

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-Abstract	1
2-Author's Note	2
3-Act 31 History and Statutes	4
4-Review of Literature	9
5-Oral Tradition/Classroom Synthesis.....	37
6-Teacher-Training Materials.....	49

Abstract

Wisconsin schools are required to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the culture, history and sovereignty of Wisconsin First Nations. This mandate is commonly referred to as Act 31. Traditional First Nations education systems are rooted in the oral tradition. Use of oral traditional teaching methods in the university gives students an example of the application of another cultural perspective in education. Implementing elements of the oral tradition in the classroom creates a culturally appropriate vehicle for students and teachers to gain an understanding, appreciation and application for the content concerning Wisconsin First Nations. While learning about the Nations in the area, all students are engaged during practice of this method, which instills communication and critical thinking skills in its practitioners. In order for teachers to use these techniques, experience and understanding of the method is needed. This project creates the teacher-training course that equips teachers with the ability to provide the content of Act 31 in an appropriate cultural context.

Author's Note

I grew up in De Pere, Wisconsin, and graduated from high school in 2001, knowing little of the First Nations in the state. My knowledge base was limited to stereotypes, racist jokes and warnings of the danger in the nearby Oneida Nation Reservation. I also was interested in history, so I had an inkling of treaties and questionable land deals between the United States and the First Nations.

Upon my transfer to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, I found the opportunity to learn about First Nations history through the First Nations Studies program. My first classes were real eye openers and I was shocked at how ignorant I was. I immersed myself in the program and as I learned more, I discovered that my middle and high school teachers should have been teaching about the First Nations in Wisconsin according to a series of state statutes known as Act 31. However, I did not learn this information, and that bothered me. I ended up double majoring in History and First Nation Studies, and ultimately became determined to get involved in the delivery of this important information in our schools.

One of the aspects of the First Nation Studies program I value highly is the way the holistic, oral tradition-based teaching method has been brought into the university classroom by elders, as professors. In a system that is linear, and contrasts greatly with a holistic approach to education, I identified this method as crucial to understanding the worldview and culture of the First Nations. Throughout my work in the master's program of Applied Leadership-Teaching and Learning, I am more involved and aware of the efforts to satisfy the Act 31 requirements. A major focus of this effort is to provide accurate and appropriate content. My focus has become the context, which I found so

fundamental in my learning process that creates an experience for understanding this cultural worldview. The traditional education system is rooted in the oral tradition, and through teaching this content in the context of the oral tradition; we create a holistic understanding, which reinforces the teachings. Therefore, this project explores:

- >The historical background and goals of Act 31, in order to understand how traditional teaching methods address this mandate.

- >An exploration of educational philosophy that forms the foundation of the approach to learning in this context.

- >My experience in the application of this approach, how it is used in the classroom, the effect and importance of method.

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate how oral traditional teaching methods fulfill Act 31 requirements. The culmination of this process is a teacher-training course that uses cultural context as well as content to educate.

Act 31: History and Statutes

What is known as Act 31 is a series of statutes included in the 1989-1991 biennial budget bill. This chapter will provide the statutes and provide a brief historical background and implications of Act 31. This information as well as a more complete history of Act 31 can be found at act31resources.com, and through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

HISTORY:

In Wisconsin, there are 11 federally recognized tribes, six of which are bands of the larger Chippewa Nation. Throughout the 1800's, several treaties were made between the United States and the Chippewa, ultimately resulting in land cession and the establishment of the reservations. However, in the language of these treaties, the members of the tribe protected the ability to hunt, fish and gather in the ceded territory. The ceded territory includes a large portion of northern Wisconsin.

As time went on, the rights of the Chippewa were not honored. In fact, those practicing these rights were prosecuted, arrests were made, and equipment confiscated. Fred and Mike Tribble were cited in this fashion, but decided to challenge the matter in the courts, claiming the treaty rights. In the end, the U.S. federal Court recognized off reservation treaty rights in 1983.

Off-reservation treaty rights began being exercised in northern Wisconsin. This was met with an intense anti-Indian backlash involving violent protests, riots and anti-Indian propaganda. The turmoil in the state gathered national media attention, highlighting a relationship plagued with misunderstanding between non-Native and Native communities. The violence and racism caused the state of Wisconsin to look for a

solution. In 1983, the Ad Hoc Commission on Racism in Northern Wisconsin came together, and by 1984, they issued a final report.

This report called for a partnership involving the American Indian Language and Culture Board to urge all schools in Wisconsin to develop courses to educate students on First Nations' history, culture, sovereignty and treaty rights. The also recommended that the Department of Public Instruction to put pressure on the districts to do the same. The commission advised any post secondary education institution in the state to assess teacher-training programs, considering how to best prepare the future teachers to address First Nations' history, culture, sovereignty, and treaty rights.

Tension in the state continued to increase, and a more concrete measure was ultimately developed. In 1987, the American Indian Language and Culture Board passed a resolution calling on the Department of Public Instruction; state legislature and the First Nations in Wisconsin to develop curriculum units to be taught in all schools in the state. The results of this effort are the statutes that are known as Act 31.

Therefore the intention of the passage of Act 31 is to combat racism in Wisconsin through education of the next generation. The apparent lack of information, or inaccurate information is at the core of the tension. Current efforts toward teacher training include the study of Wisconsin Indian history culture and tribal sovereignty during the teacher's college career, in order to earn teacher certification. Professional development has also been made available for current teachers, including workshops and conferences, and most notably the American Indian Studies Summer Institute. The major effort is to incorporate authentic, accurate information, which has historically been lacking from our public schools, and train teachers with the ability to identify quality resources. In addition to the

statutes, now commonly known as Act 31, the American Indian Studies program at the DPI was created, as well as the American Indian Studies Consultant position. The following statutes are the mandates commonly known as Act 31.

STATUTES:

s.115.28(17)(d) Wis. Stats.

Treaty Rights Curriculum

The State Superintendent shall:

In conjunction with the American Indian Language and Culture Board, develop a curriculum for grades 4 to 12 on the Chippewa Indian's treaty-based, off-reservation rights to hunt, fish and gather.

s.118.01(c)7-8 Wis. Stats.

Human Relations

Each school board shall provide an instructional program designed to give pupils:

7. An appreciation and understanding of different value systems and cultures.
8. At all grade levels, an understanding of human relations, particularly with regard to American Indians, Black Americans, and Hispanics.

s.118.19(8) Wis. Stats.

Teacher Certification

Beginning July 1, 1991, the state superintendent may not grant to any person a license to teach unless the person has received instruction in the study of minority group

relations, including the history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized tribes and bands located in the state.

s. 121.02(1)(h) Wis. Stats.

Instructional Materials

Each school board shall:

Provide instructional materials, texts, and library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

s.121.02(1)(L)4 Wis. Stats.

K-12 Social Studies Instruction

Each school board shall:

Beginning September 1, 1991, as part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in the state at least twice in the elementary grades and at least once in the high school grades.

In conclusion, these statutes call for Wisconsin schools to educate students about Wisconsin First Nations. The goal of these statutes is to replace cultural conflict and misunderstanding with appreciation and understanding through education. The State needs to train teachers and provide quality resources in order for the schools to meet this need. This project addresses that need by creating a course to train teachers using a culturally appropriate method.

Review of Literature

Act 31 sets the standards and expectations for Wisconsin educators. The approach to Act 31 has largely concerned the content delivered to the student body in the conventional methods of the public education system. This project concerns itself instead with the context with which this content is delivered. During my consideration of context, I realized philosophy is at the very core of any teaching method. In order to develop a culturally appropriate teaching method, I began with philosophy and ended with fully functional culturally appropriate context to deliver Act 31 content.

Educational philosophy creates and directs teaching method and practice. In this chapter, I examine the philosophical foundations for developing an approach to education in solidarity with oppressed and indigenous societies. This approach is referred to as radical education philosophy. This examination illustrates the value and impact of teaching methods other than dominant western society's model of education. Furthermore, the notion of integrating radical educational philosophy into the existing educational institutions is the transition from philosophy to practice, and highlights the future development of this method. The following review of literature provides the philosophical background that I used when developing my teaching method. In addition to the philosophical theory, the application of this method is also offered throughout this chapter.

This review of literature begins with Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a classical text in radical education philosophy. From there the focus narrows to more contemporary and increasingly relevant workings of traditional First Nations teaching methods. The last articles I focus on are the works of Dr. Rosemary Christensen, an elder

and former professor at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay; I worked with Dr. Christensen in her oral traditional method, in addition to reading her publications. The method described in the following articles is one of the methods that I have experienced as a student, which will be discussed in the following chapter. First, this chapter explores the foundation of radical educational philosophy.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Paulo Freire. Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York, NY. 2009

In 1970, Paulo Freire published *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As a Brazilian born educator, Freire found education as a path towards liberation of the oppressive societies he experienced in his youth. This classic text outlines his argument for rethinking the education system. The text is four chapters; the first chapter provides a detailed description of oppressive societies, as well as a justification for a pedagogical approach towards liberation. The second chapter criticizes the banking method of education and describes the problem posing method as a path towards liberation. In chapter three, the concept of dialogics is explored as part of education methodology, and chapter four is an exploration of the opposing characteristics of antialogics and dialogics. The following is a breakdown of the concepts in this classical text with the focus being on topics relevant to this project.

Freire states that the central concern of mankind is humanization, and always has been. The primary obstacle on the path to humanization, or becoming fully human is societal oppression. To reach humanization is to affirm ones meaning in the world, and can only happen free of oppression. To achieve this freedom in an oppressive society

then becomes a struggle. “In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both”(44). This really captures a major theme of the book, which is to destroy the paradigms that divide societies and individuals. He argues against “false generosity”, or token actions of kindness that result in a continuation of oppression. Freire also warns that often in the initial stages of the struggle for liberation, the oppressed make the error of becoming oppressors themselves, this is another warning of problems facing those struggling for liberation. This happens because of the internal division facing an oppressed individual. “The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility”(47). This fear is reflected on the side of the oppressor as well, and if the ultimate goal is humanization, to do away with the oppressive conditions, both the oppressed and the oppressor must struggle for humanization. This leads us back to the central theme that this is “a pedagogy which must be forged with, not for, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity”(48). People must be an active agent of their own liberation. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. While the struggle is different for the two, both can be painful experiences, and solidarity is not a given even as liberation is sought. A common mistake is a paternalistic approach imposed by would be revolutionaries. “No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models

from among the oppressors”(54). Liberation must be sought from within the oppressed in solidarity with revolutionaries, and seek to liberate the entire society.

There are then two distinct stages in the overall application of pedagogy of the oppressed. “In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of the oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation”(54). The first stage is a difficult one, and internalized oppression is a major obstacle. “Self depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which drives from their internalization of the opinion that the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything- that they are sick lazy and unproductive, - that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness”(63). This of course transfers over to education, where the oppressed “call themselves ignorant and say the professor is the one who has knowledge and to whom they should listen”(63). This leads us to the basic operative principle of this pedagogy. “The correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation is therefore, *not* ‘liberation propaganda.’ Nor can the leadership merely ‘implant’ in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The correct method lies in dialogue”(67). One of the key ideas is the permanence of dialogue to build trust, a foundation of dialogue, which builds the confidence essential to liberation and humanization.

The second chapter further examines the two opposing styles of education, the banking method and the problem posing, the latter being based in dialogue. First, he

examines the relationship between the student and teacher. The knowledge banking system turns students into receptacles to be filled by the narrator, which is the teacher. “Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor”(72). This situation requires not thinking but doing, mindless reception of seemingly dead information, and alienates the student from not only the teacher, but the information as well. “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students”(72). There is no room for half measures, according to Freire, from the outset, a revolutionary educator’s priorities “must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization”(75). To become a student among students and engage learning in this way destroys the oppressive teacher-student paradigm. At this point, Freire introduces problem-posing education based in dialogue, insisting, “the practice of problem posing education entails at the outset that the teacher-student contradiction be resolved”(79). This contradiction is resolved because authentic dialogue requires mutual teaching and learning. “Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the- students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers”(80). These new terms remind us that learning is a process.

One of the qualities of problem posing education is the understanding of learning as a process, viewing individuals as in the process of completion. In this method of education, people develop the ability to “perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves”(83), which leads to an understanding of the world as being in constant transformation, rather than static. While

the goal of banking education is to instill a certain perceived reality, problem posing sets out to breakdown that reality and understand its development and application, which is always in motion. Further more problem-posing education sees the individuals as also in this state of becoming, like reality, unfinished. “Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be it must *become*”(84). Problem-posing education “enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables them to overcome their false perception of reality”(86). One of the strongest qualities of this method towards the goal of liberation is that it is unable to serve the interests of the oppressor, due to its disposal of the teacher-student contradiction and emphasis on critical thinking. Of course, for this to work the method must be applied in full measure, there is no room for a halfhearted effort.

Chapter three explores further the concept of dialogics, starting first with the very basis of dialogue, *the word*. The use of words and naming of the world requires first reflection, then the action of naming, this is praxis. Praxis then is the combination of reflection and action. It is the ability to reflect, says Freire, which sets us apart from the animal world. Naming the world, of course also requires more than one person, a dialogue. He makes a point in distinguishing true dialogue with the depositing of ones ideas onto another. Dialogue requires, or is rather, an act of love, a love for the world. “On the other hand, dialogue cannot exist without humility”(90). To make his point he asks several questions including, “how can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto the and never perceive my own?”(90). Other founding elements of true dialogue include faith, hope, and finally critical thinking. Critical thinking is described as “thinking which

does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved”(92). Dialogue not only requires critical thinking, but also generates it. “Without dialogue, there is no communication, without communication, there can be no true education”(92-93). Again Freire warns of the dangers of revolutionary leaders not adhering to authentic communication, and make the mistake of bringing the people “message of ‘salvation’”(95). In order to avoid this misstep, a dialogue of investigation be used to understand each other’s worldview. “The methodology of that investigation must likewise be dialogical, affording the opportunity both to discover generative themes and to stimulate peoples awareness in regard to these themes”(96-97). Generative themes are a valuable asset to problem posing education. “To investigate the generative theme is to investigate peoples thinking about reality and peoples action upon reality, which is their praxis”(106). The application of Freire’s problem posing education, then, is fueled by generative themes. This fundamental belief stems from the understanding that “every thematic investigation which deepens historical awareness is thus really educational, while all authentic education investigates thinking”(109). Freire also makes the point in this chapter that using this method, from the outset, creates a familiarity and unique culture among the participants. Perhaps the most empowering aspect of this approach is the oppressed “come to feel like masters of their own thinking”(124). In fact, this approach depends on the thinking of the participants. “Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed”(124). This ownership of one’s learning eliminates irrelevant content and alienation.

Chapter four serves to further illustrate the differences between dialogics and antidialogics. To understand it in brief, Freire identifies four characteristics of both dialogics and antidialogics, highlighting the juxtaposition. The first characteristic of antidialogics is conquest. Conquest is at the very core of oppression, oppressive society parallels the imposition of ideas involved in knowledge banking is. Divide and Rule is the next characteristic, and is used to promote oppression by disabling a cohesive revolution. Division is created within the individual even, and once a person has bought in to the concept of conquest, that person sees conquest as a way to succeed, at the expense of other oppressed people. Manipulation is another dimension, and follows in line with the first two. Once in control through conquest, and people are divided against each other, then it is easy for the oppressor to manipulate people who are eager to get to the top. Cultural invasion then is like the endgame strategy, and is the internalized propagation of oppression. With this characteristic, the invaded have fully bought into the invaders worldview, and reinforce the feeling of inferiority in the oppressed.

Dialogics on the other hand has a differing set of characteristics. Cooperation is of course the characteristic of dialogics, as a fundamental aspect of communication is to cooperate during an honest interaction. Unity for liberation is the next characteristic, just as solidarity is fundamental in the praxis. With the goal being liberation unity must exist and constantly be the goal. Organization, in solidarity of course, is the vehicle directly connected to unity. Through unity, organization can be formed, and develop a framework for true praxis. And lastly, cultural synthesis, as various cultures collide, unity and organization provide the ability to enter into a continuation of constant change, as reality is always in motion aided by dialogue.

Application:

The contributions of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* are mostly fundamental principles. First, I knew that I had to understand the use of oral traditional classroom methodology if I was going to truly work in solidarity with the First Nations and address Act 31. Working with the elders in the oral tradition caused me to better understand the techniques and the method of the oral tradition. I also decided to eliminate the teacher student paradigm as much as possible. I learned different techniques for the implementation of this principle. One way I approach this is to have days where the students direct the dialogue, another way is using student presentations as a large portion of the content delivery, and providing as much student choice as possible. Dialogue is very important to my course. In order to ensure quality structure and content of that dialogue, I provide incentive for participation. I provide regular chances for dialogue to happen at both the small group and total group level, require questions from student on a regular basis, and use the midterm as an opportunity for dialogue between student and instructor. Critical thinking is an important skill, and I foster that by requiring the students' questions to use identifiable elements of critical thinking. Understanding the characteristics of dialogics provided me with guiding principles. Students are encouraged and required to develop the ability to cooperate with each other in small and total group work. Unity is created either through the constant exchange of ideas, through guided discussions or during the oral evaluations. Students will influence to organization personally, rather than being manipulated on a day-to-day basis in discussion, and through the course structure by determining when each small group presents. Cultural synthesis is the development of this course, by operating a holistically oriented course

within a linear institution. These are the ways that Freire's work informed the development and evaluation of an oral traditional teaching method.

Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education. Gregory Cajete, Ph.D.
Kivaki press. Skyland, NC. 1994.

Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education gives an in depth understanding of the method and philosophy of indigenous education. Gregory Cajete, Ph.D., is Tewa Indian from the southwest region of the United States, and has served as a professor and consultant in various schools in New Mexico. His holistic approach towards education from the perspective of the First Nations of North America takes the radical education approach and refines it. Looking directly at various aspect of traditional culture, he highlights the educational significance and relevance for modern society. The following is a brief account of *Look to the Mountain*.

Each chapter in *Look to the Mountain* examines a different foundation of American Indian Education. First, we have the introduction, modern education from a tribal perspective, followed by an overview of tribal indigenous education. The topics of the following chapters include, spiritual ecology, environmental, mythic, visionary/ artistic, and affective/communal foundations of American Indian education. The last two chapters concern the combination of indigenous education in a twenty first century world, and its role in individual transformation. The foreword is written by Vine Deloria Jr., in which he praises Cajete for his ability to understand the two worldviews, Euro-American and American Indian. First, we will start with the introduction and overview.

Cajete starts by stating that the book is a reflection on his perspective on the possibilities of introducing an indigenous frame of reference into the development of Indian education. He discusses the historical separation of the two models of education and makes the case that the time has come for synthesis, or at least interaction. He also makes note that this new relationship is essential as we go forward and must recognize education as a process.

In the introduction we are given the perspective of tribal societies view on the contemporary education model. The observation is that it is lacking cohesiveness and as time goes on, losing its relevance in the modern world. Traditional education however, is holistic in nature and provides that cohesion; this concept is reinforced by the common refrain, *Mitakuye Oyasin* (we are all related). Cajete speaks of creating a new educational model using this tribal orientation. "To begin this process, American education must move from a focus on specialization to holistic knowledge, from a focus on structures to understanding processes, from objective science, to systemic science, from building to networking"(27). Cajete realizes this is a fundamental shift in practice. "To accomplish this, Indian people must open avenues of communication and establish a reflective dialogue toward evolving a contemporary theory for Indian education that originates from them and their collective experience"(27-28). Cajete then goes on to outline the foundational characteristics of indigenous education. In the overview of tribal education, he first makes it clear that the traits he writes about are in fact reflected in indigenous cultures around the world. "The cultivation of all ones senses through learning how to listen, observe, and experience holistically by creative exploration was highly valued"(33). Constantly developing knowledge of self is a key and leads to the

understanding of the world around you. This seeking of life and continual learning constantly changing to meet the needs of the day, and allows one to adapt and continue to learn. Cajete draws from different North American First Nations' cultures throughout the book, and while the cultures are very different, he acknowledges commonalities as well. "Regardless of Tribal culture, Indians of the Americas share common metaphors of indigenous knowledge and education. It is because of such shared metaphors that the development of contemporary indigenous philosophy of Indian Education is possible"(36). The holistic worldview is one of the shared cultural characteristics.

There is learning to be had in all situations, and being holistic, this leads to a very complex setting for education. These "dynamic contexts develop from a unique and creative process of teaching and learning"(39). However, in order to simplify the understanding of the process, we can understand that "all education is the expression of storytelling"(40). Understanding the role of story in all education reinforces the holistic worldview.

The next chapter concerns the spiritual ecology of indigenous education. "The foremost context for understanding is the Spiritual"(39). This is where we are first introduced to 'the place Indian people talk about', referring to a phrase he has heard referencing the spiritual connections Indian people feel to the special places in their lands and their lives. While education involves learning of one's true being, it also understands that all things are sacred. These guiding principles highlight the fact that the spiritual dimension gives orientation to the individual as well as the group. Living in a good way is a central theme to the story and lessons within the stories.

Cajete contends the mythic foundation of American Indian education presents an opportunity to understand learning for both the community and individual. The myth has many functions in society and creates an opportunity for developing critical thinking in the context of storytelling. “It is exactly this working in the context of myth that leads to profound and highly creative tribal expressions of teaching and learning”(119). Myth aids critical thinking within the holistic worldview by encouraging understanding central themes and connection to ones experience. “Learning how to blend the mythical, aesthetic, intuitive, and visual perspectives of nature with the scientific, rational, and verbal perspectives is an integral part of Indigenous education”(123). This blending highlights the holistic nature of traditional education, and provides a vehicle to transmit teaching and learning. The oral tradition is of course an integral part of this model.

Literacy and the written story are very recent developments in human history, even in the history of Western societies. They undeniably evolved from illiterate mythopoetic roots in spite of the negative connotation that that western civilized cultures have promoted regarding illiteracy as a sign of being uneducated, uncivilized and primitive. The study and honoring of oral traditions and orality in children offer essential insight into natural learning. The human oral orientation to education offers techniques as well as windows into the world of indigenous education”(131).

The level of complexity and sophistication involved in the enabling of this imagination and individual skill development is sorely missed in the modern, homogenized education system. This includes practical aspects of the education, not being limited to artistic expression. These dynamic methods with such rich outcomes

suggest that there is no such thing as a primitive form of education. “These processes in turn engaged the fullest participation of both the giver and receiver in reflecting upon the message of the work”(133). In reference to oral tradition, Cajete states, “Nothing in modern educational experience comes close to affecting and engaging individuals as deeply and multidimensionally”(134). Cajete contends the oral tradition serves essential functions, which the written word simply cannot.

This method, according to Cajete, also provides a lot of answers to some of the societal and educational problems facing our communities today. The myths and story as well as the oral tradition can be ways of promoting community and caring, while at the same time countering deculturization and alienation. “The creative solution is to construct an educational process that resonates with a functional cultural/mythic perspective that is healthy and fits contemporary life”(137). Attention, creative imagination, flexibility, and fluency of thinking are some of the disciplines involved in such a process. Story has always been a part of education and just recently neglected.

Relationships, then, are crucial, leading us to the communal foundation of indigenous education. “Relationship is the cornerstone of Tribal community”(165). Communities give context, interconnectedness, basic human relational skills. Valuing diversity, community work, unique learners, and community also provides ethical models as well as recognition. “People were formed in the context of indigenous community. They are given a context through which they can realize themselves by being of service to their community, their people”(173). In this context, individuals are valued and the community supports their search for fulfillment. As a result, the individual will find themselves inseparable from the community, truly being a part of the whole. “The

community is the place where each person can, metaphorically speaking, become complete and express the fullness of their life”(166). Community is a vital part of the holistic worldview.

Now looking at the contemporary application, Cajete turns his attention to indigenous education for a twenty first century world. “All education is rooted in or has evolved from an indigenous past. In reality, all education is founded upon Indigenous basics”(187). He describes his work on this book as a pilgrimage and the importance of the Asking. “The Asking is the place of questions, and this is the place, I believe, American Indians are in tracking a collective vision of Indian education. Questions are the basis of dialogue and stem from the basic human desire to know, to understand, to explain, and to story.”(188). Questions are a driving force of learning and should be taken seriously.

Cajete notes that alienation from the mainstream of education and society as a major barrier to learning. Ethnostress, the result of disruption of ones cultural life and beliefs, has long-term effects, and to manage these obstacles, empowerment is needed. Here he introduces his “curriculum mandala”(198). Using the cultural teachings of the seven sacred directions an incorporating the curriculum. The first is the center, learning how you learn and create, and learning from others. The east is the direction where a grounding philosophy is explored, and learning how it is expressed. In the west, understanding of community and social structures is stressed. The south is the direction where health and wellness are the focus, with an emphasis on plants and traditional medicine. From the north, an understanding of animals, myth and reality is sought. Focusing below leads to knowledge of the elements of life, and geosciences. Lastly,

looking above and finding astrology from a Native American perspective. Within the seven directions, a holistic approach is taken, encompassing a wide array of subject matter in each direction.

In his final thoughts, Cajete suggests the beginning of a search for an Indigenous response to the current educational system and development of a transformational approach, focused on creating wholeness in individuals and communities. He describes stages of this development. Also, he explains the need for this development for the purpose of survival. Learning how to learn and doing so in a way that respects and values the culture of the individuals and group is key.

Application

My project is a response to *Look to the Mountain*. Cajete articulates the relevance of Traditional education and challenges educators to implement changes. His need for a spiritual orientation is mirrored in my project by establishing values and guiding principles for the class. Respect and personal sovereignty are the principles around which the course is oriented, and other cultural teachings are learned throughout the course. Cajete demonstrates the potential for learning through the oral tradition in a way that I needed to have present in my project. Appreciation for listening and expression as essential skills to be developed is addressed in this project directly. Storytelling provides a not only a vehicle for communication but also critical thinking, which is why I have students develop critical thinking questions. I include group work in my course in order to reinforce the importance of community and relationship. Cajete's reference to Ethnostress is another reason that this course is important, which is to honor other cultures in education as a way to engage all students and deter alienation. In conclusion,

Traditional education methods fill a gap in the modern educational system and the course I have developed addresses this need.

Tradition and Culture in the Millennium: Tribal Colleges and Universities, pages 93-106.
Chapter 8 Worldview and Cultural Behaviors: Strategies and Resources Determination in the Tribal Academy. Rosemary Ackley Christensen. Information Age Publishing. 2008.

Dr. Rosemary Ackley Christensen, a former professor at University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, wrote this article highlighting the influences of culture and worldview on education. Christensen, an Anishnaabe, draws from her practice and the influences of her culture and worldview. Highlighting the importance of traditional intellectualism and its application in today's education system, she gives examples of her approach. Furthermore, context becomes the vehicle to deliver a culturally responsive learning experience. Having a structure, a foundation, based in the indigenous worldview for teaching and learning to take place is the result.

Christensen starts by providing a fresh perspective, "Back in the day when the indigenous people of Turtle Island (North America) controlled the education of their young, teachings reflected, replicated, reinforced and honored their holistic worldview"(93). Elder knowledge is crucial for the integrity of the development of such a system. Elder teachers using the oral tradition have been the main method for education throughout human history. Having this understanding of the culture and context, we now look at the collision of the two cultures, and how to incorporate the indigenous cultural methods.

Christensen addresses the need to address the need for proper evaluation in contemporary education. "Evaluation is required in grant process and any institution need to understand how to more effectively use evaluation, to look at and solve problems"(96). Different approaches to evaluation are presented that attempt to incorporate culture. The ideas stated focus on not just how but what and why we are evaluating, in order to get a clearer picture. One group noted has suggested using a synthesis of indigenous teaching and western evaluation practice. Christensen states that as different groups have this focus "administrators, teachers and others can rest assured there will be assistance and trained evaluators when they ponder possibilities for evaluation efforts that reflect Tribal cultural norms and practice in a way that provides helpful information for further learning and modification(s)"(97). This is a crucial step in order to better understand learning outcomes as well as goals.

To begin discussing teaching method and techniques, first she looks at what teaching is in the cultural sense. Christensen breaks the Anishnaabe words down, according to oral scholar Lee Staples, for *teacher* and *teach something to someone*. The words derive from different forms of the root for *transference*, as well as to *point out* or *direct*. Transferring teachings is vitally important, as is the act of listening. "Our Elders insist that we listen intently to assure that our teachings always survive"(97). Listening is done in an overt way. Recognizing the differing constraints from situation to situation while applying the techniques can and should be discussed by practitioners. Also, one must recognize the reality that the application of indigenous teaching methods is a process. The use of this method is referred to as circular teaching, as opposed to the standard linear approach of academia. This method focuses on a single point and uses

familiar examples to examine the point of discussion. There is a focus on inclusion, making sure everyone involved understands, seeking a holistic notion of balance in that way. Of course, the holistic nature of circular teaching makes room for the use of the linear worldview within the practice of this method. This incorporation is likened to a Venn diagram. The worldviews overlap, and it is understandable for the academy to honor the Indian and non-Indian perspective.

Christensen describes how worldview influences her practice. “Circular teaching techniques are based on the values and intellectual construct of the indigenous worldview with the core value of personal sovereignty (and its practice of non-interference utilized through the structural elements of respect reciprocity and relationship) being paramount”(98). These values are the foundation for the practice of the circular method. Oral traditional learning concepts are a part of the circular teaching method, and further represent the indigenous worldview. Christensen stresses the three R’s (relationship, reciprocity and respect) as the “grid in the frame of the plan design”(99). This can be implemented to improve the schools environment.

Storytelling as a teaching method “reinforces to core value of personal sovereignty, allows for and encourages balance between young and old and teaches life’s many lessons in a variety of ways”(99). Repetition is helpful, as stories change meaning to a person over time, the only real limitation to this method are the individuals involved. Spiral lecturing is the technique derived from the storytelling method. “In this technique, the teacher is in the middle of the circle, while the students sit in the circle. Each student is invited to make a comment about ideas previously presented (either by the teacher or by student presentations). Teacher might comment to reinforce student idea, learning, or

add onto the information provided to foster learning, to correct an aspect that might be a little off, or just say, that's a terrific way to say it"(100). Spiral lecturing gives the opportunity for both the teacher and the students to have some influence on the discussion.

Listening skills are a focus, especially in storytelling methodology. Teachings become more recognizable through repetition, this is a common function found among American Indian instructors, and the delivery is a reflection on the importance of personal sovereignty, each person has their own way of using story. This flexibility or fluidity contrasts with non-Indian scholars' methods, who are often uncomfortable with the changes in context. The story adapts to suit the audience, and context, in order to establish a connection with listeners. "Storytellers take the age of a listener into account in the length of a story, focuses on particular values, seeks and creates balance and harmony between teacher and learner, between young and old. The teacher takes time, interacts and is reciprocal with listeners"(100). The listeners also become the storytellers as students are given the opportunity to use their skills to present material orally. Creating opportunities for making choices, using consensus, and really listening and learning from the class in a way the students can appreciate is the task of the teacher, and can be achieved when the students have time to speak.

"We all need to know what resources are available when thinking about teaching techniques/methods that involve cultural context"(101). Elders are a great resource in so many ways, and can be very helpful in evaluation of teaching techniques, which Christensen does by videotaping her classes, providing syllabi and any additional info needed for elders to evaluate her teaching. Through this, she has refined her practice of

interactive grading. Christensen recommends staying in touch with elders, and attending gatherings for the opportunity to learn from elders. Useful books are noted as well as the Fusion project, an interdisciplinary project at the university that teaches the four pillars of American Indian knowledge; history, sovereignty, indigenous intellectualism, and laws & policy. Several books are noted for their ability to bridge the gap between Native and non-Native understandings and worldview.

In a brief word about pedagogy for conclusion, which is defined as the science of teaching, Christensen points out the benefits of the oral tradition. “In the case of oral tradition teaching, the pedagogical base consists of a broad based experience with dominant Indian community wherein the daily behaviors reflect the groups dominant values/practices and where Elders routinely pass life need information through oral discourse utilizing storytelling and participatory methodology”(103). The use of a culturally based pedagogy provides the ability to teach with both content and context. The benefits of teaching with this context include the ability to make informed decisions while remaining personally sovereign, as well as providing a ”wide-ranging, extensive and excellent base of knowledge gleaned from experience and participation...”(103). This pedagogy truly values student input.

Application

Many aspects of my project are directly influenced by the method used by Christensen. I more thoroughly understand the use of such tools as repetition. I use repetition in the course through techniques such as memory circle, summaries, and of course in the midterm and final. The concise nature of the content allows for in depth analysis and repletion on a day-to-day basis. The structure of classroom discussions also

reflects the respect for personal sovereignty described by Christensen. Students have an influential role in discussions and will have the ability to approach the material on their own terms. Through her experience working in the university, Christensen also give me a perspective on how to implement the holistic worldview into a linear establishment. To do this, I will be open to students incorporating aspects of linear methods, and use this as a learning tool for critical analysis.

Identifying race and transforming whiteness in the classroom: Chapter 8 Teaching within the Circle: Methods for an American Indian Teaching and Learning style, a Tribal Paradigm. Rosemary Christensen.

In this article Dr. Rosemary Ackley Christensen provides further insight into her methods and techniques. Rather than the more abstract conceptual understanding provided the last article, this article provides a more direct account of her teaching method/techniques. To begin Christensen describes her intent and frame of reference. Growing up on an Indian Reservation, Christensen explains that at the time, the federal policy dictated that she attend the government's school. Noting that the form of schooling she was exposed to then continues today, she always wondered why information was presented in a certain way. She continues to wonder about this, and sees the issue of the achievement gap as a big concern and notes the attempts to address this concern. She notes studies that suggest the importance of culture on learning, ultimately suggesting, "a teaching method based on traditional ideas from Indian society"(172), as a new way to approach and close this gap.

From here Christensen gives a description of the oral tradition, and its use in a holistic world. Elders are a crucial aspect of the oral tradition. Christensen makes it clear that what is presented in this chapter is her experience and her practice, and do not necessarily represent an entire field of practice. She is certain to assert that is with the help of the elders that she has worked with throughout her life, and continues to work with, that she is able to do as she does.

Referring to elder epistemology, “values, moral and ethical code, customs, rules, beliefs, and practices passed on by our old people”(174). This is recognized and reminds us “all knowing takes place within a cultural and political context”(174). The common teaching method is the teacher in front students in rows, with an emphasis on written skills, and memorization. This form also favors the more competitive members of class, allowing them to be noticed by the instructor.

The importance of engaging and valuing all participants is critical. “Within American Indian society, learners are treated as participants in learning by experience, with the teacher, who, by virtue of possessing additional experience, is obligated to help those younger”(175). Personal sovereignty is acknowledged, recognized and appreciated throughout the course of an education, evaluating each student from where they have begun, and how they move at a unique pace. “Each learner brings something special to any learning mix. An effort is made to build a learning environment comfortable for using individual skills in an exchanging reciprocal way between the teacher and the learner”(175). Respect is learned through the emphasis on individual skills being meshed with the group process.

The teacher's role is shifted in this method and different skills are stressed. "A teacher's primary function in Circle Teaching is as a coach"(176). Subtly is stressed and crucial to the use of this method, as is a solid understanding of what is being learned, in order to act as a resource and tutor when needed. The teacher is not above the learner, but must also observe the three R's concerning the relationship with the students.

"*Respect* means to be considerate of each living thing, every day using a process that ensures that life needs are met in an honorable way. *Relationship* means being connected to one another through unbroken, eternal ties that commence from birth to death and that present constant obligations of responsibility and honor. *Reciprocity* means action one to another on the base of mutual respect and giving in return"(176). The teaching circle is used in terms of form in the classroom whenever possible and appropriate. "Using a circle in the classroom means students will see each others faces in stead of each others backs"(177). While this style may take some adjustment for some students, most end up preferring it. Faces and even nametags can be used to reinforce development of recognition. Eventually, given the choice students choose the circle. Choice is a very important aspect and is to be given to students whenever possible. This emphasis on sovereignty as a guiding principle is what sets apart the ideals of First Nations and dominant society. "The circle of teaching is formed by the concepts or principles of independence or personal sovereignty, respect for Elders, connectedness to all living things, and indirect communications through the screen of elder knowledge"(177). A competency in indirect communication would be helpful in implementing this method, and traditionally reflect good manners. Direct questioning has been considered rude and not encouraged, which reflects a distinct cultural difference. "Tribal people are taught to

listen to Elders, not interrupt them as they are speaking, and to make sure a person is finished talking before entering a speaking mode”(180). Implementing cultural norms requires thoughtful consideration. “Abstracting traditional functions and then reapplying the concepts in other contexts as a new way to enact them may therefore be necessary if Indians are to withstand the vast strength of the western form”(180). It is with this understanding that questioning can be affectively used in circle teaching.

Small group work is well suited to circle teaching and makes for more manageable student-teacher exchanges. This allows for more individualized attention, and limits the potential for a small number of students to monopolize the total group. “Students are asked not to take notes, raise their hands or seek written instruction for daily discourse in the classroom”(181). This of course sharply contrasts the common practices in a classroom, and puts an emphasis on listening. “They listen to each other, talk with each other, and with each other arrive at learning conclusions or summaries they may take with them and keep forever. An important part of the technique is critical thinking with its important elements for learning such as identifying central issues, comparative analysis, identifying assumptions, recognizing bias, noting values and so on. Providing small group interaction with the instructor regarding learning evaluation, materials examination, analysis, and an interactive human process that uses time and space dependent on each persons need is also part of the methodology”(181-182). Attendance is a crucial aspect of a smooth working group, and therefore given large importance in circle teaching.

Christensen describes her method and how it is applied. It starts with the class in a circle, introducing themselves, and then the teacher explains the group process. The

students they are instructed to choose their groups. “I remind students that they will probably work within a group for the rest of their working lives. Learn well how to do it in school”(183). The small groups present the information to the larger group, and the total group is given many choices in the way they choose to do this. The teacher provides the appropriate material. Each group presents two or three times throughout the semester. During the first round of presentations, the total group engages the presenters with questions and comments, and during the second and third rounds, students engage in an oral remembering circle. The questioning sessions allow for further insight into teaching points. The remembering circle, the total group goes around and recalls the previous presentation, using repetition and reinforcing the use of listening and remembering. Class time is given for groups to work on their presentations. Students are urged to be creative in their presentations, and to reflect the values of the method. In addition, critiquing the material is encouraged and helps to recognize bias and use other critical thinking skills.

There is a midterm and a final as well, and the total group is given a large amount of choice as to how this is done. It can be written or oral, and must include the information covered at that point. These total group preparations can be difficult, and students are often not used to being given so many choices and decisions. Also in the beginning of the course, students are asked to do a written think piece on a provided article, as in introduction to the topic and are given choices as to its form in order to reflect the values of the method. The occasional lecture by the teacher may be woven into the course, as needed to supplement the presentations or as a summary. Repetition is heavily stressed in this method, as is the ability for students choose their style of engagement.

In closing, Christensen sees method as a way for struggling student to achieve their potential. “Methods that approximate cultural norms may help students who continue to provide fodder for the achievement gap increases”(190). Diversity in schools will truly be appreciated as the benefit that it is for all involved.

Application

Like Christensen, I see the addition of cultural context into the classroom as a way to approach closing the achievement gap. Her acknowledgement of other practices in the field is a message I will be conveying through my course, not only through the content and discussions throughout the course, but by demonstrating differing techniques in my own practice. Throughout evaluation, my course takes the concept from Christensen that each learner is unique. That concept informs my midterm practice of engaging in a guided presentation and dialogue with each group. I also see my position as that of a coach, and my small group development will also reflect Christensen’s practice. My use of questioning is overt, yet I ensure respectful dialogue and provide a respectful outlet for those questions by giving groups and individuals time to consider and develop thoughtful responses. Listening is stressed to ensure respectful dialogue.

Oral Tradition/ Synthesis

In this chapter, I provide insight into my knowledge of the oral tradition, as well as describe the teacher training model I developed in order to teach educators how to effectively implement oral traditional method. As a result of this training, the participants will be able to use oral traditional methods as a way to teach American Indian culture, as mandated by Act 31. My formal education in the oral tradition has been with David Turney, a Menominee elder and ad hoc professor at University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, as well as with Dr. Rosemary Ackley Christensen, formerly an associate professor at University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. From this point on I refer to them as Napos and Rosemary respectively, as this is how I now know to address them and reflects the relationships that develop through the oral tradition. Throughout this narrative, I highlight the influential teachings; any implication of a quotation by my elders is to be understood as my memory of a discussion, rather than a direct quote. I will also be incorporating other teachings learned through the oral tradition, through gatherings and other meetings. I take full responsibility for my interpretation of the lessons learned, and apologize in advance for my limited understanding of traditional education.

The oral tradition is holistic in nature, and while I have been a student in many of the classes using these methods, the understanding I gained outside of class from Napos, Rosemary as well as other elders, has been equally important, and highlights the emphasis on critical thinking and continuous learning. Lessons were often delivered in subtle ways and I continue to gain new insight well after a dialogue has taken place. The following is a linear, categorical view of some of the different classroom techniques and approaches that I have come experienced, followed by the technique that is part of the

teacher-training course. After this description of the course method and its development within the oral tradition, I describe the content used in the teacher-training model to provide an understanding of traditional education. One of the lessons I learned during my shadowing of Rosemary is to always have a backup plan, and to understand the method well enough, so that different techniques, various topics and schedule changes can all be accommodated within the method, due to its holistic nature. In light of this, I retain the ability to be flexible, and have the fluidity to incorporate the method into any given scenario. Napos has a similar teaching, and is very comfortable adjusting to various circumstances due to his competency in the subject. Honoring this, I acknowledge that while I have developed training course with a semester at a university in mind, adjustments and conceptual implications are also made to convey this fluidity. Therefore, the following is the methodological description of the policy and structure of the course.

STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE

Rosemary sets her circle teaching courses up to incorporate two to three cycles. The cycles are a round of small group presentations, in which the groups present the material from the textbooks. The delivery of the information must be complete, and each group has a day to present, other than that, the total group is left to decide how to divide the work, order of presentations and so on. The seating arrangement is that of a circle, either a total group circle or small group circles during presentations.

The start of the class involves group formation, which I will discuss further, and a short lecture. Once the class is aware of the course process, they are given a preparation day to develop their presentation. The first cycle of presentations then begins. Once the

first cycle is finished, Rosemary will give a wrap up lecture on any information she feels necessary to supplement the student presentations. Another preparation day is given and, as well as grades for the presentations, and then the students deliver the midterm. After the midterm, a new cycle begins, with the addition of a memory circle at the end of each presentation. If there is time left, Rosemary will include integrative readings, and assign articles to the groups and conduct activities and discussion concerning the articles. In conclusion, as with the midterm, a preparation day is given, and then the total group presents the final for Rosemary.

Napos' class is nearly entirely structured around oral exchange, with a little reading used to supplement the discussions. The class is engaged in a spiral lecture, which is much like a dialogue, with Napos covering the relevant topics. One day each week, at least, is open to questions, comments or concerns, where students are allowed to influence the discussion more directly, with Napos using the questions as teaching moments. Occasionally guest presenters are brought into the class to bring in a different perspective. As extra credit projects are needed for a better grade, students will also at times present to the class as pre-arranged by Napos. Students prepare to demonstrate a midterm, either alone or in groups, and do so with Napos.

SYNTHESIS: Structure and Schedule

The structure of my course involves group development, dialogue, presentations, talking circle, memory circle and oral midterms and finals, as well as extra credit. The implementation and schedule of such techniques will be a blend of the two different approaches used by these elders. My intention is to maintain the strong focus on the oral

tradition, and create an environment of personal sovereignty with as much choice as possible.

Groups form in the beginning of class following an introduction by everyone, including the instructor, as well as a overview of the course, its structure, schedule, values and story of course development. Groups will then be formed with an understanding of the function of the group. Working in a group is a fundamental aspect of society yet often not stressed in our schools; so being in a group is mandatory in this course. I will discuss the function of the groups further in the *Groups* synthesis section.

The day following the introduction and group formation, a memory circle will be performed in the beginning of class, both to give the experience and test the memory and remind participants the focus on oral traditional method. The class will then be given the chance to deliberate, in consensus fashion, certain additional topics of interest relevant to the course. This input allows the students some choice in what they will learn and answers to immediate questions they have.

The following portion of the course reflects Napos' method and approach of dialogue and fluidly structured presentations. Participants will sit in a circle with their small group, with the first class of a new week starting with a quick small group memory circle. The default operation of the class involves the instructor coordinating dialogue and presenting information on core topics. Talking circles are used periodically during this section of the course, often surrounding a critical thinking question. One of the days each week begin with an invitation to the class to ask questions and have a more direct influence on the days topical direction.

A midterm will then be done in the small group setting, with each individual demonstrating his or her knowledge in a dialogue with the instructor. Students are given the option of the topics covered, but within a group, all the material proceeding the midterm must be covered, any content lacking will be the subject of further questioning during the midterm, questioning is also a part of the midterm. Each group must produce a question with an element of critical thinking included and noted.

The second half of the course will be oriented around small group presentations. During the midterm, participants collaborate and decide the schedule for small group presentations. After the given preparation day, student presentations begin. After the second day of presentations, a memory circle is used to recall the previous days presentation, and after every presentation there after. Content of presentations can be provided by the instructor as well as chosen by the small group. Groups are required to engage the class in a participatory activity and must provide an outline of the day's proceedings, other than that, the format is their choice. If there is any time left after the presentations, talking circles, supplemental spiral lectures and small group activities are available to reinforce the content of the course. A preparation day is given to before the final, and the total group is required to present a cumulative oral final presentation.

In many ways the first half of the course is formatted more like Napos' style, while the second half is very similar to a circular teaching cycle used by Rosemary. Not only does this provide students with multiple examples of the method, but also an understanding of the impact and the core principles of the practice.

ATTENDENCE

Of course, for an individual to engage in the oral tradition that person must participate. It may seem simple enough, but in my experience, many times students will miss several classes and expect this to not affect their grade. Rosemary's policy is to allow one absence without consequence, and require makeup for any classes missed beyond that. The makeup is to write a paper on the material covered on the day of the absence. The student is responsible to recover the information, on days when student groups are presenting, the corresponding chapters covered are to be examined, and on a given lecture day, fellow students are the resources and must be relied upon for the information. If the student fails to make up the work for that day, the grade is negatively affected. Attendance is addressed as a matter of respect especially towards ones group, as is tardiness. The majority of the class shows up on time, and a student arriving late for class is a distraction and interferes with the function of a group. Rosemary also held herself to this standard, and never missed a class in all my experience with her. In her introductory level classes, she will call attention to students with absences.

Napos is also strict about attendance policy, stressing the importance of participation in the oral tradition. His policy is to start students out with a grade of 'B' and allow for one absence, with absence beyond that negatively affecting the students' grade. Active participation is required, to boost that grade, which I will discuss further later. While direct make up is not the policy, grades can be improved through extra credit, which I will explain further. The reason direct make up work is not the policy seems to be that there is no substitute for participation in the oral tradition, and it is not fair to the rest of the class.

SYNTHESIS: Attendance

Of course, maintaining the emphasis on participation, attendance is a high priority, and a mandatory attendance policy is needed, with little room for exception. My attendance policy is to allow for one or two absences, depending on number of meetings. I believe this policy must be strict in order to make the focus on oral tradition effective. I also would track student participation and reward consistent involvement. On the other hand, students can maintain a 'BC' through perfect attendance, however, beyond the allowed absences; each missed class significantly affects the students grade. While direct makeup work will not be available, extra credit work can mitigate the damage. This attendance policy allows for very little exception and is meant to encourage active participation with the philosophy that an engaged student is a student that is learning, and sets a minimum standard.

GRADING

Both of my elders use an oral midterm and final, although this is where the similarities end. These different approaches towards oral traditional teaching reflect the value of personal sovereignty and demonstrate the priority of philosophy over formula. The emphasis belongs to incorporating oral presentation and evaluation, through dialogue.

In my first experience being a student in one of Napos' classes, he instructed us to put our pencils away, his was an oral traditional class. He explained to the class why he sees note taking as a crutch, and how it actually inhibits our listening. This strict adherence to the oral tradition was later tempered by personal sovereignty when he allowed limited note taking for those who chose to do so, but emphasized the importance

of strictly listening. I decided to limit my note taking. This approach enhanced my experience in the class by training myself to “listen with my whole body”. The significance of this approach is that when the time came for an oral demonstration of my knowledge, I had the information process and understood to the point that I could participate in an informed dialogue. Excessive use of notes in an oral final or presentation indicates the reliance on note taking and is accounted for in evaluation. Napos has his classes develop groups, as well as allowing students to work alone, although grading is done individually. As stated above, attendance is a big part of the grading consideration. In addition to attendance, participation is noted, and the grade of ‘A’ cannot be achieved without considerable extra credit. Students are told that to him, an ‘A’ student is one that puts in special effort and demonstrates a coherent interest beyond the classroom activity. Examples of such work includes, but is not limited to, further research into a given topic, participation in a relevant activity outside of the classroom, and producing either an essay or presentation pertaining to this work.

Midterms and finals are done orally, generally the midterm with Napos and the group or individual meeting for a dialogue, where the students are able to demonstrate their retention of information, as well as voice any questions comments or concerns. This midterm also serves to develop the relationship between Napos and the students. Students choose the topics and extent of the midterm, which is done as a dialogue and an assessment of the course direction. Range and extent of knowledge as well as use of oral tradition techniques are taken into account during the midterm, in addition to relevant questions and comments.

Rosemary's circle teaching evaluation also gives high priority to attendance, uses a midterm and final and also evaluates small group presentations. Grading is done with a three point embedded scale. Points are assessed for organization, participation and class involvement. While most grades are created through the group, individual grades also develop, based on a student circumstances. Groups meet with Rosemary where she provides feedback, and also allow the groups to make up for shortcomings by explaining how they worked well outside of the classroom.

Midterms and finals are organized and executed by the total group in Rosemary's method. Students are given the sovereignty to present the information s they choose, and are graded in the same way as small group presentations and all information is to be accounted for. If some information is not presented, it is to be noted on the outline provide by the group. Students furnish outlines for both small and total group presentations. These outlines are not extensive and simply provide a basic structure of the presentation. Critical thinking questions are also a part of presentations and while not directly graded, they must be reworked until satisfactory if necessary.

SYNTHESIS: Grading

The grading strategy of the teacher-training course involves participation, extra credit, oral midterm, group presentations, and the oral final. While attendance influences the participation grade, it also involves many other aspects of the daily course work. Minimal participation results in an average grade. In order for students to achieve a grade of 'A', a student must do independent research, prepare a presentation, or participate in a relevant event or do some other sort of extra credit.

The instructor notes individual participation and points are given according to increased involvement. Points in the midterm are gained through organization, presentation, content and critical thinking. The points for critical thinking include the mandatory critical thinking question.

GROUPS

Rosemary uses the first class to have everyone introduce themselves, after which students are told to go into the hallway and pick their groups. During small group presentations, both the group presenting and the rest of the class are to develop a question from the presented material, and the group must be able to identify the element of critical thinking present in the question. As with the think pieces in the beginning of the semester, this activity is not graded per se, but must be done in a satisfactory way or result in an incomplete. Depending on the size of the class, small groups range in size, never smaller than four, and no more than eight people are the general size perimeters. If a student is not working well within a given group, he/she is allowed to switch groups after discussing the reasons with Rosemary. However, students are not able to work by themselves, as group work is part of the method, and teaches valuable lessons that will be used for the rest of the students' lives.

Before each presentation cycle, the midterm, and final, students are given one or two preparation days. Choice is given whenever possible and small groups are given the option to arrange the meeting time and place of their choice during preparation days. While the classroom is always available during the normal meeting time, students often meet elsewhere on campus, or even off campus, and at different times. Rosemary asks for

an attendance sheet and time spent outside of class. A full class period of meeting time is expected.

Napos uses groups on a more voluntary basis, although he strongly encourages students to form groups of four. These small groups can be formed at any time and by the end of the semester, most students are usually in a group. The function of the group, outside of providing a network of support and dialogue, is during midterm and finals. The groups are to work together outside of class to develop a plan for the midterm and a presentation for the final. The formation and function of the group are surrounded by the value of personal sovereignty and leaves a lot of choice in all matters, which students sometimes have a hard time understanding, especially in the beginning.

SYNTHESIS: Groups

Group work is mandatory at the beginning of class, and the optimal number is four, although different sizes are expectable, up to seven. Group work is critical for the oral traditional method, and is the format for communication in the class to begin. Although groups are formed in the beginning of the course, the ability to shift groups is acceptable if approved by the instructor. Grades are discussed with the group and given points in various areas.

PRESENTATION

Napos uses a storytellers approach to his classroom teaching. The class is involved to the extent that they participate, which is encouraged and promoted. Once a week he likes to let the class have more of a direct influence on the direction of the class by opening the floor to questions. This style of dialogue can easily last the entire class period. His presentation is a natural outgrowth and example of the oral tradition and the

class usually takes some time to get adjusted to such a fluid format. Topics are focused on, and as an elder, he relates information through story and uses no notes. As noted above, groups are given maximum freedom in terms of their presentation, and creativity and visual aides are encouraged.

Rosemary lectures very little, either at the leading up to or wrapping up a cycle of student presentations. In the occasional moments during cycles that she does interject, subtly is key, and an effort is made to not interfere with the learning or personal sovereignty of the group.

SYNTHESIS

Rosemary's style of presentation creates a group of learners focused on the subject matter and acts as a facilitator. Napos uses the skill and knowledge developed as an elder in order to engage the students and use his style of presentation. This is an instance of true synthesis, where one cycle of student presentation will occupy one half of the course, while the other half will be done in Napos' style of presentation. While I do not possess the skill, knowledge and experience of an elder, neither do the teachers being trained, and example of how to use ones own skill set in this fashion is beneficial to understanding the method and not being as focused on the details of the techniques.

TEACHER TRAINING TOPICS

The following is a sample of the topics I will use to train teachers to understand and appreciate traditional education. While the topics are direct and can assist understanding, the method is the vehicle to communicate a true appreciation. It is through

experiencing and learning about this style of education that a teacher is then able to implement the method, and truly teach First Nations culture. The topics are split into four groups and will be approached as such.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Traditional education is rooted in the oral tradition. This oral tradition is holistic by nature and includes the entire community and all types of teaching and learning. One of the main vehicles for transferring information is through story. In this section of the training, these topics will be explored and experienced.

The oral tradition fundamental, and all cultures have some aspect of practice in their background. Many topics can be explored in this section and as stated in the *structure and schedule* synthesis, I would collaborate with the class about topics to cover. One of the topics we can explore is the effect of modern technology on our oral communication. Another is the formalization of oral tradition in the classroom. Also, what are the similarities and differences between written and oral traditions, pros and cons?

The class can also explore the holistic nature of the oral tradition, in order to discern the limitations and opportunities for such an approach in the classroom. Because the essence of a holistic approach is so broad, the opportunities are also plentiful and give one the ability to use creative approaches, always with the method in mind and a focus on learning.

The use of story can also be explored and articulated. There are many different kinds of story and ways to tell them also vary. This course will allow the teachers in

training to discover and refine their storytelling ability. The entire class can provide analysis and feedback.

VALUES

Developing an understanding of values in the classroom is a crucial element of creating an environment where the oral tradition can be practiced. While most teachers understand and attempt to instill this into their classroom, the practice of certain values must be clearly stated for student of this method. This will of course be done initially and throughout the training course, and will also be explored from each individual's perspective. This exploration will be done with a talking circle, giving each participant the ability to express their perspective on fostering values in the classroom.

The main topics covered will be the values used in oral traditional teaching methods. Personal sovereignty is one of the fundamental values practiced in this method. In order to understand this value and its function, this course will practice the value by giving the participants choice whenever possible, and also discussing the importance of such a value in the classroom. Respect is also a key functioning value needed to operate in the oral traditional method. Any course based in dialogue and using critical thinking also requires respect in order to truly promote learning. This course will explore the process of overtly and subtly creating a classroom of respect. The implementation of other values, such as cultural teachings will also be both practiced and explored. Developing a firm understanding of the limitations and appropriate level of such implementation is often an area of confusion, and in this setting, the participants may explore such a topic in a learning environment.

SKILLS

Some of the basic skills developed through the use of oral traditional method will be a theme to examine. Aside from acquiring knowledge of content, the oral tradition also develops certain skills. Communication and critical thinking is the two areas of focus for this section of the course.

Oral communication is a key component of any culture, and deserves attention and is a set of skills that need to be developed like any other set of skills. The set of skills involves listening, expression, and memory, all of which are exercised in the proper use of this method. Listening is often considered the lost art in modern society, and through the process of discouraging note taking and promoting the ability to listen, we can gain this skill. I have learned through my experience that one must learn to listen with the entire body, and this is the focus of true listening. Expression is an area that not everyone is comfortable with, and can also be nurtured. I use the term expression because not everyone uses speech as the preferred mode of communication. Other forms of communication are encouraged in this course, such as music, visual arts and poetry. Use of memory is closely associated with listening, and is very helpful in engaging in effective dialogue. Memory will be focused on mainly through practice, explicitly in activities such as memory circle, and discussed briefly as a subject of the course. As this skill set is a basic component of the oral traditional method, the importance of such skills will be illustrated.

TOOLS

Some of the tools used in oral traditional methods are repetition, memory circle, talking circle, group work, and oral evaluation. These tools have the ability to be used in a variety of ways. While I will be implementing these tools in certain ways, we can also

discuss the way in which they can be used differently. While some tools, such as repetition and group work are widely used throughout the academic world, others, such as memory and talking circles are not and will be examined and practiced to gain an understanding.

PARTICIPANTS

The important thing to remember when structuring ones classroom in the oral traditional method is that teaching and learning for each individual is the principle goal, and is to be fostered at all times. The instructor's main role then is that of facilitator and guide. Providing recourses, as well as, and more importantly, a robust knowledge base of the subject is critical.

TEACHER-TRAINING COURSE

The teacher-training course developed for this project will provide its participants with an understanding of oral traditional teaching methods. Oral traditional teaching methods will assist Wisconsin educators fulfill Act 31 requirements because they are based on traditional First Nations culture. The cultural context provided will aid teachers in their effort to properly educate students about Wisconsin's First Nations. The following section holds the syllabus and additional materials for the teacher-training course, titled *Oral Traditional Teaching Methods for Act 31*.

Course objective is to provide an appreciation and understanding of Traditional First Nations educational practices and their application in the classroom. The class structure reflects the content explored, giving the students the ability to both study and experience an oral traditional teaching method, enabling them to then practice this method as a way to contribute to the standards set by Act 31. The course has an oral emphasis, using communication and critical thinking skills as well as evaluating knowledge orally.

*The **oral emphasis** in this class is heavily stressed and will be vital to all aspects of the course. The oral emphasis requires the students to not only be present, but also active listeners and participants in class in order to succeed in this course. Respectful participation, therefore, is a cornerstone of this method. **Group work** is also vital and will function in a variety of ways throughout the course. The ability to function as part of a group is a good way to demonstrate/observe communication skills.*

***Critical thinking** and communication skills are a focus of this course, as a function of the oral emphasis. Elements of critical thinking will be included in a handout, and will come to be regularly referenced and applied in a variety of occasions. Oral communication skills will be stressed and required of students throughout the course.*

*The overt demonstration of **Respect** is the guiding value of the course and is required during all communication. Ways to demonstrate respect for the class include punctuality, listening, and contributing in a constructive manner.*

Required texts:

Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Paulo Freire. Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York, NY. 2009

Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education. Gregory Cajete, Ph.D. Kivaki Press. Skyland, NC. 1994

Class structure:

Attendance is a crucial element to experiencing the oral traditional teaching method, therefore, one absence is allowed without consequence. Each additional absence negatively affects one's grade. Participation, in addition to regular class activities, is also very important within this method, and positively affects one's grade.

Small Groups will be formed in the first week of class and may vary in size, with the ideal group size being four. Small group tasks will vary and these groups will function through the duration of the course. In the event of an individual needing to leave their small group, the instructor must be consulted and arrange a reassignment to another small group.

Grading will be determined for each student based on the total group (5%), small group (20%), as well as individual (75%) performance.

Individual: The individual grade is mostly concerned with participation, however, personal circumstances and considerations, are also covered under the individual grade. Each individual grade begins as a BC. In order to maintain the BC level of individual

grade, one must do no more than attend and participate in all required class activities without any more than one absence. Active, thoughtful participation, on a weekly basis, can raise one's grade as high as an AB. This participation includes questions, comments and any other involvement in the total group discussions of the first session as well as the guided participation of the second session. *In order for the individual to achieve an A, the student must provide a significant portion of extra credit.* Extra credit can take on many forms; the main goal of this is to demonstrate proactive learning outside of the classroom. Some examples include cultural event participation or independent research, followed by a short written document on the topic. Attendance, participation, and extra credit are the main factors taken into account for the individual grade and will be tracked by the instructor.

Small Group: Small groups will be graded on their participation in classroom activities, the midterm, and small group presentations. Small group participation involves respectful listening as well as involvement at appropriate times in the discussions, use of memory circle, and other activities throughout the semester. This form of participation is expected and guided, and is an good way to positively influence ones grade. The Midterm is graded on *content*, *form* (application of oral traditional principles), *organization* (preparation and presentation), and *critical thinking*. Small groups will organize an outline for a discussion with the instructor covering the topics of session one, will develop a critical thinking question concerning the course. Small group presentations will be the bulk of the second session of the course. The same grading system will be used as for the midterm, and an outline will be required. The content of the presentations will come from the texts, and the total group will decide how the material is divided and when.

Total Group: The Final will be organized and presented by the total group. This will be the only total group grade, and will be evaluated in a similar fashion as the small group presentations and an outline is to be provided. The content is to be cumulative and the format is the choice of the total group. Every student must participate in some way throughout the final, which will typically require at least two class periods.

Note, Additional instructions will be provided in the form of handouts concerning the midterm, presentations, and the final. Also, additional information will be provided during class orally.

Schedule:

Week One

Introduction, syllabus, groups, objectives.

Week 2-6(Session 1)

Memory circles, total-group instructor-led dialogue, student led dialogue.

Topics: a) Traditional Education: Overview b) Values: The Foundation

c) Skills: Communication and Critical Thinking d) Tools: Do-It-Yourself

Week 7

Session 1 summary, Preparation for midterm

Week 8

Midterms

Week 9(Session 2)

Grades, small group presentation scheduling and preparation.

Week 10-14

Small group presentations

Week 15

Session 2 summary, grades, total group preparation

Week 16

Total group final and grade provided

Grading Detail:

The four elements taken into consideration for presentations are as follows:

Content: Each presentation has content areas that are expected to be presented. The students are expected to address all main content areas to some extent. Including all necessary topics will earn an A, The more content that is neglected, the lower the grade. Each presentation has its own content areas, and the number of main content areas divides the grade. Content areas are provided with the guidelines for each presentation. *Content* accounts for 30% of the presentation grade.

Form: Oral traditional methods are the cornerstone of this course. Accordingly, Groups are to present in a form that reflects the principles of the course. Foremost, notes are discouraged during presentations. Students are expected to be able to express knowledge and understanding through the oral tradition. Limiting use of notes and avoiding text-heavy presentations are ways to reflect those principles. Engaging the class through participation is also very important to form. *Form* accounts for 20% of the presentation grade.

Organization: Organization is the most broad of the grading categories. This grade considers both preparation and presentation. Some of the aspects considered: Fluid delivery of presentation, involvement of all members, time management, outline, attendance, trouble shooting, etc. The small group is expected to be proactive and to communicate well with one another as well as the total group and instructor. *Organization* accounts for 30% of the presentation grade.

Critical Thinking: While critical thinking is formally required and identified in critical thinking questions, critical thought is expected in all class functions. Presentations should represent critical thinking by considering the elements of critical thinking during preparation. The required critical thinking questions are the formal expression of critical thinking. Each question should identify the elements of critical thinking applied. *Critical Thinking* accounts for 20% of the presentation grade.

Lesson Plan- Session 1

Traditional Education Discussion

Standards Addressed:

-Act 31 compliance; American Indian cultural and historical understanding.

General Goals:

- Understanding and appreciation of traditional First Nations education/culture.
- Experience in oral traditional teaching method.
- Engage all students while developing memory, communication, critical thinking, and questioning skills.
- Enable students to apply method in the future.

Specific Goals:

- Memory development/forced recall.
- Practice value of respect in dialogue, thoughtful participation.
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Provide content for understanding of; First Nations traditional education, the oral tradition, holistic worldview, storytelling as teaching tool.

Required Materials:

- Chairs/desks in small group circles.
- Dry erase/chalkboard or other appropriate visual aides

Step-By-Step Procedures (80 minute class period):

1-Small group memory circle. One at a time, each member of each small group verbally recalls a memory from the previous class period without use of notes. Memories are not graded, other than participation. Small Groups then share with total group.

Approximately five-ten minutes is given for this exercise

2-Topical discussion. Dialogue based forum based on an overview of traditional education. General questions entertained, instructor calls on students in event of lack of responsiveness. Equal opportunities distributed among the small groups. Instructor guides discussion, facilitates topics, provides visual examples, controls pace and timing. Topics explored:

- >Existence of traditional educational policy
- >Clash of Euro-American and First Nation education/worldview
- >Holistic worldview v. linear worldview, (visual; circle v. categories)
- >Use of storytelling as a teaching model, personal sovereignty, critical thinking promoted
- >The oral tradition: characteristics, integrity, and skills (memory, listening, expression)

Instructor notes student participation. Approximately 50-55 minutes given for this forum.

3-Critical thinking questions. Each small group develops a critical thinking question relevant to the discussion of the day. The group must identify the element(s) of critical thinking present in their question. The question is then posed to the entire class, including

the instructor, and addressed to the point to satisfaction. Approximately 15-20 minutes given for this exercise.

Independent Practice:

-Each topic and class provides topics for extra credit opportunities. Area of research for the overview of traditional education include: holistic worldview, American Indian culture, U.S. American Indian Education policy history, storytelling, oral tradition, and other topics addressed in the day's discussion.

Assessment Based on Objectives:

-Evaluate understanding through questions
-Respectful participation in discussion and memory circle demonstrates use of memory, and communication skills.

Adaptations for Students with Special Needs:

-Written notes can be provided by a student volunteer if requested in advance.

Extensions for Gifted Students:

Suggested readings:

>Rupert Ross, *Dancing with a ghost* or *Returning to the Teachings* for further understanding of worldview confrontation
>Chapter II, "Concepts of Authority" by W.C. Wasson, available by request from instructor for further understanding of worldview, and personal sovereignty.

Possible Connections to Other Subjects:

-History
-Leadership
-Philosophy
-Culture, diversity, and/or ethnic studies
-Management

Midterm Guidelines

The midterm is intended to provide both the student and the teacher with a progress report. The instructor assesses the range and depth of understanding of the individuals and the group. Questions, comments and concerns can be voiced in this exchange, as the midterm provides the group and the instructor time to build rapport. The students are able to provide feedback and on the progression of the course, and the instructor will provide a grade and status report for the students and group in the following week.

- 1) The midterm presentation is the least formal presentation, yet still requires the small group to **present an outline** pertaining to the presentation this outline should include:
 - Names of group members, date and course title.
 - Outline format illustrating the structure of the presentation, and the names of the members involved in any given portion of the presentation.
 - Tasks and roles of each member during preparation should be listed after the outline.
 - Two Critical thinking questions regarding the first session of the course.
- 2) The **content of the presentation must include all four of the main topics** explored in the first session. The topics do not need to be covered equally, but they do need to be presented with an adequate understanding of the topic. This presentation can take many forms, including questions, comments and concerns. Students are encouraged to be creative. Time management will be considered in the organizational portion of the grade.
- 3) **Notes are not allowed** during the midterm. The midterm is meant to reflect the students ability to express information and understanding through the oral tradition. The format must be conducive the circumstance. For the midterm, the circumstances will involve the group and instructor sitting around a table, plan accordingly.

4)Required Content:

<u>Traditional Education</u>		
Oral Tradition, Storytelling, Holistic Worldview		
<u>Tools</u>		<u>Values</u>
Groups		Respect
Memory circle	<u>Learning</u>	Personal Sovereignty
Oral evaluation		Cultural Teachings;
Repetition		(4R's, 7 Teachings)
<u>Skills</u>		
Communication (listening, expression, memory, consensus building), Critical Thinking		

Final Guidelines

The total group final will be organized and presented by the total group. This is an opportunity for the total group to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding developed throughout the course. Organizing the entire group challenges communication skills and requires critical thinking to develop an effective demonstration of knowledge. All students must participate during the final, which will span two class periods. The total group is provided a large degree of choice and responsibility concerning the final, which reflects the values of the method and demonstrates respect for the development of the students.

1) The total group must ***provide an outline*** for the final to the instructor before the final begins. This outline should include:

- Date and course title.
- Outline format illustrating the structure of the final, and the names of the members involved in any given portion of the final.
- Content addressed noted within the outline.
- Tasks and roles of each student during preparation and final should be listed after the outline.
- Four critical thinking questions relevant of the course, to be posed to the total group during the presentation. Elements of critical thinking used in questions are to be noted.

2) The four ***questions from the outline must be addressed during the final***. When and how the questions are addressed remains the choice of the total group. The elements of critical thinking used in these questions must be noted both on the outline and during the final.

3) ***Required Content:***

- Oral Traditional Teaching Methods and Act 31
- First Nations Traditional Education: Holistic Worldview, Oral Tradition, and Storytelling
- Values: Respect, Personal Sovereignty
- Skills: Communication and Critical Thinking
- Tools: Memory and Talking Circles, Repetition, Groups, Oral Evaluation
- Texts:

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire
Look to the Mountain, Gregory Cajete, Ph.D.