

Fusing First Nations knowledge into the Curriculum: A Model for Teacher Education

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Introduction

Native history and culture is a central to every citizen's knowledge base. All citizens need to know about the indigenous people that were here before Europeans, if for no other reason than to understand the rights and relationships that exist between tribal people and the U.S. government. Given the fact that tribal sovereignty and rights retained through treaty negotiations are incorporated into American case law and federal policies, it is imperative that citizens understand why First Nations have rights and a status that differs from that of other citizens. In Wisconsin a lack of knowledge regarding First Nations treaties and sovereignty has led to tremendous and sometimes violent controversy.

The 1970s and 1980s were particularly difficult times for Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people in the western Great Lakes region of the United States. In 1974 the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe Indians challenged the State of Wisconsin for violating the

reserved rights to hunt, fish and gather in areas ceded in the Treaties of 1837, 1842, and 1854. During the decade of federal court litigation that followed, protest organizations threatened and harassed the Anishinabeg people who exercised their court affirmed rights to spearfish. From this action the State of Wisconsin and the Anishinaabeg saw each other in court over a period of time. The mid to late 1980s brought confrontations at the spear fishing boat landings between non-Indian citizen organizations and Anishinaabeg people. During this time, Anishinaabeg were physically threatened and verbally harassed for practicing their federally court affirmed rights.

The Wisconsin legislature passed a law (s.11819(8) Wis Stats), commonly referred to as Act 31, to address the apparent racial conflict between its Native and non-Native citizens. Thus, The State of Wisconsin recognized that Native history, culture and philosophy are a necessary part of any citizen's learning base. All citizens need to know about the indigenous people that were here before Europeans, if for no other reason than to understand the rights and relationships that exist between tribal people and the U.S. government. Given the fact that tribal sovereignty and rights retained through treaty negotiations are incorporated into U.S. and Canadian case law

and federal policies, it is imperative that citizens understand why indigenous nations have rights and a status that differs from that of other citizens.

Wisconsin's Act 31 requires that elementary and secondary students learn about Wisconsin nations at least three times before they graduate from high school. This means, of course, that the teachers within Wisconsin schools impart this information. Thus, the law implies that teachers are informed and prepared to teach appropriately about First Nations, sovereignty, and the historical and legal basis for treaty rights in the state. Unfortunately, no consistent standards or real enforcement provisions or assessment measures were included in the Act 31 policy. Consequently, school districts and universities that graduate k-12 teachers have great discretion regarding how the Act 31 mandate is met. By and large, these decision-makers themselves are unfamiliar with even the most basic, common factual data about indigenous people and tribal history.

Since Act 31 was passed, educators and school districts throughout the state have tried a myriad of ways to implement Act 31. While the UW System continues to lack a formal response to implementing the law, the individual campus responses vary

greatly, with some not providing even the most basic instruction for students in their education departments. While some institutions offer excellent instruction in meeting the Act 31 mandate, they reach only minor numbers of people. As universities continue to graduate teachers, the numbers of practicing teachers that need Act 31 training continues to grow.

This chapter describes the Fusion Plan, a model created to address this gap in several important ways. It uses an integrative approach to incorporate information about First Nations into the curriculum in a way that reflects a holistic tribal world view. It addresses several sources of resistance because it uses a democratic process characterized both by collaborative effort and individual autonomy to help faculty members develop the necessary expertise. It establishes a flexible process of guided inquiry through which students can build their understanding of salient issues and incorporate these understandings into their lessons as required by Act 31 . Because it draws upon indigenous knowledge, it can facilitate the development of rich collaborative relationships with community members. Although it was developed from this specific context, it provides a systematic solution that may be replicated at any university around

any diversity issue.

The Fusion Plan is Created

In 2002 the University of Wisconsin System First Nations Consortium (UWAIC) decided to pursue a systemic plan to address Act 31. This followed its acceptance of a set of standards for teaching First Nations Studies in the UW system. Within this set of standards, the UWAIC requires that the implementation of Wisconsin Act 31 at all levels of public instruction. At the request of the UWAIC, First Nations Studies faculty at UW Green Bay created the Fusion model for implementing Act 31 within the UW system and presented the model to UWAIC in the fall of 2003.

The Fusion plan developed at UW Green Bay draws upon First Nations Studies core knowledge (content) and utilizes traditional tribal teaching and learning methods (context). There are five distinct implementation phases within the plan and 2 levels of student competency. The goal of the plan is to fuse First Nations Studies core knowledge, organized into Four Pillars of learning, into existing education department courses. The Four Pillars of learning reflect information necessary to meet Act 31 and, further, provides a foundation for incorporating First Nations Studies core knowledge

into other existing disciplines. It is possible to adjust or modify the Pillars to meet the specific individual needs of learners and teachers across regions. Each of the phases are discussed in the following sections:

Fusion Phase One:

In phase one, First Nations Studies (FNS) and Education (ED) faculty meet to discuss, engage in dialogue, and agree upon on the goals, activities and design of their plan for meeting Act 31. In this important activity time is a major consideration, in that, faculty must find time to prepare and read materials, and time to meet and discuss the information. Discussion is an important part of the process, in that it is a choice to teach this way, rather than requiring the FNS faculty to lecture to the ED faculty. Discussion allows for partnerships to build with each participant taking time to practice respect and reciprocity.

An important aspect of this phase is the emphasis on personal sovereignty -- a core value within the tribal world view, whereby, individual choice is practiced. Thus, it is critical that each institution implementing their own plan to fuse explore the individual ideas, needs, preferences, and choices of each of the participating faculty. In other

words, the exact nature of fusion will vary by campus and the UW Green Bay plan discussed here is intended to provide general guidelines and practical experience for others to consider.

What is the Fusion Plan?

The Fusion Plan features an efficient, effective and institutionalized way of imparting selected information through the strategy of incorporating of “fusing” First Nations Studies (FNS) core knowledge into existing undergraduate education courses. The FNS knowledge is organized into four pillars of learning which provides a base from which education faculty draw upon for inclusion into their curriculum. The education professors are instrumental to the process in that they first learn the information, fuse it into their curriculum, and teach it to their students. Thus, First Nations knowledge becomes part of the basic curriculum for all students in the education program.

The education faculty are crucial players in the Fusion plan in that they first learn First Nations Studies core knowledge and, then, fuse it into their existing curriculum. Students in the education department, in turn, learn from these faculty members the essential knowledge for teaching in the elementary and secondary

schools and First Nations Studies knowledge becomes part of that basic stream of information. It is then possible to incorporate this information into elementary and secondary students' normal educational environment in an efficient way.

The model features an effective and institutionalized way of imparting First Nations knowledge through the creation and use of Four Pillars of Learning which provide a core resource base from which education faculty self-select reading and learning materials for fusing into their classes. In this process the education department (ED) faculty extend their pedagogical knowledge through interactive discussion with FNS faculty, after which the two groups agree to how to fuse new knowledge into ED classes. These techniques allow relationships to develop and grow between FNS and ED faculty through a culturally based teaching method embedded within the Fusion process.

Design of the Fusion Plan:

Further, within phase one, it is imperative that the Fusion plan or process take place in enough ED courses in order to reach all (100%) of the ED students. Thus, it is necessary to include as many ED faculty members as possible. However, at UW Green

Bay we

met 100% of the students with a minimum of two faculty. In phase one, then, ED faculty participants are identified based reaching all ED students, FNS faculty provide general information to ED faculty, and both faculty agree to a general time line.

Many states, like the State of Wisconsin, have an First Nations Studies consultant in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The First Nations Studies Consultant at the Wisconsin DPI has state-wide Act 31 oversight responsibilities. Thus, in this Fusion model, efforts were made at every phase to include the DPI consultant in the project. The primary intent of including the DPI consultant is to ensure that Fusion practices meet Act 31 state certification for teachers. However, in our Fusion experience, the DPI consultant played an important role beyond certification by adding crucial materials and readings to the Four Pillars materials list, providing much needed funds to purchase books, and, by serving as an expert in FNS core knowledge during the group discussion between FNS and ED faculty.

Fusion Phase Two:

In Phase Two, FNS faculty members meet with one another to discuss a possible

course of study for training the ED faculty in First Nations Studies core knowledge. This course of study is founded upon the Four Pillars of learning (described in detail below), and contains both written and oral learning materials that are consistent with Tribal ways. Thus, the FNS faculty create a list of written materials from their discipline. This list will naturally reflect the experience, expertise, and biases of the FNS faculty that assemble it. And oral traditional knowledge gathered from oral traditional teachers reflects their own individual tribal traditional experiences, beliefs, and life ways. Thus, Tribal, regional, as well as, individual differences are noted and emphasized in the creation of a course of study and, moreover, in the replication of this model elsewhere.

At the end of this phase, the FNS faculty gather the books, articles, etc. on the Four Pillars reading list for the first meeting with ED faculty. The listing, both oral and written is discussed in the literature section. Modifications (additions and omissions) to the reading list are expected throughout the discussion phase and will reflect individual and group needs and interests. For example, it may be necessary to provide background information on the reality of the First Nations world and its relationship to the dominant culture. An adjustment to the reading list, therefore, might include adding

several texts that address issues related to transforming knowledge to reflect these realities.

Fusion Phase Three:

In Phase Three, FNS and ED faculty meet to interactively teach and learn the materials assembled, visit and learn from Elder teachers, and discuss curriculum appropriate for fusion into ED courses. The written and oral materials assembled by the FNS faculty provide the content for teaching the ED faculty. However, unique to this model is the cultural context in which the teaching and learning takes place. Through an interactive teaching and learning process, the faculty engage in *participation learning*, whereby, each participant learns from one another on a level playing field. The interactive participation learning process with its emphasis on Tribal Elder epistemology models the traditional Tribal values of respect, reciprocity, and relationship. Thus, as this teaching process is embedded within traditional First Nations pedagogy it provides a cultural context for learning.

In this phase, FNS faculty also research, design, and compile cultural competency units for use with ED students in the second level of this plan. These units

are shared with the ED faculty and, through discussion, changes are made to the units before they are finalized. There are six proposed competency units for use in instruction at the second level of the plan (described in depth below). The time involved in phase three is very important, in that, it contains the actual teaching of an First Nations Studies knowledge base embedded within a living cultural context or foundation. Faculty must devote two or three hours per month to this effort, which means that it may take as long as a year to work through phase three. The time spent in phase three will decrease if participating faculty receive release time from their teaching responsibilities.

Fusion Phase Four:

In Phase Four, FNS faculty, consults with the ED faculty, refine and implement their design into the ED curriculum by working with ED faculty, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and other appropriate partners including the states with similar policies to Wisconsin, for example, Montana, Maine, and others, that may have First Nations Studies requirements for k-12 schools.

This is a crucial phase, particularly because First Nations professionals in teaching colleges and universities throughout the nation are interested in any model that

educates incipient teachers successfully and with a real commitment from education faculty members. Further, during this phase First Nations tribal communities throughout the state and region can be approached for assistance, support and interest in the Fusion model.

Fusion Phase Five:

This phase is concerned with promoting large-scale systemic change. After completing a pilot Fusion model, like ours at UW Green Bay, efforts to replicate the model at other teaching institutions within the state occurs. In Wisconsin, it is possible to address Act 31 systemically throughout the University of Wisconsin System, with the help, assistance and consultation with other FNS and ED faculty perhaps. It makes sense to utilize any organized forces available. In order to create a national Fusion model, other states with similar policies and people of good will might form partnerships to change their teaching institutions.

Committed Faculty from other Disciplines

As the Fusion plan between FNS and ED progressed through each of the

phases, faculty from other disciplines in the university heard about our work together and indicated an interest in learning FNS core knowledge in an effort to fuse this information into their own classes. Over time, we created additional Fusion groups with faculty from history and social work. While there is no state mandate that requires First Nations Studies in these programs, the faculty from these disciplines involved in Fusion were committed to teaching their students First Nations history, culture, and world view. The historians that joined the Fusion plan both taught U.S. history and were dedicated to incorporating First Nations history into their curriculum. The social work faculty as a whole are committed to diversity and working with tribal students and communities. Thus, for these faculty members, Fusion was not compelled by a legal requirement, it was necessary to teach classes that included First Nations content and world view.

The Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning:

As described above in Phase Two of this five phase Fusion plan, it is necessary for First Nations Studies faculty to design a course of study for training faculty in FNS core knowledge. In this Fusion plan, the course of study is designed and organized into

four categories reflecting the First Nations communities in Wisconsin but shared by First Nations throughout the U.S. These four categories, named the “Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning are described here:

Pillar One. History: Indigenous traditional, contact and contemporary eras

This category or pillar offers historical information about First Nations in three distinct eras: the traditional (before contact) era, the era of changes experienced by tribal communities as a result of European and American contact and invasion, and the contemporary or present era of First Nations tribal communities. The purpose of this pillar is to provide learners with an understanding of traditional First Nations cultures and communities as they existed prior to mass Euro-American influence. Further, learners will understand the impact of contact upon those traditional communities, gaining an appreciation for the unique differences and identities maintained by First Nations today.

Pillar 2.Laws and Policies

This category or pillar provides learners with an understanding of the public policies and laws that apply to First Nations people, Tribal governments, and First Nations lands. Within this pillar, it is possible to emphasize state and Tribal laws and policies in order to provide a more tailored approach to teaching that takes into account the region that which students work, live, and interact within. For example, in the western Great Lakes, it is necessary to focus on the legal history of Anishinabeg hunting and fishing rights retained in the treaties of 1854 and 1857– rights affirmed by the federal courts in the past two decades. By contrast, in other regions this particular emphasis would have far less relevance and, therefore, other local laws or policies could be examined. For example, students residing in the west and southwest U.S. could focus on an examination of the riparian (water) rights of First Nations in those regions and federal court affirmation of those rights.

Pillar 3. First Nations Sovereignty

Pillar 3 is distinct from Pillar 2 in that its emphasis on understanding First Nations sovereignty and the authorities of self-government and self-regulation. Prior to

Euro-American contact, First Nations were sovereign bodies with unique and sometimes highly complex governing systems. It is central for learners to understand the basic authorities and structures of traditional tribal governance and the ways in which these systems were eroded by Euro-American incursion and the application of state and federal laws. Further, this pillar provides learners with an understanding of the struggles of First Nations in maintaining and restoring their sovereign status through the hard work of Tribal organizations in addition to case law.

Pillar 4. Indigenous Philosophy

Pillar four provides an understanding of First Nations world view and intellectual thought as it is rooted in the knowledge of Tribal Elders and reflects the thinking and thought processes of tribal ancestors (i.e., Elder epistemology). An examination of indigenous intellectual world view and tribal philosophy offers learners a comprehensive understanding of the values, behaviors, and formative ideas within that community. As Cajete explains, “In its guiding vision a culture isolates a set of ideas that guide and form the learning processes inherent in its educational systems. In turn, these ideas reflect what that culture values as the most important qualities, behaviors, and

value structures to instill in its members (25)".ⁱ Thus, an understanding of the formative structure of the Tribal world is absolutely necessary in the pedagogical base of one who strives to embed First Nations knowledge into Western knowledge.

Fusion: Educating Students (Level 1) and Teachers (Level 2)

Once the education faculty have fused FNS core knowledge into their existing classes we reach one, basic level of educational need, we'll call this Level One. Here, at Level One, every student in the education department takes courses with that are fused with FNS content, taught by the ED faculty that worked through the Fusion plan with the FNS faculty. One example of a FNS/ED Fusion might include students in an ED course on children's literature in the classroom will use the 4th grade text Indian Nations of Wisconsin by Patty Loew (2002).ⁱⁱ

Thus, when every graduating student from the education program leaves the academy, they enter the school districts prepared to meet the mandates of Act 31.

However, there is a second educational need and that is to reach all the teachers how have already graduated from the academy (prior to Fusion) and are already

teaching in k-12 classrooms. In the Fusion plan, we have designed a second level to reach those teachers already outside of the academy. We call this level of the plan Level Two. At Level Two, individual ED students can elect to concentrate their ED degree in First Nations Studies, in other words, they can earn a degree minor in First Nations Studies. When these students graduate with a major in education and a minor in First Nations Studies can become Act 31 Teacher Trainers. In other words, they are prepared to train those k-12 teachers who are already in the school districts. These Act 31 Teacher Trainers (who elected to move on to Level Two) will serve as Act 31 “experts” throughout the state. Thus, Level Two provides a way to educate teachers and administrators who were working in their classrooms without sufficient FNS knowledge and unable to meet the spirit and intent of Act 31.

Cultural Competencies for ED Students at Level Two

First Nations Elder epistemology with its emphasis on oral traditional teaching and learning skills is an important intellectual construct, yet, it is neither practiced or even deemed relevant in the academic community and institutions of higher learning. Instead, primary emphasis is placed on the written word and upon reading and writing

requirements. It is regrettable that the forms and structures of First Nations Tribal life and world view are overlooked, for when they are incorporated into existing structures, the academy is richer, more varied and distinct, as it reflects the contributions of the indigenous cultures of Turtle Island (North America). Elder epistemology provides a basis for First Nations cultural competencies because it reflects the holistic world view of traditional First Nations people. Elements of this world view are embedded in the values and practices of contemporary, 21st century First Nations people. Elder teachers customarily pass along oral traditional knowledge in a number of ways including using the indigenous Tribal language as a teaching/learning medium and, also, through other traditional ways that are customary to the community. Cultural competencies, as described elsewhere in this book, are provided through both written and non-written means by First Nations educators. The instructional techniques are based on the counsel, advice, and observation of teaching Elders through the process of participation learning. When possible, Elder teachers and their oral instruction are used in the teaching process.

An important part of the instruction is the specific nature of the cultural

competency. Christensen's seven competencies aid in understanding First Nations cultures. Frequently when cultural diversity is included in higher education, broad based information is used to teach about difference. However, the cultural competencies units developed in the Fusion plan go beyond broad based instruction and add specificity. For example, it is a broad stroke to speak of 'respect,' within First Nations communities, but it is specific to provide and demonstrate behaviors that show or mean respect in Native society. Participants observe, practice, and discuss a form of listening, learning, and remembering practiced in Tribal oral traditional communities. Dialogue and discussion throughout this process are not only encouraged but are, in fact, necessary.

The behaviors that accompany oral traditional routines, those of listening, remembering, dialogue, and discussion, are learned through and practiced in participation learning. This form of learning draws upon the tribal concepts and behaviors of respect, reciprocity, and relationship. Thus, participants engaging in the cultural competencies articulate oral forms and practice skills and behaviors that emanate from the teachings of traditional tribal Elders and reflect intellectual concepts that comprise the tribal canon. Materials, texts, and resources in the cultural

competencies include units that can be used in a group or in an individual process and, further, provide guidelines for group processes and skills needed for building consensus.

Fusion Plan Resources

The greatest resource needed by the Fusion participants is time. The faculty need time to meet as a group. Moreover, the faculty members need time to meet with tribal Elders, to read and reflect upon the materials on the Four Pillars reading list, keep written journals of their progress in the Fusion process, and develop fused curriculum in their existing classes. We found that it can take several years for faculty to gain the knowledge needed in order to fuse FNS into their classes. Some faculty were eager and dedicated and started fusing within the first year of working with the FNS faculty and meeting with Elders. For others, the process takes much longer and even after a number of years of working with FNS faculty some have not taken steps to fuse the learning into their classes.

The FNS faculty also need time to engage in the following: research, design, and write the cultural competencies, obtain oral resources, assist with the faculty with

Fusion details and disseminate information about the plan at the state and national levels.

The Fusion plan at UW Green Bay piloted without monetary funding or course release. The FNS faculty shared their personal copies of articles and books. Five years into the Fusion project, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction purchased 20 different book titles and video resources to support the Fusion efforts. Small grants were written to the University of Wisconsin System to fund the Elder teaching gatherings, these monies provided stipends to the Elder teachers and paid for lodging and meals for all faculty and the Elder teachers.

Finding Balance: Fusion Plan Successes and Struggles

Indigenous world views are premised upon notions of balance whereby we believe the positive aspects of the universe equal the negative aspects. Our Elders remind us to search for the balance in all things. Thus, an explanation of the Fusion project is not complete without a discussion of the successes and struggles encountered along the way. We interviewed university faculty involved in Fusion in Phase Three to hear testimony of their personal experiences and journeys.

Fusion is not a simple process for participants and we experienced a number of difficulties throughout our Fusion efforts. As mentioned previously, time is a significant factor in the success of this plan. It can take great deal of time for individual faculty to develop a solid knowledge base in First Nations Studies before Fusion into the curriculum. Over time, we lost faculty along the way as they left the Fusion group before their classes were fused. Thus, for some, the priority to fuse waned and time requirements became too great. A few other faculty members dropped out along the way when Fusion did not meet their individual teaching or research agenda. For example, one Euro-American faculty member joined the group and candidly stated that she wanted to write and do research *about* First Nations and was hoping to get insight from the FNS faculty. At our first Fusion meeting with her, we lent her a copy of *So You Want to Write About American Indians?* by Devon Abbott Mihesuah (2005)ⁱⁱⁱ, a book that explicitly discusses the exploitation and appropriation of indigenous culture by Euro-American scholars. Shortly after reading the book, the faculty member dropped out of the Fusion project but, to date, has not published any work *about* First Nations. We also lost a member of the Fusion project when she retired from teaching.

It is central to note that the faculty working to fuse their classes all undertake a personal journey in this process. At times, this process is emotionally painful as they reexamine their own white privilege and experience feelings of shame and guilt when learning the details of the history of genocide experienced by indigenous people. Often faculty were confronted with the ways in which they were unknowingly perpetuating racism in their classrooms, in their research, and in their personal lives. While some met this challenge and persisted, others dropped out. Some of our most difficult Fusion experiences occurred around the topic of U.S. and Canadian boarding school and residential school atrocities. These discussions were difficult for everyone as some of the Elder teachers to the Fusion group were boarding school survivors who sometimes spoke candidly about their own unimaginable traumas and lived experiences. Thus, the Fusion faculty undergo a process of grief and critical self-reflection and, for some, this process is too difficult. Faculty left the Fusion group because it was easier to walk away than to continue to address these forces internally. One faculty member described the Fusion experience in this way:

...to deal with these issues is such a journey. Sometimes I think that we find people that aren't in a place on that journey where they can listen and if you invite them to join, they

will not be there. It asks for a lot and it took a lot of responsibility from me. I could see where someone might not be that position... There is a level of soul searching that is required if you are going to deal with these issues in more than a superficial way. It asks someone to take on a really personal journey and some people haven't come to the realization that this is required of them.

While there is struggle in the Fusion process, for those faculty members who persevere through the difficulties and internal challenges, the rewards are many as there is balance in all things. We interviewed faculty to find out why they initially joined the Fusion project and, moreover, why they stayed committed over time as there are no institutional incentives for taking on this additional work. All faculty who joined Fusion and continued to work with the project did so because, as educators, they felt it was a imperative to include First Nations in their curriculum. One faculty member saw it as the right thing to do as an educator.

I see Fusion as such a huge resource that it would be irresponsible and unethical of me not to...when I think about how it has enriched my teaching and knowledge base and ability to make better connections with students and create better lives for their clients. In such a profession that puts forth this message of social justice and cultural competence... the more I learn, the more I can share with my students the more they can help improve the lives of clients, the more just our society will be. So it would seem wrong not to do Fusion.

Similarly, another faculty member saw Fusion as a way to address a lack of knowledge

about First Nations, “I grew up here and did not even know where the Oneida reservation was... even before Fusion, I was thinking I needed to confront my own ignorance and begin to learn. I find I learn best from other people rather than going off into a corner and reading. So my tendency would be to find some opportunities to learn from other people.” Another faculty member committed to Fusion because of dissatisfaction with the limited inclusion of First Nations in the teaching of U.S. history as a discipline, “I realized that Indians were there but only in a limited fashion, as ineffectual defenders of their land... they were fighting and they were losing and that was it. I didn’t have a sense in those courses of how Indians were actually shaping the history that was unfolding on the North American continent. My graduate training didn’t really prepare me to do that... I knew enough to know that what I was doing was inadequate. I knew I needed to learn more.”

Faculty involved in the Fusion project were asked how they actually fused First Nations core knowledge from the Four Pillars into their existing classes. Each provided excellent examples. One of the Fusion faculty teaching provided an example of how the tribal value or world view of personal sovereignty is fused into his U.S. History courses:

I probably heard one of our Elder teachers in Fusion say “It’s important to give students choice.” That is a paraphrase but I heard it a million times and that started to sink and it was being practiced right in our Fusion work. Now I try to give choices more often when it comes to assignments that my students are doing. I am convinced that it is important and that it is effective pedagogically because it means students can pursue something that interests them... It is not a revolutionary principle...I will give students options on the midterm essay and they can pick from a few things. For example, paragraph one, option A, there are different dates and topics they can write about. The heart of this idea came out of Fusion.

Another example of curriculum comes from this fused U.S. History course:

This example is small but it has substance. I just put together a revised course packet for my Intro to U.S. History course up to 1865. It is supposed to start in 1607 but I start way before then. I just added a primary document and it is not an Indian source but it is a U.S. Supreme Court opinion. I made an edited version of Chief Justice John Marshall’s opinion in *Johnson V. McIntosh*. My students will read it when we are talking about Indian removal to get back to how the powers at be in the United States are justifying Indian policy. This fall I will have 130 students reading this document.

Almost all faculty members started fusing their courses in some way, shortly after they started the Fusion project. One faculty member described how she started fusing her social work classes:

I started using First Nations material in my classes right from the get go. I would say that the year after I started with the Fusion group I chose pieces from Rupert Ross’ *Dancing with a Ghost* immediately as soon as I could fit it into the syllabus... I would never have picked Ross on my own because it was out of my field. Now I use a couple of different sources of information on First Nations written by social work practitioners,

tribal members and Rupert Ross. I started to be able to talk with students about what I was learning in Fusion and how I was interpreting issues and how some of it was difficult.

Faculty who committed themselves to Fusion reflected back on how their efforts to learn First Nations core knowledge and fuse it into their existing classes impacted them personally as teachers and as individuals.

Fusion has been an extraordinary and invaluable experience. Today in the humanities we have so many academics driven to publish, attend conferences, build their careers. As a result, this impacts how we educate students. Liberal education does not prepare students to live in the world. It does not prepare students for community engagement and service to community. We are not preparing students to be humanists. But Fusion impacts the whole person because learning is not compartmentalized and isolated. Learning is not separate from socializing and social values. Learning in Fusion is normal and natural and reflects the tribal world. Fusion taught me social values. It provided me more support for a liberal education than the entire rest of the university.

Another faculty member shared this about how Fusion impacted their learning:

I believe that learning more about groups that I am not a member of helps me better interact and be with people and understand social issues with different perspectives. So the more I learn about First Nations groups and other racial and ethnic groups, the more I connect and become a better teacher and citizen.

All of our colleagues in the Fusion project felt the experience impacted them positively in a very personal way. One colleague summed up his experience, "Fusion has been a

profound experience for me. Intellectually I experienced tribal culture in a radically different way. As a person, it offered me interpersonal support.”

ⁱ Cajete, Gregory. 1994. *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*. Skyland, N.C.: Skyland Press.

ⁱⁱ Loew, Patty. 2003. *Native People of Wisconsin*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Historical Society.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mihesuah, Devon Abbott. 2005. *So You Want to Write About American Indians? A Guide for Writers, Students, and Scholars*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press.