY INQUIRY

Indigenizing Education

Transformative Research, Theories, and Praxis



Jeremy Garcia | Valerie Shirley
Hollie Anderson Kulago editors

CONCLUSION

A Call to Action: Indigenous Teaching and Teacher Education

Keiki Kawai'ae'a
Jeremy Garcia
renée holt
Ac'aralek Lolly Carpluk
Valerie Shirley

The vitality in sustaining Indigenous youth, families, communities, and Native nations is reflected across the respective educators, families, and tribal communities who have contributed to this book. The collaborative projects are grounded in decolonization, critical Indigenous pedagogies, language revitalization, and critical engagement with families and communities; and have revealed the strength in braiding research, theory, and praxis to guide Indigenous education efforts. Vital to this process is recognizing rich cultural and linguistic knowledge systems that historically serve as foundational ideals of learning and teaching across Indigenous communities. Further, the collaborative projects lead us to an energetic call to action for Native and non-Native educators and communities to implement a transformative approach that is justice-centered and contributes to Native nation-building. Our colleagues—those who have come before—have walked and cleared the pathway for what is possible and what is yet to come. This notion of what

Indigenizing Education, pages 287–299
Copyright © 2022 by Information Age Publishing
www.infoagepub.com
All rights of reproduction in any form reserved.

is yet to come is powerfully contextualized in Anpao Duta Flying Earth's chapter, "Wólak'hota: Reclaiming Language and Unlocking Identity" (see Chapter 7), by centering Indigenous youth:

NACA [Native American Community Academy] alumni captured this commitment to identity, language, and our people embodied by our students during a graduation address when she said, "We are the dreams of ancestors and the nightmare of colonialism." The next iteration of Indigenous education, I believe, must hold youth at the center of this concept of *Wólak'hota* [peace] and challenge the things that are not in alignment with who we believe that we should be. I believe that this is our responsibility to continue the evolution of education for our people by picking up the work of our ancestors and past relatives. (this volume, p. 104)

We, too, believe the answers are inclusive of Indigenous youth who continue to remind us of their resiliency, commitment, and agency to sustain our Indigenous lifeways and peoples. We also echo Anpao Duta Flying Earth's point that we must "continue the evolution of education for our people by picking up the work of our ancestors and past relatives."

In this final chapter, we invite Indigenous scholar-educators and allies to join our collective call to action—a call that seeks to develop, innovate, and build stronger pathways for Indigenous educators and teacher education programs. Through the Native Professional Educators' Network (NPEN), the goal is to root teaching and teacher education efforts within Indigenous epistemologies and languages—restorative acts that hold Indigenous well-being and vibrancy at the center of educational endeavors. This chapter introduces the vision of NPEN, linking its purpose with historical movements that will inform the next 50 to 100 years of educational transformation for Indigenous communities, families, and children.

FROM THE NATIVE VOICES WITHIN US

Native communities across the 50 states in the United States continue to reach deep within themselves for the answers to counteract the negative impact of Western acculturation and assimilation through a growing surge of hope across the land and waters of Native communities. It is understood that Indigenous knowledge, language, worldview, and ways of being are critical to Native people and can be easily lost if not passed across and through the generations. What we have painfully learned is how critically important Native languages, epistemologies, practices, and values are to the well-being of Native peoples and that fostering strong cultural roots in the transmission of understanding who we are and where we come from equip us with a greater sense of pride and confidence to face the future. It is important to

remember that Native elders, families, and communities have provided the best of their insights and intentions leaving behind the stones from which strong Native educational foundations can be rebuilt. In this regard, William Demmert Jr. and John Towner (2002) explain:

Traditional systems of Native American education used to transfer skills and knowledge from one generation to the next developed over thousands of years. In these systems, students were not allowed to fail. The family, clan, tribe, and responsible mentors worked with the youth until the information or task was clearly learned. The lessons were an integrated part of daily life and ceremonies, not a separate or isolated activity. (p. 1)

Over the last 20 years, and as made evident across the chapters in this book, there has been a growing surge of discussion around how to sustain and address the transfer of knowledge, values, and languages. For instance, as referenced by contributing author, Walter Kahumoku III (see Chapter 4), *culture-based education* (CBE), a term coined to express a culturally responsive model for addressing the education of Native peoples is one model that has gained attention. Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni and Keiki Kawai'ae'a (2008), expand this work by defining CBE as:

The grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places, and language that are the foundation of a culture . . . Culture-based education may include teaching the traditions and practices of a particular culture, but it is not restricted to these skills and knowledge. More importantly, culture-based education refers to teaching and learning that are grounded in a cultural worldview, from whose lens are taught the skills, knowledge, content, and values that students need in our modern, global society. (p. 71)

There are a number of reasons for encouraging instruction in Native languages and cultures that include the survival and transmission of Native languages, identity, cultural knowledge, mores, and practices that lead to improved educational opportunity and increased student achievement (Kawai'ae'a, 2008; Kimura, 2010; Little & McCarty, 2006; McCarty & Snell, 2011).

Recent movements in Indigenous education also include the call for *critical Indigenous teachers* (Garcia, 2020) whose curriculum and pedagogy are driven by a decolonial praxis and infuses Indigenous social justice pedagogies (Shirley, 2017) to generate a critical consciousness in youth who then become protectors and advocates for their Native nations. These unique educational models that address academic, cultural, and political goals reflect and respond to community aspirations that are vital in elevating the vibrancy of Native peoples. In order to accomplish these goals, Mary Hermes and Keiki Kawai'ae'a (2014) add that education "programs [must strive to]

seek an indigenization of the education system as a strength-based place from which dynamic Indigenous language and culture rich environments can further foster the cultural identity and positive sense of well-being, self-image, and homeland connection" (p. 308). Therefore, theoretical and educational models such as CBE, critical Indigenous pedagogy, and Indigenous social justice pedagogy are essential for Native schools, educators, families, and tribal nations to draw upon as they thrive toward indigenizing their education systems.

Given the growing relationships between research, theory, and praxis that continues to inform Indigenous education, we recognize the necessity to engage in ongoing dialogues that bring Indigenous theories and praxis to life. Essential to this process is acknowledging the power Indigenous teachers have in enacting, sustaining, and informing critical and culturally based Indigenous pedagogies. Thus, the call to action includes the questions of: How are we preparing Indigenous teachers to be change agents who enact critical and culturally based Indigenous pedagogies? How are they being prepared to be Indigenous teachers as Native nation builders whose curriculum and pedagogy are driven by revitalizing language, sustaining relations with families and communities, advocating for the protection of land and people, and upholding notions of self-determination and sovereignty? Finally, how are we sustaining critical and culturally based Indigenous pedagogies within current educators and educational leaders in schools, communities, and diverse learning contexts?

INDIGENOUS TEACHER EDUCATION

There are multiple types of school models and philosophies of education and indeed, no "one size fits all" approach would be appropriate in the preparation of teachers. When reflecting on the purpose, function, and role of education, there are many viewpoints and responses to the questions posed above. One might also argue that education should be responsive to family, community, and individual aspirations and that education must serve the "we," not just the "me." Native education, however, must position itself in the "we" and the need for holistic learning that attends to the development of the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. Therein lies the problem which must be addressed in the preparation and development of an educator workforce for classroom teachers, administrators, and educational support/specialist staff. What kind of preparation, development, and skill set would teachers in these kinds of schools need?

As a consortium of Indigenous educators, we believe that in order to teach in schools serving a high concentration of American Indian, Alaska

Native, and Native Hawaiian learners, teacher preparation programs must be (RE)envisioned to reflect the unique demands of Indigenous communities. This calls for teacher education programs to engage a mindshift change and think of new pathways that utilizes course instruction, observation, and practicum opportunities for modeling effective teaching strategies and providing extensive experiences in generating curriculum tailored to Indigenous contexts—where the Native language, culture, values, and goals of the Native nations are embedded throughout the learning experience.

A National Initiative: Native Teacher Education Pathways

Early initiatives across various platforms like the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force of 1991, and the White House Conference on Indian Education in 1992 led to actions to address the cultural and educational needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives. In 1998, President Clinton signed an executive order (13096) that created funding opportunities to support this need. Critical to this moment was the establishment of the Indian Professional Development Program that provided funding to increase the number of Native teachers serving Native students (Archibald & Garcia, in press; Beaulieu et al., 2005). Since the inception of this federal program, many Indigenous teachers have earned their degrees to become teachers.

Few studies have been conducted to examine Indigenous teacher education. In 2001, a 3-year national research study, the Native Educators Research Project, examined 28 teacher education programs across the United States and conducted case studies in the induction year on issues of language, culture, and student achievement in their classrooms and school sites. Among the many findings, the research project revealed two critical goals for re-envisioning Native teacher education programs: (a) a focus on building resilience and relationships and (b) enriching content, pedagogy, and practice. David Beaulieu and Anna Figueira (2006) explain the importance of building resilience and relationships between Native teachers of Native students by suggesting

they must be resilient—strong in their sense of self and steadfast in their sense of mission . . . It is in the development of resilience and building relationships in a community of practice that Native teacher training efforts have sought to re-envision teacher training that shows great promise. (p. 119)

The urgency to continue developing a strong sense of self and mission is essential in re-envisioning Indigenous teacher education. There is much

work yet to be done to (RE)shift the focus from Western systems to Indigenous systems of teacher preparation and development. With the growth in Indigenous theories and practices in education (as evident in the chapters in this book), it is essential to engage new research that will inform the process of Indigenous teacher education.

Over the last 3 years, the Grow Your Own (GYO) teacher education initiative has accelerated a national momentum towards addressing critical teacher shortages and the wide racial, ethnic, and linguistic disparities found in the teacher workforce (Valenzuela, 2017). These programs focus on recruiting and preparing local community members through teacher education pathways and partnerships to enter the teaching profession and teach in their communities. The underlying principles of GYO align with the creation of a national Native Teacher Education Pathway for local programs that prepare Native teachers and others to work in Native communities as well as language and cultural educational settings such as Native language immersion and schools with predominantly Native student enrollment. The creation of a Native Teacher Education Pathway as a national initiative will greatly support local programs to prepare and further advance teacher know-how through programs that tightly integrate and build upon Native philosophies of education, infuse approaches to language revitalization, and engage in critical Indigenous theories across foundations and methods courses and seminars. It is critical that these kinds of distinct teacher preparation programs are available, accessible, and supported. These unique programs would amplify those best practices that honor Native ways of learning and teaching as a strengths-based strategy designed to meet and advance rigorous academic standards and the unique cultural, linguistic, and social-emotional goals for Native education that nurtures positive cultural well-being and leads to Native nation-building. A Native Teacher Education Pathway would significantly reduce the teacher shortages and retention rates that have thwarted the ability of schools from meeting the unique needs of Native American, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian students for decades. The increase of Indigenous teachers who are capable of meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of Indigenous students would assist greatly in addressing a longstanding educational inequity our children, families, and communities have endured. While Native nations are diverse and unique, there are essential programmatic elements that guide a common and distinctive Native American Teacher Education Pathway. These elements include:

1. Native Languages—to teach about and through a Native language and its cultural lens.

2. **Native Understandings of Place**—to understand and value place as a context for learning and to build connection to and with the place, people, language, and culture.
3. **Native Culture and Knowledge**—to develop a cultural mindset that transmits the knowledge, practices, mores, spiritual, and leadership understandings of the culture.
4. **Native Worldview and Values**—to maintain and transmit an Indigenous perspective and the worldview reflective of the Indigenous language, culture, and history.
5. **Relationship with Native Families and Communities**—to value and understand the family and community and to connect, collaborate, and advocate for its students.

While these essential elements offer a unique approach to developing a common Native Teacher Education Pathway, we underscore the need to continue building relations across Native educators, schools, and communities to assist in co-constructing these proposed elements. We have seen an influx of great work emerging across universities and tribal colleges and universities (TCU) as they strive to institutionalize Indigenous teacher education programs; and the momentum extends to new opportunities toward building solidarity and collective efforts among Native professionals and educators at a national and global level. The efforts to establish a national initiative across universities and TCUs would strengthen Indigenous communities and increase the well-being of Native children and their families through the process. Building a national coalition to engage Native Teacher Education Pathways is being contextualized through a recent initiative entitled, Native Professional Educators' Network which centers Indigenous teaching and teacher education.

NATIVE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS' NETWORK: A CALL TO ACTION

In 2015, Indigenous educators convened at the National Indian Education Association annual convention with the intent to develop a Native Professional Educators' Network (NPEN). Approximately, 50 educators across diverse educational contexts and communities engaged in a generative dialogue, seeking to describe concretely the strengths of a Native teacher. This first gathering confirmed the need for a national and strategic effort to envision, innovate, and design increased opportunities to strengthen Native education for and by Native communities. A series of discussions and collaborative visioning led to the official inaugural gathering of Indigenous educators at

the 2018 NIEA annual convention held in Hartford, Connecticut. In 2018, a subcommittee was officially appointed and included the inaugural NPEN members: Keiki Kawai'ae'a (University of Hawaii—Hilo), Jeremy Garcia (University of Arizona), Ac'aralek Lolly Carpluk (University of Alaska—Fairbanks), renée holt (Washington State University), Valerie Shirley (University of Arizona), and Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz (First Light Education Project). In 2019, Jason Dropik (Head of the Indian Community School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin) as a newly elected NIEA board member joined NPEN.

At the subsequent 2018 and 2019 preconvention workshop series, the NPEN committee planned and created space for educators to engage in critical dialogues regarding the state of Indigenous education across their respective contexts and to generate attention in reconceptualizing pathways for Indigenous teacher education programs. During the sessions, attendees continued to express the need for increased and targeted support specific to Indigenous teacher educators whose work is at the crux of integrating Indigenous language, culture, and education. Through these generative sessions, a vision, mission, and guiding principles were developed for NPEN.

The Native Professional Educators' Network seeks to bring educators and community members together to generate a national voice for strengthening Native place-based, culture-based, and language-based teacher education programs (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2019). With Indigenous knowledge and values as a grounding framework, NPEN is a community of Native and non-Native educators who work to create changes in education systems. NPEN engages and rematriates Indigenous education through culturally based education and critical Indigenous pedagogical frameworks that calls for educators to include land-based, culture-based, and decolonization in their programs and schools. NPEN's goals are to: (a) create opportunities for educators to build networks specific to Indigenous teaching and learning principles and (b) to develop a national movement that supports the development of Indigenous teacher preparation programs. The following are NPEN strands that are guiding this effort.

Guiding Strands of Native Professional Educators' Network

In building a momentum for NPEN, four areas of focus create the spaces for continued critical conversations towards advancing Native teacher education and professional development through a national collective platform: Native community vibrancy through education; Indigenous knowledge, pedagogy, and praxis in education; Indigenous teacher education programs; and accreditation systems for Indigenous teacher education programs.

Native Community Vibrancy Through Education

Education rooted in Indigenous social and cultural systems lead toward transformative change in Indigenous communities. Indigenous and locally implemented educational efforts serve as places to enhance Native community vibrancy across the continuum of educational practices and systems (i.e., early childhood through postsecondary education and beyond—birth to elderhood—as well as family and community engagement initiatives). NPEN recognizes the possibilities of such efforts and facilitates dialogues around envisioning Native community vibrancy through education.

Indigenous Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Praxis in Education

An essential focus of NPEN is grounded in Indigenous knowledge, language, and values through curriculum, pedagogy, and praxis. Within this strand, notions of Native community vibrancy come to life as we sustain and revitalize our (re)connection to our epistemologies—our knowledge systems, kinship, ceremonies, and genealogy. This focus centers our relationships to place (i.e., land, waters), clan systems, and Indigenous philosophies. NPEN strives to engage in critical dialogues that capture the ways in which educators indigenize curriculum and pedagogy in education. With foundations of transformative education and decolonial praxis growing among Indigenous communities, the need for a national initiative that calls upon teaching and teacher education programs to shift significantly has become paramount. By drawing upon transformative models and theories such as culturally based education and critical Indigenous pedagogies, NPEN offers opportunities for collective solidarity in revitalizing and sustaining Indigenous worldviews and values that guides an educational pathway leading to Native nation-building.

Indigenous Teacher Education Programs

Indigenous teacher education programs prepare Native teacher candidates for teaching within the unique sociocultural and political contexts of Indigenous communities. NPEN seeks to create a broader space for ongoing discussions and strategic actions that actively support the preparation of holistic, critical, and culturally grounded educators. Through NPEN, Indigenous educators have an opportunity as a collective voice to (RE)envision, strengthen, and advocate for the kinds of Indigenous teacher education programs that honor and actualize our Indigenous voices, languages,

cultures, and ways of knowing while building solidarity across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Accreditation Systems for Indigenous Teacher Education Programs

The accreditation of teacher education programs is important for building capacity of Indigenous teachers. Across universities and TCUs, Indigenous teacher education programs are integrating Indigenous principles and practices to prepare teacher candidates; therefore, there is a growing need for accreditation options that acknowledge and affirm Indigenous philosophies, ways of knowing, language, culture, and place in Indigenous teacher education programs. NPEN supports accreditation systems that imbue Indigenous processes of accreditation and contribute to community vibrancy, well-being, language, and culture perpetuation, and self-determination.

NPEN's goals are intended to lead to transformative outcomes that are informed by Indigenous educators, leaders, youth, families, and communities. The members of NPEN strive to build upon the experiences, challenges, and successes of educational efforts to inform educational policies (within Native nations and at the state and national levels) and the landscape of teaching and teacher education programs across institutions and programs. We encourage all Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholar-educators and allies to join NPEN's call to action by engaging in dialogues and innovative approaches that mobilize a national movement to create a Native Teacher Education Pathway that informs the preparation of the next generation of Indigenous teachers.

We invite you to join us as we expand on this work during the annual convenings of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA). We are grateful to the NIEA as they have supported the inception of this effort. Through this coalition, we can generate new possibilities for research, theory, and praxis that informs Indigenous teaching and teacher education.

CONCLUSION

The scholarly contributions shared in this final chapter and across the chapters of this book reflect a deep level of love, care, and passion for all generations of Indigenous Peoples. Together, we are a collective whose values and commitments to sustaining Indigenous lifeways are guided by the principles of respect, responsibility, reverence, and reciprocity (Archibald, 2008). Evident across the chapters are models and collaborations that reflect the ways that indigenizing processes of research, theory, and praxis are in motion

across Indigenous communities. Importantly we value the transformative approaches in how Indigenous research, theory, and praxis converge to co-construct meaningful critical and culturally sustaining curriculum and pedagogy with families and communities. It is the work with teachers, youth, families, and community members that ensures our goals, knowledges, and values in sustaining pathways that honor Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and Native nation-building. For example, in *Indigenizing Education in Early Learning: Connecting Curriculum to Community* (see Chapter 16), Oomagelees (Cynthia Wilson) drew on her Lummi creation story to guide efforts in carrying on the lifeways of her people. She reflects:

The Lummi creation story talks about the survivors of the great flood. The elders put the children in the canoe and set them off to carry on the lifeways of our people. Today, we want to do the same thing with our children. As future leaders, the children can save our ways of life. (this volume, p. 262)

Through these exemplars, we document and analyze pathways for sustaining and revitalizing a distinct form of education that is decolonizing and grounded in transformative outcomes for Indigenous communities. The extraordinary outcomes of an education by Native and non-Native scholar-educators are manifested in the revitalization and use of Indigenous languages, using critical Indigenous theories to guide praxis, engaging in ceremonial practices to sustain communities, protecting what is sacred to us, and maintaining an educational pathway that contributes to Native nation-building for generations to come.

We also call attention to the importance of reconceptualizing Indigenous education that is inclusive of being in solidarity with diverse communities who have experienced and witnessed long-standing injustices. It is vital that scholar-educators join efforts in countering anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Immigration, and anti-LGBTQ challenges occurring across the United States and the world. We must remain diligent in creating opportunities for teaching and learning in relation to and with diverse communities who are also working to engage a decolonial education.

Finally, we close this book by offering our prayers for all who have been impacted by COVID-19. We find it critical that we continue to center love and care in a moment of increased concern for the well-being of communities as we respond to a global pandemic. We believe there is strength and answers in our Indigenous prayers, medicines, and prophecies—the legacies of our Indigenous knowledges.

REFERENCES

- Archibald, J. A. (2008). *Indigenous story work: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. University of British Columbia Press.
- Archibald, J. Q., & Garcia, J. T. (in press). The struggles and triumphs of Indigenous teacher education in Canada and the United States. In C. Gist & T. Bristol (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teachers of color and Indigenous teachers*. American Education Research Association.
- Beaulieu, D., & Figueira, A. (Eds.). (2006). *The power of native teachers: Language and culture in the classroom*. The Center for Indian Education, Arizona State University.
- Beaulieu, D., Figueira, A., & Viri, D. (2005). Indigenous teacher education: Research-based model. *Australian Association for Research in Education 2005 conference papers*. <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/abs05.htm>
- Demmert, W. G., Jr., & Towner, J. C. (2002). *Improving academic performance among Native American students: A review of research literature*. Western Washington University.
- Garcia, J. (2020). Critical Indigenous pedagogies of resistance: The call for critical Indigenous educators. In S. Steinberg & B. Down (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of critical pedagogies* (pp. 574–586). Routledge.
- Hermes, M., & Kawai'ae'a, K. (2014). Revitalizing indigenous languages through indigenous immersion education. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 2(2), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jicb.2.2.10her>
- Indian Nations at Risk Task Force. (1991). *Indian nations at risk: An educational strategy for action*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/oieresearch/research/natatrisk/report.pdf>
- Kana'iaupuni, S. M., & Kawai'ae'a, K. (2008). E Lauhoe mai nā wa'a: Toward a Hawaiian Indigenous Education Teaching Framework. *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being*, 5(1), 67–90. http://www.kamehamehapublishing.org/hulili_5/
- 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). Routledge.
- Kawai'ae'a, K., Holt, R., Yazzie-Mintz, T., Garcia, J., Shirley, V., & Carpluk, A. (2019, October 8–12). Lifting our voices for native teacher education: Creating a native professional educators network (NPEN) [Conference workshop]. National Indian Education Association 50th Convention, Minneapolis, MN, United States. <https://www.niea.org/>
- Kimura, L. (2010). Aia Iā Kākou Nā Hā'ina—The answers are within us: Language rights in tandem with language survival. In C. Galla, S. Oberly, G. Romero, M. Sam, & O. Zepeda (Eds.), *American Indian language development institute: Thirty year tradition of speaking from our heart* (pp. 41–51). <http://aildi.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/aildi-30-year-book-10-aia-ia-kakou-na-ha'ina-the-answers-are-within-us.pdf>
- Little, M. E., & McCarty, T. L. (2006). Language planning challenges and prospects in Native American communities and schools. *Education Policy Research Unit and Language Policy Research Unit*. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/>

language-planning-challenges-and-prospects-native-american-communities-and-schools

McCarty, T. L., & Snell, A. W. (2011). *The role of native languages and cultures in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian student achievement*. Arizona State University.

Shirley, V. (2017). Indigenous social justice pedagogy: Teaching into the risks and cultivating the heart. *Critical Questions in Education*, 8(2), 163–177.

Valenzuela, A. (2017). *Grow your own educator programs: A review of the literature with an emphasis on equity-based approaches*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED582731.pdf>