INDIGEPEDIA: DIGITAL DECOLONIZATION — LIVING HISTORIES OF NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES INDIGENIZING K-12 CURRICULUM

IN WASHINGTON STATE

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of DAVID PERRY WARNER find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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INDIGEPEDIA: DIGITAL DECOLONIZATION — LIVING HISTORIES OF NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES INDIGENIZING K-12 CURRICULUM IN WASHINGTON STATE

Abstract

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Native American peoples within the state of Washington have a unique relationship to their newly arrived non-Native neighbors. The power of formal education to shape the historical memory of all people within the state of Washington is important to understanding the digital project which has been undertaken by Native peoples after the passage of HB 1495 in the year 2005 that states that the school districts in Washington State are “encouraged to incorporate curricula about the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, so that students learn about the unique heritage and experience of their closest neighbors.”

This project will examine the idea of Native peoples’ histories as “living histories”—not as artifacts from the past to be studied and learned about; rather, to have a comprehension of Native American tribal histories as being a history of the past and the future informing the current lived relationships between Native peoples and their non-Native neighbors. Additionally, this project will examine the ideas of an emplaced history and experience which can be shared with non-Natives so that students in the K-12 educational system can understand
the unique relationship that has come about through the signing of treaties and the recognition of tribal peoples’ sovereignty.

Finally, it is hoped that this project can help to add to the vision and mission of those who are sharing tribal histories using digital technologies so as to help non-Natives to understand the shared landscape upon which they live and the hopeful creation of more responsible, respectful, reciprocal, and humbly participatory relationships between themselves and Native American peoples within the state of Washington. This project is a piece of that vision.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The appropriation, transformation, and reappropriation of indigeneity—whether it be of objects, identity, children, land or sovereignty [...] is directed toward the future. [...] Nowhere in the indigenous world are cultural reappropriations regarded as returns to the past; rather, they are always reimaginings of the future.

—Jeffrey Sissons

Recovering and maintaining Indigenous worldviews, philosophies, and ways of knowing and applying those teachings in a contemporary context represents a web of liberation strategies Indigenous Peoples can employ to disentangle themselves from the oppressive control of colonizing state governments. Combined with the political drive toward self-determination, these strategies mark resistance to cultural genocide, vitalize an agenda to rebuild strong and sustainable Indigenous national territories, and promote a just relationship with neighboring states based on the notions of peace and just coexistence embodied in Indigenous knowledge and encoded in the original treaties.

—Leanne R. Simpson

Laying the Groundwork

The roots of this doctoral thesis came out of my desire to understand how Native peoples within the United States were using digital technologies to share their histories with other Native peoples and with their non-Native neighbors. These projects include digital Native curriculum in Montana (Indian Education for All and www.montanatribes.org), a film series and digital curriculum in Utah (We Shall Remain: A Native History of Utah and America and www.utahindians.org), smaller digital projects done by individual tribal nations in the United States, and focusing primarily on the online digital curriculum, Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State (STI), in the state of Washington to understand how Native peoples within the state of Washington are attempting to share their living histories with their non-Native neighbors (http://tribalsov.ospi.k12.wa.us/). Originally I was interested in looking at how wiki models, where users can add, modify, or delete the content on a website could help in
understanding how Native peoples within the state of Washington could have control over the living histories that they would be sharing. This then changed into a respectful critique of the tribal sovereignty curriculum that is currently being developed in the state of Washington. It is my hope that through understanding how this curriculum is shaped and implemented that a clearer understanding of how digital technologies mold the sharing of living Indigenous histories and what will be included in those digital spaces for both Natives and non-Natives to learn about the twenty-nine federally recognized tribes in the state of Washington.

This project was almost never completed as the fears and uncertainty of its directions and, more importantly, its foundations came into question and under strict scrutiny. How does one respectfully critique a nascent vision? Particularly a vision of transformation where relationality becomes both the roots and the fruits of the project of Indigenizing the curriculum in K-12 education and of the ways that teacher certification programs are a portion of that circle; vital elements of that mission and vision. It is critical to be completely forthright at the start of this project that the concept and praxis of the four R’s (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991) of Indigenous research came into the mind of this researcher—respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility.

Respect

I grappled with how to not only show, but to embody respect; to treat with dignity and honor the relationships that Native peoples within the state of Washington were and are seeking

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1 The author uses the terms Native and Indigenous interchangeably throughout this article while recognizing that a necessary piece of self-determination is the power to name oneself and one’s community. These terms are commonly used throughout the literature of Indigenous/Native studies while still not being uniformly accepted or adopted by members of Indigenous communities. The use of these terms is not intended to flatten any real differences but are used to aid in the comparison and contrast of the diversity of these communities in their common goal of remembrance as a piece of cultural revitalization (decolonization).
with their newest neighbors, those non-Native peoples who are the recipients of the treaty-making and the ensuing relations that occurred generations before. Additionally, cultural respect is demonstrated toward Native American peoples within the state of Washington by valuing their diverse knowledges, their unique worldviews and value systems and by making the utmost effort to honor the contribution that these make toward an enlarged view of and differential understanding of historical remembrance, curriculum, and the pedagogy that emerges from these unique epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies. I had a great deal of apprehension regarding critiquing this Indigenous contribution to K-12 curriculum insomuch that it might lead to a misrepresentation of the vision and values that those who have contributed to Indigenizing the curriculum in the state of Washington are in the process of creating and attempting to integrate—how does one truthfully examine and assess the potential outcomes of a project that is still a “pilot” program?

I recognized that stepping into this mission of respectful criticality would require a full disclosure of positionality—those pieces of myself where situated knowledge became the way of mapping my own conscious and unconscious influences that have shaped this project—my frames of reference—that have transformed my relationship with the subject matter, and my relationships with those Natives and non-Natives who have altered the questions I have asked, the paths I have wandered, and the theories that I have found most useful and relevant in this undertaking. It has meant that I have had to recognize the fluidity of not only the material I have been examining but also my own fluidity when it came to my own subject position and how that

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In using the term non-Native it is recognized that there are also people of color and white people within the United States who fall under this broad term. Many of those who are identified by the term non-Native may be Indigenous in their homeland and may even think of themselves as Indigenous within the context of the United States. However, the term non-Native is used to signify the difference between immigrant peoples and those peoples who made treaties with the U.S. federal government and have nation-to-nation relationships with them.
positionality and locationality have changed my vision and the scholarly theoretical and methodological tools that have proven both fruitful and just.

It is about knowing who I am and how I engage and interconnect with my surroundings. This has meant that I must respect my own living history and how it has come to be braided with the living histories of those Native peoples within the state of Washington who are now trying so very hard to be seen, heard, and have their lifeways and remembrances honored and respected. I start by stating that I come from two sources of Indigeneity within my own bloodlines. Because of the Indian Act in Canada I am not aware of where my homeland lies though I have partial knowledge that informs me that my mother is First Nations from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Because of the Indian Act she became a non-status Indian and I, by virtue of this colonizing illogic, have also lost my status to be recognized by my original tribal community and by the government of Canada as a First Nations person. However, this has not impacted my understanding of my ties to Indigenous peoplehood. In fact, it may have unwittingly contributed to my search for an understanding of who I truly am as a Native person. My biological father is Mexican and although I am not aware from what state in Mexico he hails from this does not lessen my knowledge that I also draw from Indigenous roots on this side of my bloodlines. These two facts of my existence have shaped my educational, pedagogical, and research paths and have led me to a deeper understanding of how my work is important to helping others to understand the unique worldviews of Indigenous peoples. I have found that being Indigenous is more about becoming and recognition of roots, of a memory in the blood—storytelling stored in the DNA that has called me back to who I am and what I should be about. My own journey of coming to this realization has been fraught with difficulties, dead-ends, and loops that brought me back to where I am and where I am going. That sounds convoluted, and it is, because this has not been a
straight-line journey; no linear timelines for myself. A related thread in this braiding has been my own mis-education and the subsequent Indigenizing of my own schooling and pedagogy. As I have found that my embodied knowledge was of greater importance than I had initially recognized I discovered that this “newfound” common-sense has meant that I have had to be even more careful and thoughtful in my teaching and learning. This led me to the idea of homework where I emphasize the first half of this word-concept. In this way of relating and connecting I began to wrestle with the idea that my own social location, my positionality, had a profound impact on the way I related to other Native peoples, to non-Natives, and as a Native scholar-activist in higher education. The italicized home in the word-concept homework refers to the need, the clearly identifiable requirement, that before we can engage with and hope to understand the living histories of Native American peoples within the state of Washington that a necessary element and practice of humility is required. The emphasis on the word “home” is recognition that all learning is ideological and that those conceptualizations and the lived experiences that flow from them are a reflection of the ways that we understand our relationships with one another. I understand that I needed to be clear about my embodied knowledge about my own Indigeneity and how it has shaped the ways I have learned, what I have learned, who I have learned from, and how I share that knowledge with others.

**Decolonization and Relevance**

Throughout many scholarly pieces on Indigenous peoples and their worldviews and their contact” with Western nation-states we read the term *decolonization*—this is a term that I have

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3 The author recognizes that the term “decolonization” is also a contested term with a multiplicity of working definitions that grow out of the particularities of those Indigenous peoples impacted by imperialism, colonization and neo-colonialism (globalization). Decolonization is a reparative response to the destruction of communal relations, which has historically been achieved through projects of assimilation and acculturation, through genocidal acts, and through theft of lands. Since the effects linger and the project of assimilation is ongoing, decolonization is also about continual resistance to these projects.
wrestled with since I have started on my journey to understanding how to better share the living histories of Indigenous peoples; it feels like this term is trying to engage with something so large and complex that it has become emptied of meaning before it has had a chance to create new relations between Natives and non-Natives. The term feels false because it asks what about the contact with these newcomers needs to be stripped from us and at the same time it begs the question of how to create/reclaim—at times this has meant recovery and re-creation of traditional ways of knowing and being—those Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies that, up to this point in time, seem have been treated as worthy of contempt or at best have been relegated to a place of exhibitionary pedagogy. There is a deeper question that I want to pose: How do we think about ourselves as Indigenous peoples without the requirement to juxtapose our existence through comparison, contrast with, or in opposition to non-Native peoples?

So, after respect I found myself struggling with the issue of relevance—how would this “new” curriculum bring in the indigenous knowledge, the traditional knowledge, the oral knowledge that would show the local tribal nations’ situated knowledge, their emplaced knowledge, place-based knowledge which draws its meanings, values, and uses from the cultural context in which the knowledge is situated? This epistemology had been thoroughly integrated into everyday life and had been acquired through direct experience and the active participation in real-world activities—whether that is the more “mundane” day-to-day tasks or ceremonial activities. This type of knowledge is different than what we are taught in Western educational institutions as history. The challenge I saw placed before me was to understand where that wisdom/insight, if it appeared at all, was to be found within this “new” curriculum. The colonized educational system has historically devalued this knowledge and labeled it as myth. What about and how does this Indigenous curriculum shift the power in K-12 education in the
state of Washington to eliminate the deficit view of Native American youth and their learning styles and their learning outcomes?

**Reciprocity and Responsibility**

Reciprocity requires that there is a two-way process of both learning and research exchange between the school districts that will be using these materials in their classrooms to educate all of the students in the state of Washington about their closest local tribal nations. There is a set of paired questions that I leave as yet unanswered, because it will take time to see how complementary relationships will be developed through the implementation of these curricula. Firstly, how will non-Native youth increase in their knowledge and understanding of local tribal history, culture, and governance thereby hopefully creating respectful relationships with their Native neighbors? Secondly, how will this “new” curriculum benefit the Native communities that are offering their living histories as a bridge to creating new respectful relations—how does this digital project “give back” to Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington?

The last element I must address is responsibility—the active and respectful empowerment of Indigenous peoples which can be fostered through an active and rigorous engagement and participation with them as we rewrite the history of the state of Washington. This is about revising our shared historical remembrance so as to create new or improved forms and the ensuing relationships which will grow out of these efforts. My responsibility includes being mindful of the need for respect, relevance, and reciprocity during all the stages of this thesis—this uncovering of this “new” pedagogy and curriculum. Part of my responsibility as a researcher and an educator will be to see if I can discover if this digital project has met the needs of the Native peoples who are sharing their living histories. This final goal will not be
discovered immediately; in fact it will take an extended engagement with this digital project to discover its outcomes.

The Roots and the Fruits

The roots of this project started out of the consideration of two different projects that are intertwined in their aspirations for understanding remembrance, representation, community, education, place, and the uses of information technology to facilitate this complex dialectic for Indigenous peoples. The power of remembrance, particularly when understood as being more than that which can be discovered through the written word allows us to interact with lived histories that Indigenous peoples powerfully claim as having an existence from time immemorial and which, because they are *living* histories, are understood to be in relationship with the people. These histories are not static; rather, they are interactive knowledge which can only be understood through a relationship with a landscape (water, plants, animals, the earth, other humans, etc.).

The first project relates to the use of digital archiving by Indigenous peoples as a tool to aid in the sharing of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The other related project is one that is an ongoing project in the state of Washington in the introduction and integration into the state education curriculum of Native peoples’ cultures, histories and governance.\(^4\) The threads that connect these two projects are the ways that we understand community and citizenship, the importance of place-based education, and the historical (mis)representation of Native peoples as the “Other”. This introduction will attempt to both complicate our understanding of these issues and yet at the same time attempt to provide the beginnings of some possible solutions to these knotty issues that will appear in later chapters.

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\(^4\) Information on the curriculum and outcomes of this legislation can be found at the website for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for Washington State: [http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/Curriculum.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/Curriculum.aspx)
Place-based Education, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge

One of the first concepts we must engage with is the idea of place-based education. This paper will attempt to explain the ways that digital technologies and the pedagogy and curriculum in Washington state schools, both elementary and secondary, can be used to connect virtual reality and the lessons learned in the classroom, and hopefully outside the school walls, with local places. David Gruenewald (2003) has written about the connection of place to a different vision for education, “Critical place-based pedagogy cannot only be about struggles with human oppression. It must also embrace the experience of being human in connection with others and with the world of nature, and the responsibility to conserve and restore our shared environments for future generations” (6). This understanding of the connection of place with pedagogy is important because it shows that learning takes place beyond the books and the classrooms as we begin this journey of connecting Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with mainstream education. The value of this type of knowing is needed for both Native and non-Native students, their parent, and their broader communities. It is less about the specific pedagogical tools themselves and more about the ways we think about the ends of education that we envision creating with those tools. To find the answer of what those ends are we must ask all involved with this curriculum what they want from this “new” way of teaching and learning.

A short explication of Indigenous digital archives is also needed at the outset of this venture to clarify the directions that this dialectic can take. The idea for the project of Indigepedia, which has now grown into a respectful critique of existing Native American online educational archives in the state of Washington, grew out of the recognition that there were numerous models of digital archiving for Native communities that developed immediately
following the advent of information technologies (IT) and the earliest stages of the digital domain as a public domain for information sharing, creation, and archiving. These digital tools were seen as a necessary piece of the process of cultural revitalization—the ongoing process of decolonization.

**Indigenous Peoples Using Digital Technology**

Native peoples within the United States have a large presence in the digital domain and have websites that range from online versions of Native news publications to tribal nation websites that give information about the particulars of different tribal nations’ histories, cultures, languages, treaties, and community development projects. In addition, there are Native dating websites, sites that give information about powwows, sites that deal with issues of health (e.g. obesity, diabetes, heart disease), and Indigenous digital archives. The digital archives are generally connected to institutes of higher education and are used as digital library collections of documents, photos, and other information that is being “preserved” and as a way for those doing research in the field of Indigenous studies to have access to these collections.

These digital archives are what prompted this idea of looking at the way that these collections are changing the way Native studies and pedagogy relating to Native American living histories is done. The idea for Indigepedia grew out of this author’s frustration in attempting to access the disparate areas of Native studies (health, law, government, education, etc.) in a more coherent and usable fashion. The current approach to finding materials about Indigenous peoples can be likened to taking the older reference card system (Dewey decimal) and dumping the aforementioned cards on the floor and attempting to find those areas that one is interested in researching. It is a tedious, time-consuming and frustrating process. Additionally, there is the need to connect the work that is being done by numerous Indigenous communities in their efforts
to revitalize their traditions and to assist their community members in the process of recovery and resilience. This digital decolonization is directly connected to the ideas of how “decolonization” has been understood by some Indigenous scholars:

Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (Smith 39)

Thus, it is not necessary to throw the colonial baby out with the imperial bathwater—the technology itself is not what we are battling but rather the discourses and ideologies that have framed the uses of technology as tools of domination. Indigenous peoples have recognized that the power is in re-framing, shifting the accepted paradigms of understanding through re-centering the discourse and the accompanying actions. There are other Indigenous writers who agree with the earlier assertion about decolonization, “The strongest weapon we have against the power of the state to destroy us at the core is the truth” (Alfred 95).

**Indigenous Self-Determination**

This truth is the remembrance of Indigenous ways of being and knowing. This Native cosmology is related to the struggle for the recognition of the peoplehood and self-determination of Indigenous peoples. Self-determination has been expressed in numerous Indigenous conferences, writings, and speeches and one expression of it comes from the collected papers and proceedings of the *First International Conference on the Right to Self-Determination & the United Nations* held in Geneva, Switzerland in the year 2000, “…self-determination means the freedom for indigenous peoples to live well, to live according to their own values and beliefs, and to be respected by their non-indigenous neighbors . . . The indigenous peoples must feel
secure in their right to make choices for themselves—to live well and humanly in their own ways” (Daes 58 emphasis in original). This expression of self-determination ties directly to another conference attendee who stated a further explication on the meaning of this term:

We recognized that self-determination is not held in isolation; there is no absolute self-determination. It is shared with your neighbor. It follows the relationship you make with your neighbor. It follows the relationship you make with the people who live next to you. Self-determination means living side by side (…) we had to learn how to co-exist (Deer 105).

This working definition is invaluable in understanding the ways that digital libraries can serve to help Indigenous peoples to alter the relationships that they have with their newly arrived neighbors. That in their journey toward having their peoplehood recognized, that these new tools could help to bridge the gaps that have been created through mis-representation.

The other component that this thesis addresses is that of the ways that Indigenous people are re-presenting themselves—to resist the “Othering” that has occurred since first contact with their new neighbors:

To resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve what we were and remake ourselves. The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they also have become spaces of resistance and hope. (Smith 4)

This resistance has been enacted through the efforts of Native peoples in the state of Washington to re-present, to present anew, their peoplehood in the curriculum that is taught in the public schools. This is being brought about through a bill introduced in the legislature in 2005. Substitute House Bill 1495 has specific language which states:
Each school district board of directors is encouraged to incorporate curricula about the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, so that students learn about the unique heritage and experience of their closest neighbors... school districts are encouraged to collaborate with any federally recognized Indian tribe within their district, and with neighboring Indian tribes, to incorporate expanded and improved curricular materials about Indian tribes, and to create programs of classroom and community cultural exchanges. (1, 4)

The goal of this bill is to provide children in elementary and secondary education with information about the tribal nation(s) that their school district(s) is/are geographically closest to with the intent of teaching Native children about their own people and other Native peoples and provide non-Native students with an understanding of local Native American history.

The important language of this bill, which relates to the earlier definitions of self-determination, is where the word “collaborate” is used. This collaboration requires recognition of coexistence, especially where one recognizes a meaning of coexistence as living in peace with another or others despite differences. This is a radical idea because if it were implemented it would change the way curriculum is developed and even the notion of “measuring” educational success through high-stake tests. Furthermore, it addresses the larger goals of integrating Native histories, cultures, and governance into the way that all children are taught in U.S. society.

The goal of integrating Native histories, cultures, and governance into the curriculum serves as a corrective to the long history of colonization where Indigeneity itself was being erased. This draws upon a concept called “cultural safety” which comes from qualitative research literature when the term was introduced as part of a nursing and educational initiative in New Zealand (Dyck and Kearns 1995). The debate over cultural safety grew out of the cultural
oppression, social and economic subordination, of Indigenous New Zealanders and their growing resistance to this domination. The same situation can be seen for Indigenous peoples within the United States whose very way of being was/is also under attack—the corrective to this situation of integrating Native history, culture, and government into the mainstream curriculum in Washington state can be seen as mirroring that of Native New Zealanders:

Cultural safety might be defined as feeling safe to express one’s perspective and behave in accordance with one’s own culture—acknowledging, accepting, and affirming cultural identity, history, values, beliefs, styles, and practices. Cultural safety is essential for effective learning, and it is precisely what is absent in mainstream educational settings for many minority students. The result of its absence is low participation and completion rates. (Ball and Pence 81)

This idea of “cultural safety leads back into the discussion around place-based education and its connections to Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). One author, Peter Hanohano (1999) writes about the necessity for regarding place with reverence:

The Native notion of place or sense of place refers to appreciation and recognition of certain lands, locations, natural monuments and places as sacred and imbued with special power and spirit. Man is thus required to maintain these places with honor and respect to ensure that the spiritual essence and power continues to benefit each succeeding generation of people, whether Native or not. (215)

This relates to Gruenewald’s (2003) discussion of Chet Bowers’ insight that decolonization is not simply a resistant act, but that, “it also depends on recovering and renewing traditional, non-commodified cultural patterns such as mentoring and intergenerational relationships” (9).
The power of place-based education lies in the goal of resisting the isolating effects of mainstream education, both socially and in relation to their lived environment for both Native and non-Native students, and showing teachers and students that they already have the power to better perceive and transform their local places (Gruenwald 2003). In writing about the Makah and their whale hunting practices Michael Marker (2006) examines the ways that incorporating Indigenous values into the mainstream educational process can be seen as a way to “[focus] a mirror back at the commonplace assumptions about nature, history, identity and food” (483). This cross-cultural dialectic is necessary if we are to understand how Indigenous peoples can help their non-Indigenous neighbors to understand the memory of the land. The key for Marker is to help non-Natives to see what is at stake and what Indigenous peoples have to share that disrupts the dis-location of non-Indigenous, and even many Indigenous people, who must recognize, “... a collective experience on the land” (492).

In writing about Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Deborah McGregor (2004) puts forward the idea that to learn and understand Indigenous ways of being and knowing requires a reciprocal relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. She asks a series of questions which can also be asked of the Since Time Immemorial digital project, “... Indigenous Knowledge represents an integration of person, place, product, and process. This means that who you are matters! How do you learn IK? How do you respect IK? How do you share IK? And most importantly, are you ready to receive IK?” (391). These questions foreground the respect, attention to the relations between human and those more-than-human, and the reciprocity that must be present in this web. One Native scholar who has written clearly about the relationship between humans and those who are more-than-human is Vine Deloria Jr. (1999):
“We are all relatives” when taken as a methodological tool for obtaining knowledge means that we observe the natural world by looking for relationships between various things in it. That is to say, everything in the natural world has relationships with every other thing and the total set of relationships make up the natural world as we experience it. This concept is simply the relativity concept as applied to a universe that people experience as alive and not as dead or inert. (34)

Now we can turn our attention to the ways that different cultural theorists can help us to understand these coupled projects and their perils and promise. The first theories come from the writing of Arjun Appadurai who is discussing in his chapter “Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination” about the debates raging around the effects of globalization and the fact that “social exclusion is ever more tied to epistemological exclusion” (2). This epistemological exclusion can be seen as a continuation of colonial projects that have been enacted with the goal of silencing Indigenous voices, erasing Native histories, and absorbing those crushed under the wheels of progress into the mainstream body politic.

**Grassroots Globalization**

Now, we are not left in a state of despair when explicating this exclusionary state of being—rather, we find the weapons of the weak at the ready. One of these tools is the idea that just as there is a top-down approach to globalization (imperialism) we also find an approach that lets us know that the subaltern can speak, that there is a “grassroots globalization” or “globalization from below” (Appadurai 3) and that it is this resistance to domination that we need to understand as Indigenous scholars have noted that Native resistance has always been present in response to oppression. The linked projects that I am writing about—Indigenizing the curriculum being coupled with digital decolonization—are a new articulation of this ongoing
resistance to colonization and the revitalization of Indigenous communities. Leanne R. Simpson (2004) in addressing anticolonial strategies of recovery and revitalization of Indigenous communities ties this resistance back to the land and to the idea of place-based pedagogy:

... we must strengthen the oral tradition, teach children how to learn from the land and how to understand the knowledge of the land. From the perspective of Indigenous Peoples, how you learn is as important or perhaps more important that what you learn, and Indigenous educational programs must use culturally inherent ways of teaching and learning IK. They must be land-based, and they must provide opportunities for youth to interact with Elders and Traditional Knowledge holders on Indigenous terms... Indigenous knowledge must be lived, and so we must think very carefully about how we are preparing our children to live their cultural knowledge in the coming generations. (380-381)

Appadurai makes a strong argument at the beginning of his chapter when he states, “The idea of an international civil society will have no future outside of the success of these efforts to globalize from below” (Appadurai 3). How will Indigenous peoples be included in this understanding of a global “community” and what part will they play as actors in this globalization from below? How does an understanding of Indigenous peoples as self-determining, autonomous peoples who have struggled against incorporation into nation-states now be viewed when the latest incarnation of colonization, globalization, has supposedly trumpeted the dissolution of nation-states and the idea that time and space are now compressed and that the latest stage of capitalism has already made the local global and the global local? There is no “outside” to this new world order and so the question of the effectiveness of grassroots globalization efforts requires us to understand both the strategic and tactical effects of
Indigenizing the curriculum and digital decolonization. Again, we return to the writings of Simpson (2004), “Engaging in anticolonial strategies for the protection, recovery, and maintenance of IK systems means that academics, Indigenous Knowledge holders, and the political leader of Indigenous nations and settler governments must be prepared to dismantle the colonial project in all of its current manifestations” (381). So, place-based education when coupled with IK or TEK requires revolutionary vision and a different understanding of the stakes involved for both Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous communities alike. It is from this that I first began to conceive that digital decolonization required more than resistance, more than mere incorporation of Indigenous histories into the curriculum—that if we are to truly Indigenize the curriculum in the state of Washington, and even within the broader United States, that we have to transform in revolutionary ways how we think about education, curriculum, and pedagogy; that critical pedagogy must start from the original peoples and be thought of as Critical Indigenous Pedagogy.

Appadurai asserts that when we see this compression of space and time we are missing the bigger picture and he asserts that in order to understand the intensified motion of globalization we have to understand them as “relations of disjuncture” which is in direct contestation to the common-sense understanding of globalization as a period of history when we are becoming increasingly more connected, “The various flows we see—of objects, persons, images, and discourses—are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic, or spatially consistent” (5). Relations created by globalization are unequal, unjust, and in many instances literally unlivable:

…these disjunctures themselves precipitate various kinds of problems and frictions in different local situations. Indeed, it is the disjunctures between the
various vectors characterizing this world-in-motion that produces fundamental problems of livelihood, equity, suffering, justice, and governance. (Appadurai 6)

It is precisely these problems that the projects of Indigenizing the curriculum and digital decolonization address. The earlier discussion about self-determination as a relationship with one’s neighbors is applicable to this dilemma created by these relations of disjuncture, “[Digital] information networks create a “space” for sharing stories, values, customs and experiences, which represent the roles of self and community” (Leclair and Warren 7). Digital decolonization, then, can help us to understand that the act of sharing and re-creating is not about victimization but rather:

…aboriginal societies are recognized as strategists, who develop specialization and institutionalization processes as innovative responses to the social, political, normative, economic and cultural changes brought about through contact with Eurocentric institutions. (…) these strategies are deliberate efforts to preserve the cultural and national autonomy, as well as to create options for sustaining a collective resistance. (Leclair and Warren 10)

We can thus see that digital decolonization, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) ought to be understood in practical terms, as a mode of action, ways of being, and not simply in a technical fashion—the adoption and adaptation of these tools into the lives of Indigenous peoples (Salazar 19). Thus we begin to understand digital self-representation and place-based education as powerful tools of “globalization from below.”
Seeing Through “New” Eyes

Having espoused the strengths of new technologies to transform the relations that Indigenous peoples have with their neighbors, a caveat must be made at the outset where the threat of digital colonization is ever-present:

Clearly, the Internet provides indigenous peoples powerful new means of self-representation, but as its use expands and intensifies, so does the ‘over-seeing gaze’ of encapsulating polities and transnational corporations. This given, the current relief from visual imperialism afforded to indigenous peoples by the web may be phantasmagoric and the ‘visual performative’ alone will not overturn their subaltern positions in the political arena. (Prins 72)

I feel it is necessary to tread cautiously into these digital domains but that what will answer many of these concerns is how Indigenous peoples use these tools. They are using them as tools for the revitalization of their ways of being (e.g. language, storytelling, etc.) as spaces for sharing cultural knowledge with non-Natives as a way of countering the destructiveness of Western ontology and epistemology with more communal understandings of being and knowing, and as a way to communicate the connection between Native peoples and the land they inhabit and in so communicating this connectedness to also show the connections between non-Natives and the land:

Places are fundamentally pedagogical because they are contexts for human perception and for participation with the phenomenal, ecological, and cultural world. What we know is, in large part, shaped by the kinds of places we experience and the quality of attention we give them. (Gruenewald 645)
This understanding of “worlding” relates to Appadurai’s suggestion that we understand the role that imagination plays in our lives as social beings and that it is, “…the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge” (Appadurai 6).

What the attention to the local environment and Indigenous histories does for us is that it shifts the source of the “gaze” and lifts the veil of ignorance that is part and parcel of the creation and maintenance of the figure of the “Other” in relation to the “civilized” citizen. It persuades us that in order to understand the world differently we are required to ask what the world looks like from other social locations. How do we learn these Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies? Who will be our guide? The answer is outlined quite simply in the language of the bill to Indigenize the curriculum—it is about a partnership with the elders of the Native communities who are the neighbors of these non-Natives:

The commitment to work in partnership is a conscious decision to harness the potential that exists in the networks of relationships that define us as human beings. This commitment requires us to open ourselves to the possibility of mutual transformation and to focus our attention on the resources that are available from moment to moment – in ourselves, in our partners, and in the environment – to support a dynamic, unfolding partnership process. (Ball and Pence 17)

This echoes the call made by Appadurai about working across disciplines and, in this case, across worldviews, “We need to attend to this varied set of public spheres, and the intellectuals who constitute them, to create partnerships in teaching and research, so that our picture of areas does not stay confined to our own first-order, necessarily parochial, world pictures” (Appadurai 9). The “public intellectuals” of Indigenous communities then are understood as those Elders of
the community who possess the wisdom of their communities—knowledge is viewed as something to be shared and learning is seen as accountability to a community (reciprocity). This is much different than the model of knowledge where it is viewed as a commodity—knowledge as something to be earned; learning shows my value in society:

The act of co-construction requires a level of trust and sharing seldom found and not required in knowledge-transfer approaches that seek to fill one mind from another. . . . Knowledge accumulation without transformation is a sterile process that permits one only to accumulate wealth, but not to create it. (Ball and Pence 46)

This vision of pedagogy will require a different relationship between Native and non-Native peoples—one built on trust and respect so that Indigenous self-determination can flourish, “The interactive process that develops over time between students, Elders, instructors, and community members is at least as important as the generated Aboriginal content” (Ball and Pence 40). This last quote highlights the view that Indigenizing the curriculum is not about a finished product, but rather our attention to the *process* and the relations developed through these coalitions.

**Cultural Dubbing and the “Authentic” Native**

We can now turn our attention to the work of Tom Boellstorff who writes about the idea of cultural dubbing in his chapter from *Mobile cultures: new media in queer Asia*. Cultural dubbing as a metaphor is related to the film practice of dubbing or looping which refers to the practice of recording voices which do not belong to the original actors and that speak in a different language than the actor is speaking. This idea of “cultural dubbing” is powerful when applied to the politics of Indigenous re-presentation in the United States because the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the mainstream curriculum does the same work of
disturbing the hegemonic imaginary about what constitutes the “authentic” Native and at the same time it disrupts the hegemonic understanding of what it means to be a “citizen”—to be “American” and belong to the United States of America.

What makes this even more subversive is that the incorporation of Native histories, cultures, and government into the mainstream curriculum is very subtle—it has the potential to quietly undermine the “common-sense” understandings of the construct of a national self, on both the societal level and on the level of the individual as embodying the nation. Cultural dubbing shows that identity and identification are always in flux, constantly in transformation and that the Native subject positions are “in terms of translation” (Boellstorff 22). This is not a failed translation, even though there is always something “lost in translation” we can still see the value of this cultural dubbing because it re-creates a new “original”—it blows apart the idea of the “authentic” Native because it shows that what it means to be Indigenous is always a process, and not a final product, “...the voice of globalization is powerful, but that voice does not “move” across the globe, it is dialogically reconstituted. It is in a constant state of dubbing” (Boellstorff 26).

Another powerful counter-discourse to the notion of the “authenticity” of the Other is put forward in an article written by Alexandra Harmon, Wanted: More Histories of Indian Identity, where the idea of “Indianness” is examined regarding cultural adaptation:

...history contradicts the still-prevalent notion that culture change destroys Indianness; it shows that Indianness cannot be calibrated to degrees of cultural continuity. Group after group has maintained a strong sense of Indian identity despite wholesale changes in structure, customs, beliefs, and personnel. While the characteristics that identified Indians in the past have altered radically, Indians
have refused to disappear. … historical studies should disabuse people of the notion that Indianness, no matter how altered, has an irreducible essence—a primal core that authenticates its possessors. In truth, there has never been an essential identifying characteristic of Indians or an Indian group . . . Indianness is an ongoing creation, and Indians are chief among its creators. They have taken active roles in shaping their identities that we know as Indian. They have asserted their identities in strategic ways. And again and again, they have sought change as a means of maintaining their societies and their distinctiveness. (260-261)

What this means is that the work of Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington, who are attempting to integrate Indigenous discourses into the whitestream curriculum, are simply doing what their ancestors have done in response to colonization—they are adapting for survival and continuance.

What Boellstorff brings to this idea of naming as an act of resistance is that the idea of cultural dubbing does the same work that Appadurai mentioned when he wrote about “relations of disjuncture”—we can see that if we are to recognize the subjectivity of Indigenous peoples we have to recognize the problem with the trope of the “authentic” Native:

Disjuncture is at the heart of the dub; there is no prior state of pure synchrony and no simple “conversion” to another way of being . . . The idea of dubbing culture indicates that the root of the problem is notion of authenticity itself . . . . It disrupts the apparent seamlessness of the predubbed “original”, showing that it too is a dub, that its “traditions” are the product of social contexts with their own assumptions and inequalities. (Boellstorff 41-42)
Rey Chow brings forward the paired ideas of the “corrupted native” and the “natives [who] are no longer staying in their frames” (28). This resistance to staying within the frame of the colonial gaze is echoed by other cultural theorists, “. . . how does the world look—as congeries of areas—from other locations (social, cultural, nation)?” (Appadurai 8).

At the same time we must be cautious that we are not reinscribing and reifying an “authentic” Indigenous image in our move to disrupt the colonizing gaze:

For many, the image is also the site of possible change. In many critical discourses, the image is implicitly the place where battles are fought and strategies of resistance negotiated. Such discourses try to inhabit this image-site by providing alternative sights, alternative ways of watching *that would change the image*. (Chow 29 emphasis in original)

The question that needs to be asked is what is the value of showing those images that have introduced and reproduced the stereotypes of the Native as inescapably “Other” in the cultural imagination? In our longing to disrupt the binary created by the “civilizing mission” do we run the risk of creating new “authentic” representations?

Chow brings a powerful tool to analyze the language of Substitute House Bill 1495 and its call to integrate Native American history, culture, and government into the mainstream curriculum. The question of what is considered to be the *approved* history and culture brings in Chow’s discussion of the “authentic” native, “How do we identify the native? How do we identify with her? How do we construct the native’s “identity”? What processes of identification are involved?” (29). These are invaluable questions to bring to bear to looking at the language of this bill. What are the goals of integrating Native history, culture, and
government into the state curriculum? Is this to serve as both a corrective to the absence of local Native history in the curriculum and as a way of countering racial prejudice and racial discrimination? Additionally, how can it serve as a corrective to the absence of place-based pedagogy? Chow has a powerful insight that critiques the second possible reason for introducing a more “correct,” and local form of Indigeneity, into the curriculum, “The problem with the reinvention of subjectivity as such is that it tries to combat the politics of image, a politics that is conducted on surfaces, by a politics of depths, hidden truths, and inner voices” (29). When teachers are working with the tribal nations to develop and implement Native history, culture, and government into the curriculum Chow’s critique becomes very crucial to understanding what will eventually be taught.

In a slight re-wording of Chow’s question we can ask, “How can we [teach] about the native by not ignoring the defiled, degraded image that is an inerasable part of her status—i.e., by not resorting to the idealist belief that everything would be all right if the inner truth of the native is restored because the inner truth would lead to the “correct” image?” (30). This question is crucial to understanding the project of introducing an Indigenous directed shaping of the curriculum. What are the pitfalls and promises of collaboration when it comes to the representation of the image of the native? Will the project of alternative remembrances be able to traverse the rigid requirements of curriculum design during the era of the No Child Left Behind Act? Will it successfully counter the stereotypes? What will be lost in the translation? Will we be able to pair Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and place-based education in a way that will see the successful incorporation of both Indigenous ways of knowing and this critical pedagogy?
The power of including Indigenous Elders in the process of re-framing our understanding of Indigenous peoples, a paradigm shift, is that by bringing the Indigenous ways of knowing into the classroom we can begin to answer Chow’s question, “Is there a way of conceiving of the native beyond imagistic resemblance?” (34). Another important voice that should not be lost in this process of re-creating the curriculum is that of Indigenous children. With this different understanding of education we need to attend to the voices and lives of those who will benefit the most from this project of Indigenizing the curriculum and bringing in the pedagogy of place-based education. In doing this we should recognize the “essential untranslatability from the subaltern discourse to imperialist discourse” (Chow 35 emphasis in original).

What does this mean for the goals of the project of Indigenizing the curriculum? Perhaps a powerful piece of what it means is that we must be comfortable with ambiguity. That Indigenous peoples who are putting forward these paired projects must be untroubled by the fact that in implementing these projects that it is about the dialogue that is necessary for Native and non-Natives to co-exist. That it is not too late to begin another dialogue but more importantly it is never too late to begin listening to one another—that Native epistemologies teach us that the living histories of Indigenous peoples are both an oral tradition and an aural tradition. The notion of untranslatability means that we must face Chow’s challenge to our own projects that can potentially call back the “authentic” Native which will haunt our efforts to disrupt hegemonic understandings of Indigenous peoples, “The hasty supply of original “contexts” and “specificities” easily becomes complicit with the dominant discourse, which achieves hegemony precisely by its capacity to convert, recode, make transparent, and thus represent even those experiences that resist it with a stubborn opacity” (38). How then do we avoid the pitfalls when
we attempt to re-present Indigenous peoples? How do we honor their reality while not reproducing notions of “authenticity”?

**Chapter Overview**

In the second chapter there is an examination of how Native American histories are *living* histories—that through understanding the oral and aural nature of Native peoples’ histories we can see the necessity for shifting our understanding of historical remembrance to include non-Western ways of remembrance. In addition, in this chapter there is an explication of how an understanding of place is required in order to *begin* to comprehend the legacy of the twenty-nine federally recognized tribes in the state of Washington. In the third chapter it is laid out for the reader how non-Native peoples are required to understand the history of colonization and how we see this made real through the video project *We Shall Remain: A Native History of Utah and America* which helps us to see how video and a digital curriculum can open up an understanding of Native histories in the K-12 curriculum. In the fourth chapter the idea of “place” is unpacked to include more meanings than a geographic location and additionally the idea of integrating Native American studies more thoroughly into American Studies programs and other departments, beyond departments of education, is discussed. The fifth chapter lays outs the ideas of relational ethics, cultural safety, culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally responsive schooling, community cultural wealth, and the theory and practice of decolonizing and Indigenizing mainstream educational curricula. The concluding chapter examines the pitfalls and promise of integrating Native American histories, cultures, and governance into the K-12 curriculum and how digital technologies can serve to aid in this work.
Chapter 2

LIVING HISTORIES:

Humbly Listening to the Voice of Native Peoples and the Voice of the Land

We recognized that self-determination is not held in isolation; there is no absolute self-determination. It is shared with your neighbor. It follows the relationship you make with your neighbor. It follows the relationship you make with the people who live next to you. Self-determination means living side by side (...) we had to learn how to co-exist.

—Kenneth Deer

This chapter took shape from the experiences of the education, “research,” and pedagogy that I undertook in response to the questions formed even before this doctoral thesis began to take shape. These questions were forming even before I sat in a formal college classroom setting—they are the kinds of questions that one cannot find the answers to at the back of the book like one would in a math textbook (only odd-numbered questions answered). These questions had been sitting with me since I was a little child: Who am I? What qualities or characteristics make me Native? How do I interact with other Natives who have grown up with their language, with their ceremonies, who have grown up on, or near, their traditional homelands? How do I interact with other Native peoples knowing that I have only been around a handful of them since I was a little child? I realized that I would have to look in unusual places if I were to have any hope of finding answers to these kinds of questions and that I would not have to look far afield as the answer to all of them is in and about my relations, not my blood relatives, rather those Native people who I would connect with and learn from—Elders; my Native peers in my college classes and community; the Native instructors that I would seek out, both those who were professors and those who were teachers without the institutional certification but with communal and generational knowledge; Native community members who
visited the university campus; even the Native students who signed up for the courses I was teaching; and finally, those Natives who I would find within the pages of those written texts whose stories—whether those be the stories of judicial and legislative struggles, the place-based stories of culture and being, the historical record recorded in the written word and through oral tradition, or even the poetry and prose that resonated with my experience of being/becoming Native.

I began to have a clearer understanding of the ways that Native Americans and their histories were being presented in higher education. This came about through my own education as an undergraduate in taking courses that would allow me to minor in Native American studies. The coursework was a mixture of courses offered through the Department of Comparative American Cultures, anthropology coursework, and Native American studies courses offered through the Department of History. These course offerings were an odd mixture of the basic points surrounding Native American histories and ranged from discussions of sovereignty, the trust relationship between Indian nations and the federal government, the history of contact with European Americans from the year 1492 onward, and specific topics such as Indian gaming, fishing rights, and the impact of boarding schools. The larger lessons derived from this coursework were that the educational experiences that I had in the classroom were ones where we were introduced to a mixture of general information about Native American peoples with very little that spoke to the local tribal nations and their histories.

We were taught about general locations and the large geographical groupings of Native peoples within the United States—the Plains tribes, those tribes within the Plateau region of the country, or tribes of the Pacific Northwest coast. However, we were not taught about specific tribal peoples’ histories; different tribes were used to illustrate certain points about the relations
between Native Americans and non-Natives but we did not learn about these tribal nations’ specific histories. The bulk of what I learned was taught through multiple-choice exams and short essay responses to material that we were required to memorize and then asked to regurgitate to show our mastery of names, dates, and events. I only had about three courses, out of the many that I took, that were taught by a Native American instructor. The remainder of my coursework was taught by non-Natives. This observation is salient because in thinking back about the education that I was receiving about Indigenous peoples and their lives I realized that the majority of my instructors had only received their learning through the remove of written materials. So, I was being taught to read about Native peoples by non-Natives who had mostly acquired their knowledge of Indigenous peoples through written histories, anthropological field reports, and literature.

In thinking about this project I pushed back into my childhood memories to attempt to reconstruct what I had been taught about Native American peoples—whether it was in my elementary, middle-school, or high school years—I can only come up with fragments relating to my own exposure and learning about Native American history. One incident stands out in particular where I was asked to make a diorama using flour, salt, and water to create the “earth” which was then spread in the bottom of a shoebox where we added tipis constructed from construction paper and wooden dowels along with using the plastic figures of Native peoples to populate our village scene. In my case, I also painted a small river and added some foliage. This is about all I can recall about my early education about Native peoples. The remainder of my “education” about Native American peoples came through museums, television shows, and movies.
More importantly there was a vast difference between the experiences that I had outside of the classroom and those that were occurring only within the realm of official classroom pedagogy and curriculum—particularly as I entered the Native community as a college student. My early experiences with the history of Native peoples were the same as the students who walked into my classroom. We were taught a history that was disconnected from the places that we lived in; there was no consciousness that there had ever been local Native peoples or even that Native peoples are a living presence. This, I believe, is not due to any inherent bias on the part of my teachers as I was growing up. Rather this was a “fact” that popular culture taught and reinforced through the myth that Native American history started at first contact with Columbus and seemingly ended around the end of the nineteenth century—the history that we were taught in the public schools was disjointed and fixed upon an image of Native Americans forever present in the nineteenth century but seemingly absent from the present-day lives of students, both Native and non-Native. This was also possible because of the reservation system that placed Native peoples far outside of my awareness because they were physically separated from the community that I grew up in.

The learning that I was seeking to uncover, as a descendant of a Coastal First Nations woman and a Mexican man, was nowhere to be found because of my severed ties with my community and the traditional lands of my ancestors and I can only vaguely remember what I was taught as a child after my adoption into a white middle-class family: the visits to museums and the hodge-podge nature of the education in relation to my own Indigeneity—how could I relate to the artifacts encased in the glass display cases? Where was my Indigeneity located; where was it emplaced? What does it mean to be Native American in the twenty-first century—to be of “mixed-blood” descent, to be disenfranchised (or as one of my non-Native professors
attempted to label me: \textit{detribalized}), to be adopted into a white, middle-class, religiously conservative Christian home?

Where does one go to look for answers to these types of questions? Educational theories and methods are silent when it comes to answering these questions. I pose these personal questions because they are not separate from the silences surrounding the living histories of Indigenous peoples within the borders of the state of Washington. The questions may change when querying as to what it means to be Spokane, Colville, Yakama, Upper Skagit, Makah, or even Muckleshoot—however, there are still silences and present absences when one searches for answers; or even the threads to find out what questions to ask within the classrooms, school libraries, and the curriculum of K-12 education.

My own experience in teaching Native American studies courses at a land-grant institution have taught me that most students’ knowledge-base is limited at best. That even Native students’ knowledge is limited because they are sitting in the same classrooms and taking the same coursework as their non-Native classmates. Many, but not all, have the knowledge that has been taught them within their home communities. For some this has only meant the teachings and experiences of perhaps a single relative—whether that is a parent, an uncle, an aunt, a grandparent. This potential knowledge base has been impacted by the level of colonization that has impacted their tribal nations and that is continuing to reverberate throughout their communities, families, and their own lives.

\textbf{Colonization and Conquest}

The colonization of Native peoples is a difficult subject—extremely troublesome to address because of the many manifestations that it has come in; troubling because of the violence
that has been part and parcel of it, and fearsome because of the silence surrounding it within our elementary and secondary curriculum. Paul R. Carr and Gina Thésée speak to this silence:

> Although colonialism is generally thought of to be buried in the past, similar to the mainstream pop-culture mantra that we are now in a post-racial society because of the election of an African-American president in the US, it is clear that our realities, experiences and minds have been shaped by the platform of centuries of colonial exploitation and degradation. (15)

Addressing these issues becomes powerful to changing our relationships because in examining these issues non-Natives are required to step back and examine not just the humanity of their Native neighbors, who come from a different historical background, but most importantly they must examine what makes them fully human; this is the challenge set before them of reciprocal relationality. This is about “learning into being” rather than accepting a model of citizenship where the assumptions are made that certain individuals were destined to receive this mantle of “civilization.” Currently within elementary and secondary education within the U.S. we still are receiving the messages about the rightness and inevitability of the settlement of this country by non-Native immigrants. Regrettably this message is not fundamentally challenged by the Indigenous curriculum that is being proposed in the state of Washington.

The *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum has five questions that guide the overall learning goals for students in the K-12 school system in the state of Washington—How does physical geography affect Northwest tribes’ culture, economy, and where they choose to settle and trade?

What is the legal status of the tribes who negotiated or who did not enter into United States

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5 This understanding of learning is different from rote memorization and regurgitation of names and dates on high-stakes tests. It is about recognizing learning as transformative—“learning into being” means that teaching and learning are seen as never-ending processes and that learning, for Native peoples, has traditionally meant that all learning is connected to our relationships and our understanding of the protocols that must be performed to have this knowledge become a part of who we are. It is about *being* rather than merely *doing*. 
treaties? What were the political, economic, and cultural forces that led to the treaties? What are the ways in which tribes responded to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence? What have local tribes done to meet the challenges of reservation life? What have these tribes, as sovereign nations, done to meet the economic and cultural needs of their tribal communities? These questions are important but in none of them do we learn anything about the distinctive histories of the twenty-nine federally recognized tribal nations that are located within the borders of the state of Washington. The original goal of Substitute House Bill 1495 is left adrift as we learn nothing of the distinctive histories of these tribal nations. We are only learning about them regarding their relation to the arrival of their non-Native neighbors.

Many of the goals of colonization have been about disrupting, if not outright destroying the ways that Indigenous people perceive their relationship to their home communities; their relationship to their places of being, and their understanding of themselves. Colonization has meant the destruction of cultural ties as “It distorts communication, dislocates victims from their cultural origins, and creates an ever-evolving and all-encompassing environment that inhibits the very establishment of a “political vocabulary” necessary for its identification” (Ball 3). These distortions find their way into the curriculum that is taught in both elementary and secondary educational institutions within the state of Washington. The necessity for this “political vocabulary” speaks to the hidden curriculum about Native peoples within elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions and curriculum. The project of Indigenizing the curriculum that is being put forward in the state of Washington can be about increasing the vocabulary of both Native and non-Native students, teachers, administrators, and community members about the “hidden” histories of the Indigenous peoples closest to these school districts.
The stories of Native American peoples rarely make it into the textbooks—they serve as a disappearing backdrop to the larger, and supposedly longer, march of civilization. They enter the stage when Columbus mis-names them and disappear, along with the buffalo, around the end of the nineteenth century. They only appear in world’s fairs, in museum cases, on postcards, and as figures to be used for marketing purposes. Later they made it to the movie screen and served as the villains to the “heroes” of the Wild West and helped to establish a uniquely “American” identity. Yet, Indigenous peoples stubbornly remain upon the landscape.

This is a place and a subject, that of settled lands and colonization, that seems to be almost wholly absent from the proposed curriculum that is being put forward as a recommendation for teachers in the public education system in the state of Washington. In making this claim I know that as a part of this conceptualization of history-making, in both its rendering as a written record of what has happened in a given geographical area and in its ideological form as a choice of what counts as historical memory, it is recognized that there is a grappling of this through the videos that are presented as part of the sharing of histories of Native American peoples who live within the state of Washington. In particular there is an online video entitled *Tribal Perspectives on American History, Vol. I: The Northwest* that does an excellent job of laying out the relationships between Native peoples in what is now known as the state of Washington.

The video starts out by discussing the political capital of telling history and how power and ideology shape how the story is told and who has been allowed to tell that history. In particular, it asks that people will listen to the storytelling of Native peoples, not the stories in books or newspapers, but through *listening to* the voice of the people, on their own terms, and how they share their interpretations and values related to the expansion of the Northwest. Those
Native peoples sharing these Indigenous histories know that the power of teaching a more honest and inclusive history is about healing the harms that have occurred. They are asking for non-Natives to honestly face their history and go about enduring some truth-telling and work through the pain, the guilt, and most importantly, the responsibility to work out their relationships with Native living histories.

This video is powerful in that in it we hear the word *genocide* voiced—however, there is no explanation as to why this word is used. There is no contextualization or further explication as to why we hear this word in reference to Native and non-Native relations. This can be problematic as the youth studying these matters in the public schools in the state of Washington have no other materials available through the website that clarify why this powerful descriptive language is being used to describe the violence that occurred as part of the history of contact and the continued relations between Native peoples throughout the Northwest and the waves of traders, explorers, and eventually settlers who would be arriving. More importantly, absent a teacher intervening and recognizing the power of the word genocide as it is used in this video it is highly doubtful that a student would hear this word and venture a question as to why that word is being used to describe the violence and brutality of colonization and the settler society that moved steadily westward.

These early observations about the proposed curriculum connects back to my experience in teaching the history of Native American peoples to college undergraduate students—whether that be in an introductory Native American history course, a Native Americans in film and media course, or even a course about Native American women. One of the utmost challenges has been in identifying and dismantling the stereotypes that are ever-present in the minds of the students—their “experience” of Native peoples has been primarily shaped by popular culture and has lead
me to the necessity of first unpacking the racial/racist stereotypes that drive this “imagined Indian” in the consciousness and subconscious thoughts of these students and how they understand what it means to be Indigenous. These stereotypes range from the familiar messages that one gets about “Indianness”: alcoholism, laziness, violence, suffering, poverty, criminality, despair, the brave warrior myth, the mystical Indian or wise Elder myth, the Noble Savage myth/stoic Indian, the original environmentalists or nature lovers, the irredeemable savage or obstacle to civilization, Native people as passive and full of childlike innocence, every Native is the recipient of casino riches and/or full-ride college scholarships, and the framing of a pan-Indian identity. There was even the rare moment where because, for these students, Native peoples are stuck in a concrete understanding of culture, the romantic view of Native peoples as frozen in time, that several related their belief that Indigenous peoples are anti-technology.

This is the place that the majority of them are commencing in their understanding of Native American peoples. If quizzed on their knowledge of Native people—of whom they can name—their short-list reads like a who’s who of John Ford and Disney movies with a mismatched mish-mash of prominent Native figures: Pocahontas, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, Sacagawea, Squanto, and Crazy Horse. The only ones who can name living Native peoples are those Native students who are sitting in on these courses who name relatives and friends before even venturing to name those Native peoples who are most famous or infamous, as the case may be. This is all part of the work that colonization has accomplished—the colonization of our minds, our memories, and our humanity.

**Native Youth—A New Generation Working Through Similar Struggles**

These previous insights seem to lend themselves to a sense of hopelessness. However, this is not the case. I have seen the power of reparative pedagogy in working with youth from a
local Native American tribe. This tribe is a Plateau tribe situated within a rural area of Northern Idaho. The statistics for these Native youth were not much different from those of other reservation youth. Their statistics included a high dropout (push-out) rate, alcohol and drug abuse, high rates of domestic violence, single-parent homes or even situations where the youth were living with their aunts and uncles or grandparents, or were surviving in the foster care system.

The tribe itself, when I began working with these youth, had only three living fluent speakers of their traditional language—all over the age of fifty-five. This fact is important to note because of the impact that assimilation policies have had on this tribal community. These youth were being taught a Native American culture class that was taught by a non-Native teacher in the off-reservation high school and middle school where the Native youth made up about 70% of the student population of these small, rural middle and high schools. The tribe was working in partnership with the university and faculty from the college of education who developed a week-long program/camp of leadership development to assist the tribe’s goals of increasing student retention, raising academic performance, and working to assist the youth in seeing higher education as a possibility and a reality in their lives. The youth spent a about a week living on-campus in a dorm and participated in classroom learning activities, developed different projects each summer, and were kept physically active through various sports activities.

The power of what was occurring with these camps was immediately visible—even to outside observers—when it was contrasted with the involvement and commitment that the youth were showing within their work in their schools at home. The focus was on learning with a purpose and every summer the effort was made by the instructors, both faculty and graduate students, to connect what was occurring in the more formal classroom settings with the projects
that the students were creating. Over the years these students have worked on creating children’s literature, staging a theatrical production, using hip-hop and slam poetry/spoken word to talk about their life on the reservation and what it means to be a member of their tribal nation, and using the methods of participatory action research to create their own interview questions to interview their community members about the reasons they had for dropping out of school, or alternatively feeling that they were being pushed out, and the reasons that many had for returning and completing their high school education and pushing on to attend college and later returning to work in and serve their home community.

This project gave these students a sense of pride and an understanding that they could critically think about their local history and the effects that their schooling had upon their relations, both with one another and with the world at large. These projects and the camp itself were expressions of what is possible when powerful things are done with Native youth, in teaching and learning and what develops from this critical pedagogical approach and practice—cooperation, commitment, mutual respect, self-generated and self-motivated learning, providing the enabling conditions which present the opportunities for these youth to move to more mature roles, hard work, persistence, self-discipline, consistent effort, responsibility, and gaining knowledge by active participation.

This contrasts sharply with the type of schooling that they had been receiving within a Euro-American epistemology—didactic instruction, the requirement for conformity, the restraint of their behavior, an emphasis on passive knowledge acquisition, and the reliance upon a single expert with specialized knowledge, the focus on mental activities within formal settings, and the distancing of themselves from the realities of life. Without even consciously attending to it the faculty and graduate students were providing an Indigenous learning environment. One where
there was a demonstration through the teaching and learning of the value of individual
differences in understanding, performance, abilities, and areas of competence. Most importantly
these Native youth were able to see and experience the value of every community member’s
contribution to their success.

This camp became an invaluable addition to supporting their tribal community’s vision
for them in creating positive visibility and acknowledgement of the youths’ talents and abilities.
Additionally, this project of addressing the drop out (push-out) rate enabled the youth to be seen
by some of the adults, Native and non-Native, school faculty, and by their peers who did not
attend the camp, as responding to and setting high expectations for themselves and for one
another. In a community meeting that was partially facilitated by some of the students who had
worked on this action research project there was a visible shift in the responsiveness of the adults
to understanding the power of collaborating with these youth to address some of the challenges
that they faced on a daily basis. Unfortunately there was little follow-up to this meeting and so
much of what could have been a powerful catalyst for change was squandered. There was a
great deal that went on in this action research project as many of the youth in their digital stories
that they created from these interviews grew in their knowledge of who they were in relation to
their parents, their peers, elders, and Native and non-Native community members. Their strength
and confidence in themselves was visible and palpable as some of them recognized that there
could be an acceptance of who they were as Native people in their rural community. Most
importantly, many of them recognized the power in their own storytelling and what that
storytelling, what their personal narratives, could do to bring about powerful and positive change
in their community. Many of these youth have begun to see their formal education experiences
as more meaningful and purposeful—they are more hopeful for the future, with that increased
optimism and hope they are beginning to have more clearly defined goals for their future, and many have begun to connect their school learning to their personal, family, and community vision. This connection was something that occurred again and again every year that this camp has happened and what is more powerful is that many of the younger youth, both Native and non-Native, are enthusiastic about returning to the camp and learning something new and being able to participate with their friends in a place where learning can be fun and there are no penalties for making mistakes. The power of place was connected to everything that these youth were engaged in while participating in the camp and contrasted sharply with their educational experience within the walls of the middle and high schools.

Listening to the Land

This is the challenge—How do you listen to the land when you see humans as the only contributors to knowledge? This links directly to the ideas of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Moreover, when we think of our relationships how do we include our lived environment as a part of those connections? The subject of Indigenous research methods needs to be included in any discussion of educational curricula and approaches to teaching and learning within the K-12 educational system. When thinking about the landscape as one of our teachers, as a contributing member of our web of community members we are required to break free from the Western view of the earth. This viewpoint in part comes out of Biblical Christianity where Adam is commanded in Genesis, chapter one, verse twenty-eight to: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (emphasis added). This is tied together with the ideology of capitalism and land ownership where land is viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold; where land is viewed as to its productivity, whether that is as
pasture for cattle, farmland to harvest, minerals to be extracted, or land to “develop” in an urban setting.

To illustrate the difference between the description of place given from a Western perspective and an Indigenous perspective of relationality with the landscape we must listen to the words of Peter Hanohano, a Native Hawaiian, who was quoted in *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*:

I started with tribal, and it’s relational, but it’s more than human relationships. And maybe the basis of that relationship I know with Indigenous people is the land. But it’s our relationship to the land that’s a spiritual connection to the land. So I think that we can take people to those places, and they can experience them for themselves. So it’s [pause] like Oscar and Ray, they write about the pedagogy of place, that the environment is the knowledge. So place is important, and how we describe it, I don’t know how we go about doing that. I have another friend, he is Tongan, but grew up in New Zealand, and space for him is that distance or relationship between people. So the Maori, when they do ceremonies, it’s to eliminate the space between people. So the space between people is Kapu, is sacred, and you go through a ceremony and respect each other’s space, but the ceremony brings us together so that we occupy the same space. So that’s the Maori concept of space, or the Tongan concept of space. And I think that Indigenous concept of place is that there is that same kind of relation between humans and our environment. So the distance or relationship between ourselves and the environment is sacred, and so you do ceremonies to bridge that space or that distance. (Wilson 86-87)
One of the key points that are brought out in this quote is that of “pedagogy of place” and this was brought in the introductory chapter of this thesis as it relates to place-based education. However, this is not what Peter is sharing with us. This is about what we learn in relation to the lived and living landscape and about our relationship with the landscape that we inhabit—to be wholly present in a place. A paradigm shift must occur for us to understand that some of our teachers may be the rocks, the water, and the plants; not in an environmental studies sort of way, this is not simply about ecology. Rather, we find ourselves as part of the ecosystem and not separated from the landscape. We also find ourselves as finding our relationship shifting from one where the landscape is inert and abstracted to relationality where we find ourselves in dialogue with and learning from the land. In “learning in place” and “learning from place” we can then see that true learning—an enduring understanding—is not about an event, rather, we find ourselves enfolded within growth as a process and not a measurable product. Because we experience it we find that we are literally at a loss for words to explain this “pedagogy of place” to others and all we can do is invite them to also come and feel and “see” for themselves. The best way that this author has found to explain this ineffable property of trying to explain experiential learning is through talking about trying to help someone else understand a sensory experience using only words. How would you go about describing the taste of salt to someone who for some reason had never tasted salt before in their lives? This thought-exercise helps students to understand the value of experiential learning; that in order to truly understand the taste of salt—and this experience will be different for everyone—one has to experience it for oneself. Words fail to relate meaning and understanding as there are no metaphors or analogies that will even come close to substituting for the experience itself.
Further, there is the challenge laid out before us to “occupy the same space” and that brings to bear the difficulty of what will be lost in translation. This is because these spaces and places are not in common; rather more often than not they are viewed through Western eyes as commonplace. One place can be exchanged with another when the earth itself is viewed, as was previously stated, as a commodity. This means that the idea of places as sacred, as holding wisdom, as sites of power can be very difficult to convey.

The compelling idea that “the environment is the knowledge” invites us to see that our understanding will come from our experiences in certain places. But these experiences require guides, require community and generational knowledge, it requires that we cultivate empathy and humility. These are not measurable on high-stakes test and cannot be described in Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). Finally, there is the idea of bridging the “distance or space” or alternatively the “distance or relationship” between ourselves and places—this bridging, along with the space itself, is sacred. This seems to be extremely difficult to impart through anything other than a direct interaction, intimate contact, with these places.

**Decolonizing and Indigenizing**

In the state of Washington Indigenizing the academy; to decolonize—questioning the “legitimacy” of colonization and once an honest recognition of the truth of this injustice is achieved imagining ways to resist, challenge, and overturn colonial institutions and ideologies alongside the variety of ways that Indigenous peoples are actively working to transform their lives and the world around them. This active working toward freedom and self-determination in the “land of the free” is a necessary piece of what Indigenizing the curriculum can mean not only for both Native and non-Native students but also what it can do when it assists in the process of helping all of us to become **unsettled** in the best sense of that word. Considering the previously
mentioned colonization of Native peoples and lands we can recall the maps we have of the state of Washington and that the only remnant of Native peoples upon these guides to the geography, roads, and towns and cities scattered across the state are the Native American place-names of some of the cities, the waterways, mountains, etc. It is true that the Native American reservations are marked upon some of the maps but they become mere markers of the appropriation of an acceptable form of Indigeneity that is thought of as part of the history of the dominant society.

This is the challenge being set before those who are attempting to integrate these Native histories, governance, and cultures into the K-12 curriculum. They want to address the high “dropout” rate of the Native youth and help to educate non-Natives about histories that have previously gone both unrecognized and been unseen in the majority of cases. The glaring weakness of this STI digital project is that it is not a mandatory requirement for the school districts to implement this Native American curriculum.

This project of digital decolonization, the *Since Time Immemorial* website, can be thought of as another tool for Indigenous peoples who are attempting to find their way back to themselves, not in a nostalgic sense, but in the sense of wanting a return to the balance that their ancestors had achieved through thousands of years and a myriad of generations of struggle becomes a small, yet powerful portion, of the dream of decolonization. The call for the integration of Native American histories, cultures, and governance (sovereignty and self-determination) into the K-12 curriculum in Washington State is invaluable because it addresses the current expression of Manifest Destiny brought about by globalization, or “Empire-by-any-other-name” as some critical cultural scholars would claim. Arif Dirlik (2004) pins the tale on the proverbial hegemonic donkey, “If the USA in its globalization eliminates the outside, it does
so by incorporating many outsides within a globalized body politic, beginning with the incorporation of Native American societies, which have never been an integral part of the USA” (291). A part of the project of Indigenizing the curriculum may be about attempting to unsettle where the settler society imagines that the narrative of contact and assimilation is finished, closed, and complete. Though Dirlik’s use of the word integral makes an absolutist claim about the “incorporation” of Native peoples, Indigenous peoples within the borders of the United States are integral, existing as an essential constituent or characteristic, to the larger body politic.

This unsettling is about getting members of mainstream society to reimagine and recreate their history—both the stories they have been told in school, at home, and through the media—and to re-envision the relationships and possible futures they can have with the original inhabitants of this continent, more specifically, those members of tribal nations who now reside within the borders of what is currently called Washington State. The unsettling is also about decolonization, recognition of the violence, both rhetorical and lived, that has changed the very landscape, physical and mental, of where they live, and work, and where they now call home. This project is about unsettling the very ideas of what is considered finished business—that the stories of contact, of treaty-signing, and of land cessions are only part of the story. That Indigenous peoples within Washington State are still here, and are still creating their own parallel and vastly different histories within the body politic of the United States of America.

Through providing an Indigenized view of historical remembrance there can be attention drawn to a thoroughgoing critique of U.S. as an Empire which can be accomplished through the subversive and yet innocent act of Indigenizing K-12 educational curricula. There are some important cautionary notes I have documented in the move to share Indigenous epistemologies. One of them is highlighted by Celia Haig-Brown (2008) as she discusses an Anishinaape elder
who was listening to her children and grandchildren who were seeking after knowledge from her and that, “she would be happy to teach them all they wanted to know as long as she could be assured that they would actually use that knowledge” (10). That becomes the challenge for Native peoples in Washington State who may be hesitant to share more than they feel their non-Native neighbors are capable of caring for in a responsible and reciprocal manner. This is not a small point, part of what could be a revolutionary change, or what could be just another add-on in the multi-cultural mélange is at stake here. When attempting to persuade those who are responsible for teaching the children in the state of Washington that Indigenous epistemologies are a valuable addition to the curriculum, it becomes even more important to understand what will be shared with teachers and students to enable them to see anew their Native neighbors, how that new knowledge will approached and shared, and what effects it will have upon the behavior and words of all who come into contact with these other ways of seeing, being, and knowing.

The challenge will be in helping all the residents of Washington State to see that the stereotyped images need to be cast aside in favor of complex and complicated understandings of peoples who have lived here since time immemorial, but more importantly, the value of seeing them as still-present and having a voice in the future of the state of Washington and of the United States.

Further in her article Haig-Brown quotes Dale Turner, an Associate Professor at Dartmouth College and a member of the Temagami First Nation who brings up a warning, “Whether these [Indigenous] ways can be explained to the dominant culture, and understood by it, or at the very least respected as legitimate, remains to be seen” (10). The question of understanding is critical—what will be the point of sharing different ways of being if there is not a corresponding change in thought, word, or action? Turner is asking that at the very least that
these alternative ways of being in the world be respected as legitimate, as having merit, of being worthy of consideration.

Scholar and activist Michael Apple (2008), who upon discussing the inequities of education in the US and being verbally attacked following his presentation for his views, stated simply that, “...when a nation and its government and major institutions do not deliver on their promises and on the sets of values they officially profess in education and elsewhere, then substantive criticism is the ultimate act of patriotism” (241). This reframing of the word patriotism, which has been used a political tool and weapon, is being rearticulated and reframed to exhibit positive traits. One of the greatest challenges discovered in the writing of this thesis and also set before those who are attempting to Indigenize the K-12 curriculum is explained further by Michael Apple and allows us to see in a new light what we are attempting to do when he expounded upon the power of education to transform individual student’s lives:

Education clearly plays a key social role in the formation of identities. That is, children spend a very large part of their lives inside the buildings we call schools. They come to grips with authority relations, with the emotional labor both of managing one’s presentation of self and of being with others who are both the same and different. Transformations in the content and structure of this key organization have lasting effects on the dispositions and values that we do and do not act upon, on who we think we are and on who we think we can become. (254)

That is all that this project of Indigenizing the curriculum is asking, pleading with the mainstream to do—to respect the sovereignty and self-determination of the Native youth who they teach. The powerful idea of altering the way that mainstream educators have about “who [Native students] think [they] are and on who [they] think [they] can become” becomes of
primary importance in persuading them that business-as-usual can be very harmful to future generations, both Native and non-Native and alternatively that respectfully teaching Indigenous living histories can empower all children in the K-12 educational system.

Critical educational scholars have shown that this vision is not radical—unless one understands that the true meaning of radical means getting to the root of a problem. Teresa McCarty (2009) has laid out quite simply and sensibly the challenges before Native American children and their communities when it comes to NCLB and high-stakes testing:

Holding schools accountable for providing a high-quality, healthy, and uplifting education to all students is unquestionably a worthy goal. Yet, it is necessary to ask, “accountable to what or to whom?” Indigenous parents and communities must be at the center of education reforms intended to serve their children. This entails a commitment to Indigenous self-determination and the right of choice – not choice in the narrow sense of NCLB-style “school choice”, a policy that masks operations of race, social class, language, and power – but choice rooted in the linked domains of individual and communal self-determination. (25)

The challenge that is placed before us is to see how much re-centering of Indigenous epistemologies we can do within the educational system, both K-12 and higher education. How much we can be of assistance in helping both individual Native students and their tribal communities to actively use their self-determination in their educational experiences. This is the challenge raised by the report, From Where the Sun Rises: Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State, which states:

When we remember that we live in a world where many cultures co-exist,
we realize the importance of understanding each other. Today, our common
denominator collectively places great value on the written word; this
document itself represents indigenous advocates reaching out to representatives
of a culture that reveres documentation. But truly, however high we hold
this document in esteem, we must remember that it is not the study itself that
is important; it is the results that are important, the sincerity, and the partnerships
that are being created and fortified as these drafts become final versions. At
stake is our very survival. (3)

Understanding? This word appears in the document where the authors themselves recognize that
documentation is not nearly enough; in fact, it pales next to what they are truly seeking after.
Understanding can mean sympathy; like a sympathetic heartbeat or more deeply it can mean
empathy. It can mean to take the time and care to consider another’s story, another’s feeling, or
another’s experience. It can mean to be accepting of differences—differences in ways of
knowing, differences in ways of being, differences in the ways that we gather knowledge,
differences in our morals or ethics. It can mean how we attend to others; how we perceive their
presence and whether we honor and respect that nearness and intimacy. Because with that level
of closeness we are going to be vulnerable—however, with that level of openness, with that lack
of guile, we will find ourselves creating new relationships of trust, caring, and commitment to
dignity. This is the heart of survival and reaching beyond merely continuing to exist but, rather,
blossoming into new kinship as non-Natives recognize their own humanity requires that they
treat with dignity their Indigenous neighbors and recognize their humanity even as they respect
different living histories.
Understanding Indigenous histories as “living histories” requires abandoning the claims that written history is the ultimate measure of truth—rather, that veracity can come in other forms and through other modes of being. This is what is possible if the curriculum is Indigenized rather than merely having the multicultural appreciation of “difference” injected into a curricular structure that already assimilates anything that fails to match the dominant narrative. A narrative that has for too long held sway as the final measure of reality while silencing all other voices, narratives, and lives.
Chapter 3

DOING HOMEWORK FIRST:

Seeing Through New Eyes—Worlds and Lives We Have Previously Misrecognized

Indian education dates back to a time when all children were identified as gifted and talented. Each child had a skill and ability that would contribute to the health and vitality of the community. Everyone in the community was expected and trained to be a teacher to identify and cultivate these skills and abilities. The elders were entrusted to oversee this sacred act of knowledge being shared. That is our vision for Indian education today.

—From Where the Sun Rises: Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State

What can we consider to be true Indigenous histories within the K-12 curriculum in the state of Washington when there are no stories to be heard; no narratives shared of the places where the Native nations within the state of Washington call home? How can these be called Indigenous histories when we are missing the stories—the storytelling; the oral histories? The peoples’ voices—the voices of the ancestors, the voices of the current generation, the voices of the children and future generations—are a present absence. There are a series of questions put forward as we begin this exploration and explication: How do we shift in our teaching and learning when thinking of history as storytelling? How much of local history is taught, both of Indigenous peoples and even of their newly arrived non-Native neighbors? What is the accuracy of the stories being told; how do we measure their veracity and who will be our guides? How does consultation with the tribes/elders about the veracity of the tribe’s living history occur and will this be an ongoing process? What will learning about and from these Indigenous living histories do for us and to us?

The questions from the opening of this chapter lead us into a discussion of what precisely is obstructing our view and our reach when attempting to Indigenize the curriculum in K-12
education in the state of Washington. This chapter will wrestle with the idea of “remembering to forget” as brought forward by Susan Dion (2009) as she relates how the understanding, if we can graciously call it that, of Aboriginal peoples and their perspectives from post-contact history are ignored and replaced with a more comforting narrative in which, “…many teachers and students with whom I work resist an understanding of history that positions Aboriginal people as human agents actively resisting oppression by dominant Canadian society. Calling on images of tipis, tomahawks, furs, and feather, teachers and students too often reveal a dehumanized representation of Aboriginal people” (4). This creates a “discourse of subordination” (Valaskis 156) or as been mentioned in the previous chapter it provides us with a romanticized image of Indigenous peoples—the “noble savage” or the mythical “Other.” Native people in the United States are still viewed as being forever stuck in the past. One of the greatest challenges is getting the dominant society to see that Indigenous peoples are still here and that we have been here for thousands of years. That the history of this hemisphere is an Indigenous history and that we have to break down the display cases, we must take the artifacts off the wall, we must shatter the myths that are separating non-Natives from developing respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples. In the process of altering their thinking about Indigenous peoples the residents of the state of Washington will also be required to think in new ways about themselves and through this altered self-conception and the new ways of thinking about Indigeneity they will have to create new stories of themselves and their relationships with Native peoples. They will have to do their homework first—they will have to understand their relationships with Native peoples and how colonization, how their settler society, and how their current mis-education has distorted not only their understanding of Indigeneity but also their understanding of their own position vis-à-vis Native communities and the comforting and celebratory histories that they have been told.
Denial and Disavowal of Colonization

The practice of sharing stories is fraught with many complications and the objective is for non-Natives to truly listen to these stories; more than simply hear Native peoples out. The figure of the “romantic” Native is connected to the idea of forgetting the past. However this “forgetting” is actually a denial and a disavowal of a history that many refuse to face. An example of this denial and disavowal comes from scholars in the field of Indigenous studies who are attempting to grapple with the effects of genocidal events that occurred within the Western hemisphere and particularly those genocidal actions which were enacted and authorized by the federal and state governments in the United States (e.g. boarding schools, “Trail of Tears”). In dealing with just the aspect of denial we must face those who would deny both the fact of the “American holocaust” and a coupled denial of awareness of the facts. In discussing colonization and the attendant violence which is part and parcel of Empire there is an interpretive denial—there is a concession that something happened but the ‘something’ is being seen through a different light by the dominant sector of the United States, or there may even be the claim that this “American holocaust” is portrayed as not truly belonging to the genocidal class of events as is alleged by some scholars in the field of Indigenous studies (Stannard 1992).

There is a need for an alternative story surrounding the colonization of the Americas. There is a disavowal, a knowing and not knowing at the same time, of the genocidal projects in the United States—there is an unthinkable quality to the idea of colonization and genocide in the U.S. and there is a lingering question which can be felt as too monstrous to face: What do we do to the truth of the “American holocaust” when we discover its legitimacy and what will it do to us and for us? There is both a respect and fear, perhaps not unwarranted, of the recognition of the holocaustal events that have occurred in this country. There may be both conscious and
unconscious efforts at cover-up to maintain the illusion of a “democracy” that is unsullied by past events—some may be attempting to avoid drawing the serious implications from the human suffering that has occurred in this country. How can we best remember these effects of colonialism-imperialism as the challenge before us is one of addressing not only the recognition of the historical genocidal projects but also attending to the current and future legacy of this murderous brutality in its physical, psychological and soul-murdering outcomes? This challenge is made all the more difficult because the project of denial is transmitted from generation to generation—if we deny the reality and fail to feel the pain of colonization then we will fail to take action and engage with these realities.

How can Indigenous scholars favorably engage a populace, perhaps even including some Indigenous peoples, who through cultural learning and indoctrination have embraced a delusional trope surrounding the colonization of the United States? Those in denial have to take on a type of disavowal that makes the argument that the genocidal acts, if they are even granted that appellation, are part of a distant past that has no connection with who “we” really are today as citizens of the United States of America. The sincerity of this claim may only add to Indigenous scholars’ challenges as they attempt to assail this self-deception. Perhaps a large part of the challenge is that the calming effect of denial is so effective—the anxiety surrounding addressing the claims of genocide is reduced, but the threat of repercussions remains with a lingering possibility of full-disclosure.

One of the supreme challenges is surrounding the dissociative qualities of denial; there are always elements of partial acknowledgement and partial denial being put into play according to differing needs and desires. There are real concerns surrounding the threat of emotional vulnerability and moral responsibility arising out of human suffering. The colonizing violence
that occurred in the United States illustrates how difficult denial is to maintain because the actions of the U.S. clearly conflicts with the self-image and there is a great deal of effort that goes into the escalation of rationalizations. An equal measure of effort, if not more, is required by those who are attempting to close the gap between perception and reality; especially when it is known that when faced with threats that perceptions are changed to enhance our vision of ourselves—the implications for our nation’s image. Clearly there is a threat of disruption—a major project of Indigenizing academia, and in particular the ways that we discuss contact between Natives and non-Natives within the borders of the state of Washington.

The test that we have put to us as educators is one of the circulation of accounts, giving and receiving stories about who we are and what has shaped us, and the acceptance and rejection of varying scripts or schemas. Indigenous scholars and Native American community members have had the gauntlet of truth-telling thrown down before them and it part of their trial to see that the word accountability is understood as more than just getting the story right but rather the fundamental meaning of it is concerned with the idea of justice. The tricky part is that there is no fine line between the denial of the past and the denial of the present. When is forgetting ever acceptable? How does the commemoration of history lead to changes in our remembrance of the details of historical events? The true test of Indigenizing the field of education comes through the struggle to engender empathy rather than sympathy and encourage the wider populace’s identification with these Indigenous issues in a truly substantive fashion. The violence and the aftermath of the colonization in the U.S. must be recognized as an institution—a concrete set of social practices that guided and continues to guide the interactions between Indigenous peoples and their newly arrived neighbors. The hardest part will not be in telling more stories but in the
ways that we use those stories to explain why the practice of colonization was begun in the United States and why it was sustained.

Cultivating Historical Amnesia in the Classroom

Native people in the U.S. are attempting to decenter Western history. Part of the challenges faced by Native peoples lays in ignorance—teachers being unaware of the history of an Indigenous presence and not having enough understanding of their relationships, of the origins and development of the interactions, between Native and non-Natives. As was mentioned in the previous section as Native peoples attempt to recenter their stories of contact, even when that contact was unjust, they run into those who would rather not come to terms with a truer history of the United States. Many in the U.S. would rather forget this chapter of American history and just move on. However, this idea of “moving on” yet again does violence to the historical remembrance of Native peoples.

The stories of forced relocation to Native peoples to reservation lands, the violation of the treaty relations, the policy of forced assimilation, the destruction of communal landholding, the imposition of private land ownership, and the boarding schools are fragments of colonial history that members of the dominant society would sooner forget because they do not fit with the image of a progressive, democratic nation as the defining marker of “American” identity. Even within the current “war on terror” we find apologists for the United State’s actions who argue that we are simply spreading democracy and freedom to those who will benefit from our military intervention. The idea of rugged individualism also enters these arguments because it allows those who hold these dominant images of American history to argue that their ancestors worked hard for what they received and allows the current generation to understand the events that allowed the current generation to ignore the inequalities that exist currently, the strained and at
times bitterly antagonistic relationships between Native and non-Native peoples are explained away as being cultural misunderstandings—where the misunderstanding lies on the Native side for not getting why non-Natives feel guilt, or fear, or anger when discussing the history of Native-White relations. The message that Native people were oppressed runs counter to this myth of the Horatio Alger “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” storyline. The story of the mythical Indian, frozen in the past, undermines the possibilities for reconciling this unjust history with a more honest assessment of the relations between Native peoples and their new neighbors and seriously hinders the possibility of creating more just and equitable relationships in the future.

Unfortunately because the majority of the new curriculum under STI is not tribally specific, and in particular does not always relate to the tribes that are closest to each school district, it is going to be valuable to see what relevance the students see in the these materials. These new materials are contending with the old ways of teaching about Native peoples. Those storylines gave the impression that Native people simply disappeared, that because non-Native people “won” in these conflicts that they must be inherently better, and that Native peoples were/are primitive and were not capable of defending themselves or their lands. These storylines are heard in the halls of the school, are absorbed through mass media messages, and are still enacted on the playgrounds and in the neighborhoods through games of “cowboys and Indians”. Students are learning through this “hidden racial curriculum” the values, power relations, and the debates that are ongoing about Native and non-Native relations. These challenges become very important when thinking about how this new curriculum will be integrated and how teachers will approach sharing this information considering all of the other sources of information that the
students, and the teachers, are being inundated with on a daily basis that can undermine these new projects.

Though writing from the perspective of Canada, Noel Dyck (1991) discusses how there is little understanding on the part of non-Natives about the lived experiences of Native peoples:

Generally speaking, Indians and non-Indians stand on opposite sides of a history of interaction and tend to be polarized further by an unequal knowledge of each other. Non-Indians are, by and large, unaware of just how little they know about Indians and of how sharply the individual and cumulative cultural experience of living on federally administered reserves departs from the experience of other Canadians. (13)

This lack of understanding spreads to more than just the recognition of different lived experiences. It extends to an ignorance and refusal to know about why Native peoples in the United States frustrated over issues of land claims, the fights over the right to hunt and fish in treaty guaranteed “usual and accustomed places”, other social issues like freedom of religion which affected the potlatch and other Native spirituality within the state of Washington, and the simple right of self-determination which is tied into the previously mentioned historical struggles. The question becomes one of how to address such learned ignorance. How do Indigenous peoples speak back to these issues and have their voices heard and respected?

How does this new curriculum fit into a classroom experience where there is little to no other supporting material that will help as a counter-narrative to the stereotypes and the misunderstandings, the gaps in historical knowledge, and the resistance to certain facts of the historical relations between Natives and non-Natives? Natives teachers and sympathetic non-Native teachers who have attempted to serve as allies have struggled with the simplistic teaching
that has been going on for decades about Native peoples. They have struggled against the rendering of Columbus as someone who “discovered” a new world. They have struggled against the mythical story of harmony and peace with the first Thanksgiving with the pilgrims. They have struggled against the lack of culturally relevant and respectful materials in their school libraries for both Native and non-Native students to see non-stereotyped images and stories of Native peoples.

With the full awareness that these discourses have been firmly entrenched the question of dislodging them while transforming education about relations, rather than education about the “Other,” becomes a piece that draws upon the “tenets” as framed by Henry Giroux (1992) in discussing that critical pedagogy:

…focuses on the production of knowledge and identities within the specificity of educational contexts and the broader institutional locations in which they are located. Critical pedagogy refers to the deliberate attempt to construct specific conditions through which educators and students can think critically about how knowledge is produced and transformed in relation to the construction of social experiences informed by a particular relationship between the self, others, and the larger world. (98-99)

This use of critical pedagogy can help teachers to understand how the representation of Native histories as “Other” undermines the efforts to show the humanity of Indigenous peoples. Content knowledge without critical thinking will reproduce unjust relations rather than transforming the way we relate to one another. So, part of this STI project will require that we find out what the teachers in the state of Washington have been teaching about Native and non-Native relations, digging deeper into finding out why they are teaching what they teach along
with uncovering why they teach the way they do, and how they may go about using the STI curriculum to make transformative changes.

The Center Moves—Paradigm Shifts

This is where the series of questions at the start of this chapter come into play and there is a value in having them repeated as repetition is an invaluable part of storytelling for remembrance: How do we shift in our teaching and learning when thinking of history as storytelling? How much of local history is taught, both of Indigenous peoples and even of their newly arrived non-Native neighbors? What is the accuracy of the stories being told; how do we measure their veracity and who will be our guides? How does consultation with the tribes/elders about the veracity of the tribe’s living history occur and will this be an ongoing process? What will learning about and from these Indigenous living histories do for us and to us?

There is a recognition that there are limitations and constraints placed upon teachers in both their choice of learning materials and in the amount of time that they can devote to extra learning materials given the constraints of the demands of No Child Left Behind and its focus on “teaching to the test” or the “skill and drill” pedagogical approach. However, the power of transforming not only the way that we learn about Native peoples’ living histories, but also how we can see our relationships nurtured and strengthened to develop new understandings become of paramount importance. This is not just about remembrance for that goal alone would support the viewpoint that history is only about events, places, and people from the past—rather the attempt is being made through the STI project to Indigenize the K-12 curriculum for the purpose of reimagining the relationships between Natives and non-Natives; for Native peoples living histories to help in re-presenting themselves to their new neighbors. If we are too look at the concrete practices of teaching and learning we have to understand the challenges, personal and
professional, and issues, curricular and the development of a new classroom culture, of seeing through new eyes the possibilities for building bridges of deeper understanding between the local Indigenous communities and non-Natives.

One of the challenges facing non-Native teachers is that Indigenous conceptions of history are not linear; it is not about telling a chronological series of events. When looking at Indigenous living histories it needs to be understood that a Euro-American understanding of time as only linear shifts as these living histories are “intimately connected to the present and the future. There is a sense that there are many histories, each characterized in part by how a people see themselves, how they define their identity in relation to their environment and how they express their uniqueness as a people” (Canada). Stories are valued within Native communities as they were and are used to teach Native people about themselves and their place within their communities. They teach Native peoples their responsibilities—about proper behavior and the observance of protocols. Additionally they provide a sense of belonging and an understanding of connections for those who will listen. As a means of teaching and learning, storytelling has been used by Indigenous communities to bind the people together and as a way to understand relationships beyond only human-to-human relations and stretches our understanding of relationality to our interconnection with land, water, plants, and animals. They were more than entertainment, as we often think of storytelling (e.g. Shakespeare, Grimm’s Fairytales, etc.), rather they are about accessing power and the stories themselves have power as many tribes have rules for what time of the year the stories can be shared, who can tell the stories, and who can hear them. One of the vital aspects of Indigenous storytelling is about teaching about and bringing about harmony and balance within the community.
One of the difficulties in teaching through stories is that it is incumbent upon the listener to discover the meaning and to act upon these found truths and so stories are told in order to:

...educate the listener, to communicate aspects of culture, to socialize people into a cultural tradition, or to validate the claims of a particular family to authority and prestige. There is an assumption that the teller of the story is much a part of the event being described that it would be arrogant to presume to classify or categorize the event exactly or for all time. Those who hear the oral accounts draw their own conclusions from what they have heard, and they do so in the particular context (time, place and situation) of the telling. Thus the meaning to be drawn from an oral account depends on who is telling it, the circumstances in which the account is told, and the interpretation the listener gives to what has been heard. (Canada 33)

Unfortunately, the context of teaching and learning within a mainstream school sets its own constraints upon how non-Native students understand the context of these stories and their interaction with them. These modes of interaction and understanding obviously differ drastically from the ways that the Indigenous storyteller and the listener would develop their relationship through these storytelling-teaching experiences. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) frames this difference in learning approaches, “The sense of history conveyed by indigenous approaches is not the same thing as the discipline of history, and so our accounts collide, crash into each other” (28). However, the differences in this approach and the Western understanding of history persuade us to reframe how we learn from and with one another—we are called to step into a wholly new listening position which may allow us to hear and “see” things differently.
The question of representation and re-presenting, presenting anew, the images and understanding of Indigenous peoples’ lives and histories becomes vital to understanding how powerfully this “new” curriculum holds the promise to change the relationship between Native and non-Natives. When the images one finds within most of the texts in schools continue to be images that reinforce a false representation of what it means to be Native then clearly there is still much work to be done to help Native youth to see themselves represented more truthfully in the curriculum and see themselves as a vital part of the history that is being taught—identification and affirmation of being.

This insight brings us back to the examples that were put forward at the start of this chapter where the mission of boarding schools, of land allotment, of even who was allowed to be the representatives when the treaties were signed speaks to the goal of assimilation and that the government’s purpose was to make Natives feel like they were not even part of their own cultures. Storytelling makes a cultural claim upon Native youth as they find themselves within the stories, as they see their connections with their ancestors, and as these stories are also there to be shared and forge new linkages and enduring relationships.

A series of videos helpful in illustrating this point is entitled, *We Shall Remain: A Native History of Utah*, tell the story of the five principal nations within the boundaries of the state of Utah—the Paiute, the Ute, the Navajo, the Goshute, and the Northwestern Shoshone. Each video is nearly twenty-seven minutes in length and tells the story of each Native nation prior to contact and after contact with their non-Native neighbors. Along with the videos there is a curriculum website\(^6\) that gives lesson plans and additional materials to help in the teaching and learning about the Indigenous peoples who reside within the borders of the state of Utah.

\(^6\) [www.utahindians.org](http://www.utahindians.org)
Learning Through Video

One video will be used to illustrate the power of storytelling, not in the traditional sense of storytelling, but as a new way of sharing a tribe’s living history. The video entitled “The Ute” will be described and then discussed in terms of what it helps us to understand about this particular Native nation. In addition, we will also see how it helps us to understand their relations with their new neighbors.

The video starts with a voice-over describing how Native Americans do not forget where they came from, where they are going, and who they answer to. Additionally, we hear more Natives speaking about how Native traditions and culture will be around for generations and that if Native ancestors were not strong that Native peoples would have died long before. The video starts by showing the “Bear Dance” and a description of the meaning of the dance is shared. The rules and forms of what they are doing are discussed and the importance of the fact that everything they do is to strengthen their relationships with one another—of healing and being with one another.

Next we hear the description of the name that the Ute called themselves by was “Nuche” or “The People”. There is a discussion of their history and their lifeways and then in the 1600s their initial encounters with the Spanish conquistadors and their introduction to the horse. We hear from Clifford Duncan, an Elder, that the Utes were a strong tribe, they were a mountain people and because of that strength they were not pushed out like other tribes were—it is here that we hear Clifford state emphatically, “They didn’t remove us. We’re still here.”

Next a description of where the Utes reside is given and how before contact with settlers the Ute people were spread across land. After this there is the introduction to the arrival of the Mormons and the idea that their leader, Brigham Young, declared, “This is the place.” Again we
hear from Clifford that this is surprising that this claim was made given that no one consulted with the tribes who were living there. This particular group was noted for their difference—the fact that they stayed and took the best lands, took the best game, and that they consumed everything that was valued by the Ute. The difference in worldviews and values is brought forward and the resistance of Utes is discussed as they were pushed off of their traditional lands.

The Utes were pushed onto land that the Mormons did not find useful and were forced to stop hunting and become farmers. The difference between their ways and the ways of the newcomers are highlighted and the decision of the Ute people to fight is discussed. The forced relocation of the Ute after they “won” this battle is detailed and how the elders talked about the “Long Walk”. Clifford talks about the sacred sites that they are still attached to in their ancestral lands, “We own the spirit, or the spirit owns us.” and “You can remove a person from a country. But you can never remove a country from a person.” Further discussion is shared about the connection between land and spirit, and the ceremonies related to the sun. Clifford talks about how nature is the Ute people’s religion and their “prophet” is the light, or the sun.

Next the language of the Ute people is laid out as not only a mode of communication but also how it is connected to spirituality and to their identity—how when there is no more Ute language there will no longer be any Ute people. We next see a teacher, Venita Taveapont who is teaching Ute language and culture to the youth. She teaches at Uintah River High School and talks about how the youth need to:

Be taught about how to be Ute…to be able to communicate, being able to have knowledge of Ute cultural practices. It’s not just beads and feathers, it’s how your family is. The values your family has. If you’re not secure in your own identity,
secure in knowing your language and your culture that you are going to have a problem wherever you go.

We then hear about the high dropout rate for Native students and the differences in the values in the schools, particularly in relation to the idea of competition. Additionally, we hear a short discussion about the idea of two worlds and the challenges that Indian students face in bridging these different worldviews.

A short discussion of the problems with gangs, substance abuse, violence, and healthcare are then brought forward. We hear from community members who talk about the violence that has affected their own families and the trauma that has impacted their lives. This reality is discussed frankly and the message is sent to the youth to “treasure yourself.”

As the video draws to a close we see the Ute people returning to their ancestral lands near Meeker, Colorado. They hold a powwow and attempt to begin the process of healing. The history of war and of forced removal is recalled. The discussion of physical and psychological trauma are discussed around the loss and hurt that has occurred because of these past events—and yet those returning want to return to these sites as a witness to the children.

The idea of returning home, of returning to their homeland is brought forward and that the current generation has not forgotten their ancestors is witnessed. The specific word “genocide” is used and again we hear the phrase “We’re still here.” The final scenes discuss that what you see today, whether it be Utes who are farming, or in the military, or attending college that this is what it means to be Ute or “Nuche” today.

**Making Sense of It All**

Although this video is short in length it allows a glimpse into the worldview of the Ute people and we are able to begin to hear what they care about, what about their history they find
important to share through the medium of video, and we are able to see the Ute/Nuche in their complexity. The voice-overs and narrative that we hear at the beginning of video do an excellent job of providing one oral bookend to this video—we hear the idea of a living history, not history as static or frozen, rather a storytelling and remembrance about these particular Native peoples and their understanding of their relation to time, to place, and to one another. The idea that they know who they are is important to understand in a nation where the dominant narrative is one of immigrant stories, of a melting pot, of assimilation. It is potent to hear them discuss the idea that they know their culture and traditions have survived and thrived and will be carried forward to future generations of their people; for them to testify that it is because of the strength of their ancestors, of those who have gone before, that has kept them alive as a people.

The small discussion about the Bear Dance is powerful because it helps us to understand immediately that everything that the Ute/Nuche people do is to strengthen their relationships with one another. The phrase that stands out is “being with one another” which obviously means more than simply being in the presence of another, rather, it means being fully present with others. This is more than mere rhetoric because later in the video we will hear about the trauma that the Ute/Nuche people have endured and the aftermath of that continuing trauma—that the people are enduring a host of issues like poverty, high rates of domestic violence, gang violence, and alcohol and drug abuse and addiction. Hearing and seeing that ceremony is a vital part of what keeps them together as a community, what holds their families together, is fundamental to understanding why at the end of the video we hear that simply holding a powwow on their ancestral homeland is not enough to begin the healing and reconciliation that is necessary.

In the next segment of the video we hear what they call themselves—Nuche. This disrupts the narrative of the generic Indian by not only declaring how the people name
themselves but it shows us that up to this point in time we are still at a remove from understanding them if we don’t even honor how they identify, particularly through their language. The name Nuche is the only time we hear their language spoken in this video and it becomes powerfully distinctive because it is mentioned throughout the video that language is a vital wellspring of who they are as an Indigenous people. That without their language, without their mother tongue, they are no longer Nuche and so the importance, the profound and pressing necessity to keep their language alive for those who come after—that language is what ties these other aspects of culture together, from their ceremonies to their everyday interactions with one another; from the sacred to the mundane.

In the next section we hear from an elder of the community who talks about their contact with the newcomers and how strong the Nuche people were and are. It is declared that other tribes were moved by the newcomers but that the Nuche remain because of their strength and more importantly that their strength is attached to and comes from place—the mountains are immovable; the Nuche have not been moved. This may seem to contradict the later story of the forced removal of the Nuche from their homeland but this counter-narrative is not false. This is a reminder that this small moment in the very long history of the Nuche people is not what defines them. That they know who they are because of their relationships, that relations mean more than human relations and more than just to those who are currently alive—to the land, to one another, to their ancestors, and to future generations.

The discussion about the arrival of the Mormons and their treatment of the Nuche becomes important to understanding the worldview and experience of the Nuche. When they arrive the Mormon settlers and their leadership assume that the land is theirs to be had and theirs to settle. Hearing a present-day elder speak to the presumptiveness of this claim, given that no
Nuche people are represented in this statement, almost makes one laugh. But that laughter is tempered by the next part of the narrative where we learn that the Nuche noted the difference of this newest group—that they were going to take all the best for themselves and forcefully move the Nuche off of their traditional homelands. That the mission of the Mormons was the same as the federal government’s mission and vision when it came to Native peoples: assimilation and acculturation. So, we hear of the attempt to make farmers out of a people who had previously been hunters and of the forced removal of the Nuche from their ancestral lands. Though this discussion of the forced removal of the Nuche people is short we still hear of the power of place for these Indigenous peoples through the poignant quote, “You can remove a person from a country. But you can never remove a country from a person.” This is where the strength that was mentioned earlier, about the power of the people coming from a particular place, comes into play. That as a mountain people the Nuche drew their power and strength from the land itself. That who they are and how they relate to one another and with others cannot be separated from where they call home. That this connection is a spiritual connection and that their feelings of longing for their homeland are more than mere nostalgia. Rather, they are deeply connected, committed to, and related to the landscape where they draw their identity and strength from because of the sacred ties that bind them to the land and to one another.

The language of the Nuche is brought forward as a clear identifier of who they are as a people. It, much like the discussion about the land, is connected deeply and profoundly to their identity and spirituality. This makes it seem as if spirituality is separate from who they are as a people but this is not the case. Their spirituality is not like Christianity where one attends church once a week but rather the earth itself, nature, becomes the sacred place that they draw spiritual strength from and where they commune. So language is understood as paramount to them as a
people, it is a key piece of what makes them Nuche because their language, as a crucial piece of their identity as a people, becomes a thread that binds them to their identity. The sentiment is expressed that when there is no more Ute/Nuche language that there will longer be any Ute/Nuche people. This seems extremely fatalistic but the power of language for a people whose memory has relied upon an oral tradition, whose ceremonies are meaningless without the language, whose understanding of their relationship with their homeland is foreclosed without their native language, whose understanding of their relationships with each other and the proper protocols relating to those relationships disappears without their language—language is, for the Nuche, a keystone; without their language the rest of what makes them distinct as a people collapses. We hear that language is a part of their culture and language supports their understanding of their culture. That teaching their language to the next generation is about helping them to understand how to be Ute/Nuche. That their language is not merely about words spoken but it is intertwined or woven into how they understand their values as a people. And that those values come from family relations and those values are taught in the family. All of these pieces are what makes them secure and whole. This insight is powerful because it lets us see that a crucial part of addressing the challenges that the Nuche are presently facing comes from remembering who they are and that their remembrance comes through doing, through being. That identity is not fixed; that there is a reciprocal relationship between identity and the land, between identity and language, between identity and values, and that without these reciprocal relationships that what makes them a people cannot hold together and their world will fall apart.

After discussing the real challenges of the current day with regards to violence, addiction, and students dropping out we hear the message that the youth must treasure themselves. What
we see through the teaching and mentoring is that the generations, all of them, are to be treasured and connected if the Ute/Nuche are to not merely survive but to thrive as a people. It is at the close of this video testimonial, for this video does the act of witnessing, that we hear the word “homeland” repeated and the connection between place and those who have gone before. The powerful claim is again made “we’re still here” which lets those watching the video understand the continuity of the Ute/Nuche. Throughout the video we have seen and heard from Ute/Nuche people who have let us know of the power of their living history, the power of place, and the power of good relations as critical pieces of what it means to be who they are—yesterday, today, and into the future.

**Utah Native American Curriculum**

The accompanying curriculum is powerful because it integrates the work—the living histories—that are shared in the video production with the classroom research that the students do in elementary, middle, and high school. The videos and the accompanying curriculum, the *We Shall Remain: Utah Indian Curriculum Guide* (UICG), were created through the collaboration of *The American West Center* at the University of Utah, the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, KUED channel 7, the Utah State Office of Education, and the American Indian nations in the state of Utah. The UICG serves as a comprehensive resource for the teachers in Utah to teach about the history and culture of Utah’s Navajo, Ute, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone, Southern Paiute, and Goshute nations.

One of the primary goals of those who designed this curriculum was have students come to a different understanding of the history of Utah, and of the U.S., when viewed from the perspective of the five Native nations that are situated within the state. They saw it as essential that students would learn about the tribes’ long struggles to survive and more importantly why
those struggles were necessary. Furthermore they did not want students to feel sorry for the tribes, rather, their goal was for students to see the trial and setbacks and yet also realize the strength and vitality of these tribal nations. When discussing the tribes the curriculum makes clear that the tribes are contributors to the history of the state—they are not studied as outsiders; rather, they are co-creators of the history of the state.

**Washington State and Native Nations’ Living Histories**

The benefit of looking at the Native American curriculum project in the state of Utah is that it gives some powerful and helpful suggestions to those working on Indigenous curriculum efforts in the state of Washington. The tough subjects, even provocative language like “genocide,” are not left out of the curriculum. They are faced head-on and talked about openly and honestly. This is not whitewashed history; this is history that is brutally frank. However, this honesty comes across as necessary because it is taught in such a matter-of-fact way. The story of Utah, like the story of the state of Washington, would not be the same without recognizing the living histories of Native peoples. Their contributions to the history of each of these states is necessary for the students to understand a fuller history of their respective states and it also gives a more comprehensive and truthful history of the United States.

Those working on the STI curriculum would benefit from seeing how the collaborative effort in Utah played out. These videos and the curriculum show how communities working across differences can develop powerful work that helps students to understand the cultures, histories, and governance (sovereignty and self-determination) of Native peoples. The greater challenge in the state of Washington is that this project must be repeated for twenty-nine federally recognized Native American tribes.
The challenge that lies at the end of this starting phase of working through the homework will be in helping non-Native teachers to see that they are partners in helping to share a powerful curriculum that has the potential to transform relations within the state of Washington between Native American peoples and themselves, the children they teach, and their communities. This is not about multiculturalism as taught through “heroes and holidays” or “food, fun, and festivals”. This Indigenous curriculum opens the door to deeper understanding and more honest relations, going beyond the classroom, providing the opportunity for bridges to be built between local tribes and their non-Native neighbors.
Chapter 4

SHARED HISTORIES AND SHARED LANDSCAPES:

What Sort of “Place” Do We Envision for Tomorrow?

…it seems to me that one could develop a model of American studies in which Indian studies is indispensable to its practice. . . . Framed this way, Indian studies offers to American studies a fundamental critique, and the possibility of transformation as Indian studies becomes a fruitfully troubling presence in any formulation of nationhood.

—Jean M. O’Brien

Recognizing American Indian cultural patterns as intrinsic to understanding America provides a means to imagine and create a discourse that acknowledges the contemporary state of American culture while remaining connected to and cognizant of its foundational history. In other words, Indians have talked about America, about negotiating multinational and transnational understandings of this place, about what is needed to live well here, long before Americans were imagined.

—Carter Meland, et. al.

Where do we find ourselves in the twenty-first century in relation to the education of Native American youth? There have been reports, books, theses, and dissertations written since the failed project of the boarding school era that have detailed the shortcomings and harms caused by the attempted imposition of Western epistemology and ontology onto Native peoples—the project of “Killing the Indian, and saving the man” through the seemingly helpful ideology of colonization and the practices of assimilation and acculturation. We know, and can detail quite clearly and accurately, where we have been. A new, and yet not so new, question arises before us today: Where do we go from here?

We can look to the current educational studies that highlight the harms done to Native youth by culturally irrelevant curriculum as enacted through policies like NCLB. We can cite the studies that show the disproportionately high dropout (push-out) rates in middle school and
high school for Native American youth. But these statistics will not address the heart of what we are looking for—the Vision, as stated at the start of the report, *From Where the Sun Rises: Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State*, eloquently lays out what is sought after:

Indian education dates back to a time when all children were identified as gifted and talented. Each child had a skill and ability that would contribute to the health and vitality of the community. Everyone in the community was expected and trained to be a teacher to identify and cultivate these skills and abilities. The elders were entrusted to oversee this sacred act of knowledge being shared. That is our vision for Indian education today. (3)

This understanding of all Native children as gifted is a revolutionary idea to mainstream society. It runs counter to the idea of the “deficit model” where children from low-income and/or historically marginalized groups are viewed as being responsible for their own failure. This also runs counter to the idea of rugged individualism because the idea of a community to which each Native child could contribute is set forth as the ultimate goal. Furthermore, it throws out the idea of a certified teacher as the only qualified instructor and opens us to the possibility that every member of the community at some point in the child’s life could be a teacher. Finally, it identifies teaching as the “sacred act of knowledge being shared”—it destroys the idea of teaching as a didactic activity and invites us to come to terms with the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning.

How do we successfully Indigenize Washington State’s K-12 educational curriculum? How do we more peacefully co-exist as neighboring peoples? How do we heal the harms done in the past and look together toward a different and brighter future? How do we ensure the
educational success of all children and the health of our communities, both Native and non-
Native, within the state of Washington? These are some of the guiding questions that this project
has attempted to both complicate and hopefully build a solution set that will serve as a humble
recommendation for change.

“Place”-based Education—Teaching and Learning Through New Eyes

In posing the question as the subtitle of this chapter—What sort of “place” do we
envision for tomorrow?—this study wants to challenge the idea of place as only being thought of
in the geographical sense, though this does become important when considering the challenges of
integrating Native histories, cultures, and governance into the K-12 curriculum. There are other
ways to understand place: as a situation, as when we place these histories alongside one another
or as we braid them together; as a way of categorizing the differences and similarities between
Native and non-Native histories in the state; and as a way of juxtaposing these Native and non-
Native histories within a home land which would require us to reexamine what we mean when we
talk about the land, our relationship to it, and our relationships with one another upon it. More
importantly when we reconsider the idea of “place” it can also push us to ask what Native
histories look like on their own without the need to compare or contrast them with the dominant
narratives of whitestream history.

If we consider place as a situation, as when we place these histories alongside one
another or as we braid them together, we are being asked to have a different view of historical
remembrance. In particular, this approach will challenge the idea of written history as the final
arbiter of truth-telling. It can disrupt the idea of history as a record of what was or is and
persuade us to understand the politics and power that are the elements in how we choose to turn
narratives into competing voices and then choose to grant one the title of winner by erasing and
silencing the “loser” in this ideological struggle. The idea of “place as a situation” can help students in the K-12 schooling system to comprehend that there is no fixity when it comes to history and that history is not only about the past but that it also helps us to understand our present relationships and can be a force in helping us to shape our future.

When we consider place as a way of categorizing the differences and similarities between Native and non-Native histories in the state we can be paying attention to the ways that what we call the historical record has influenced our current relationships. One of the powerful visions for any attempt to Indigenize curriculum is about disrupting the business-as-usual approach to the telling of history. This is no simple task as it requires that we understand first how we have been teaching, our pedagogy, and what we have been teaching, the curriculum, about the history of Native Americans.

When place is considered as a way of juxtaposing these Native and non-Native histories within a home land it is necessary to define what home means and what the relationship to the landscape that Native and non-Natives have, have had, and their relationship with one another upon the land. This is not the direct discourse used in our education system but it part of the hidden curriculum when we have heard this name attached to our country after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. Furthermore the idea of home when talking about “place” helps us to understand the relationship that we have with where we live. The word home can help us to change the understandings that we have about land because it can take our focus away from the ideas of land as property and help us to see that using the word home shifts our understanding of our relationship to place and our relationship to one another upon that place we call home. Home as a metaphor can help us to see a level of permanence to where we live and if
we see that lived experience and its stability we can also see how we can relate differently in our homes to our blood relations, members of our extended families, and guests.

Finally, when we reconsider the idea of “place” it can also push us to ask what Native histories look like on their own without the need to compare or contrast them with the dominant narratives of whitestream history. This seems to be an extremely difficult one for people in mainstream society to not only envision but also to find a way to express. In the looking at just the middle school curriculum that is being presented on the Since Time Immemorial (STI) website we find a lot that is being discussed in topics centered on the Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum—Territory and Treaty Making; Indian Land Tenure Curriculum (Termination and Indian Citizenship Act, Dawes Act, IRA to Civil Rights, Boldt II); Hanford Nuclear Reservations Effects on Indian Country; Revolution and Constitution in Indian Country; Jackson, Marshal, and Indian Removal; Indian Treaties: Goals and Effects. In almost none of this do we find any mention of how local Native peoples felt about these situations. One has to dig deep on the first unit, Territory and Treaty Making, to find a hyperlink to the Washington State Historical Society’s website where we find a webpage titled, The Treaty Trail: U.S. – Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest, and it is on this webpage that we find very brief biographies of different Native American leaders. This small sampling of histories, written by non-Native historians, gives the students a very small window into what some of these Native leaders were thinking about the treaty making process.

Challenges and Promise

One of the challenges faced by Indigenous educators, and non-Indigenous educators who are supporting the integration of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies into the whitestream curriculum, is seeking out and using the most effective approaches and curricular materials to act
as counter-narratives to the waves of misinformation and stereotypes that abound within the lived worlds of Native and non-Native children. Skewed visions of Indigeneity that come through popular media (television, movies, books, etc.) often go unchallenged and more often than not are actually reinforced through other institutional forces (education, family, religion, etc.). Within the curriculum put forward under the STI project there are absolutely no materials that directly deal with the issues of the racial stereotyping of Native Americans, when the fishing rights issues are brought up through the lens of the legal cases—Boldt I and Boldt II—the students are not given any framing of the racial hatred that grew from these cases and the violence that was directed toward Native families by whites. Aside from the issues of racial stereotypes there is limited use of language that describes colonization. Within the land tenure curriculum for middle school students there is good documentation that uses the language of “colonization” but this is very brief as this topic is not brought up in any of the other units that are taught in either the high school curriculum or the elementary school curriculum. Though this documentation and the use of the word colonization is important we do not have a clear understanding of how Indigenous peoples viewed this colonization of their lands from these materials. Furthermore, there is a certain sense of inevitability about the practice of colonization within the United States. It seems that there is the hint of a critique of this worldview and the ensuing effects from this way of viewing the relationships between the settler society and Native peoples, however, the majority of the text seems to be explaining it without questioning how it has truly shaped where we are today in terms of Indian-White relations.

Forcefully asserting the issue of Indigenous representation within mainstream curriculum M. Lynn Alward lays out a strong argument for the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, “Representing the local or indigenous community knowledges and decentering
European cultural knowledges, histories, and experiences has been shown to be part of effective school practice and transformation” (2). This is a powerful statement of both position and purpose and yet it is not broadly recognized as both true and valid and has yet to be fully embraced and implemented within mainstream K-12 curriculum. The idea about the representation of Native people’s lives is a laudable goal. However, this can be quickly undermined if in the pursuit of diversity within the curriculum we only find the otherness of Native people being introduced rather than recognizing their place within the history of the state of Washington. This is diversity merely to satisfy political correctness; mere inclusion is not the same as critically examining our histories and does nothing to change the lived conditions or the relationship between Native Americans and non-Natives.

One of the issues I have encountered in examining the materials presented on the STI website is that there is very little shared of the local tribal histories. These curricular materials seem to be in such an emergent stage as to be almost non-existent. When information is shared about a tribe it is taught as a way of illustrating a larger lesson to be learned about Native and non-Native relations. This is highly problematic as when later, if it does occur, that the school districts are working more in partnership with local tribes to learn their specific histories and integrate these living histories into their curriculum it will require that much of the formerly broad and general information will be replaced by specific historical events, peoples, and relations that are focused in on the place and knowledge of the history connected with the event(s) that have unfolded on that particular landscape. As it now stands it appears that we will be still teaching this overly general information alongside the more local history if there is a failure to recognize the rhetorical/ideological work that is being accomplished through these broad, general examples.
How does one decenter Western epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies? How does one go about decentering a historical memory that has been focused on self-congratulation and self-veiling? This is confrontational and may even be seen by some teachers and administrators as infuriating and offensive. The challenge in Indigenizing the curriculum—why it has been stated earlier that this project is subversive, is because decentering is dangerous business. The synonyms let us know what we are about: dissidence, rebelliousness, revolution, insubordination and sedition. If we are to honestly face the United State’s history of colonization, its history of imperialism, then it becomes a requirement that mainstream society face these awful truths.

Beyond the issues of resistance to Indigenizing the curriculum there are also issues regarding scheduled classroom instruction already committed to the goals of NCLB, questions of the curricular design and integration on a statewide level of the multitude of histories that must be attended to when taking into account the 29 federally-recognized tribes in the state of Washington, and M. Lynn Alward’s ideological and concrete goal of decentering mainstream epistemology and ontology also presents its own set of complex challenges. None of these goals ought to be taken lightly; these are weighty matters.

To decenter would require that we would not have to address the living histories of Native peoples in the state of Washington in relation to non-Native people. This can be extremely challenging for those who are designing this curriculum because the vast majority of written material about Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington only tells the story of their lives in relation to non-Natives. It is laudable that those who have contributed to the STI website want us to understand the sovereignty of Native peoples though this is not going to help us understand the unique cultural worldviews that they hold; their peoplehood. It only helps us to understand their legal relationship with the federal and state governments. The stories of and
from Indigenous people are missing from this framework—this is drastically different than the stories about Indigenous people.

Mary Belgarde and her co-authors lay out an excellent working definition of culturally responsive schooling, “We define culturally responsive education as curriculum and instruction that generally validate the cultures and languages of students and allows them to become co-constructors of knowledge in the school setting” (43). This bold statement both echoes and reinforces the idea of cultural safety as posited by Jessica Ball and Allen Pence (2006):

Cultural safety might be defined as feeling safe to express one’s perspective and behave in accordance with one’s own culture – acknowledging, accepting, and affirming cultural identity, history, values, beliefs, styles, and practices. Cultural safety is essential for effective learning, and it is precisely what is absent in mainstream educational settings for many minority students. The result of its absence is low participation and completion rates. (81)

The power and promise of Belgarde’s position is that children and young adults are to be seen as “co-constructors of knowledge” within the formal school setting. The reality of what this means within the state of Washington is that this is not currently present in the vast majority of the teaching and learning that takes place in the K-12 school system.

This position that Belgarde brings forwards places Native youth as co-creators of their lived reality and if culturally responsive schooling is to be effective in assisting Native American students in navigating through western ways of knowing and being and integrating their own tribal ways of being and knowing—for those Indigenous worldviews to be seen as commensurate with western ideological frameworks—then it will require a great deal of groundwork to be laid by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, Elders, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous
community members; groundwork, which to this point in time, has not been broadly or
effectively implemented across the school districts in Washington State.

This groundwork is not the curriculum alone although this is the first piece that is being
created and suggested for integration into the classroom. The revolutionary idea that is presented
by Belgarde is that the children and youth can be seen as co-constructors of knowledge in the
school setting. This is not the way that education of children and youth is understood within
Western society. The teachers are the ones to provide the information, they are the ones who
design or use pre-designed tests which measure and evaluate the learning abilities of the
students. This evaluation leads to deciding whether the student will move forward in their
matriculation through the educational institution and it ultimately can be used to decide where in
society they will find themselves later in life—in terms of their ability to attend college, and
what colleges they can qualify to attend; the types of jobs and careers that they will be qualified
to pursue; and even where they can live and whether they will have the ability, let alone the
choice, of where they will be able to rear a family.

The issue of completely differing understandings of “education,” of teaching and
learning, has come to the forefront of this project. The authors of From Where the Sun Rises
state the situation in stark terms:

We can see that state public schooling and federal policy are moving in the
direction of understanding our intellectual and emotional needs while respecting
our sovereignty. However, the need is pressing and patience has dissipated to the
point of having to say, “There is no more time. The last of our elders are passing
and it is taking place all too quickly.” So we take a stand, right now, that we have
a good course to take. We can trust that Native language, culture and history will
eliminate the achievement gap. That means that the state and school districts will share control over the mission, scope and influence of the education system with tribal governments and Indian education organizations. (5)

There is no recognition within the current curriculum being put forward under the STI digital project of the place for Native language within the teaching modules for K-12 students in the state of Washington and because of its focus on sovereignty with no real understandings of how each tribe has its own understanding of their government-to-government relationship with the government of the state of Washington and the federal government we are left with a general understanding of sovereignty without truly understanding how governance affects our day-to-day lives or how sovereignty connects to self-determination. However, and even more importantly, we see very little of the culture of the twenty-nine federally recognized tribes being shared through this digital project.

Culture is more than just the ways that people understand, interpret, and react to their environment. In fact, even though there are numerous working definitions of the idea of what constitutes culture there is one from Henry A. Giroux (1988) that lays out what the authors of From Where the Sun Rises are addressing when they talk about culture and the fact that “There is no more time.”:

[T]he representation of lived experiences, material artifacts, and practices forged within the unequal and dialectical relations that different groups establish in a given society at a particular historical point. Culture is a form of the production whose processes are intimately concerned with the structuring of different social formations, particularly those that are gender, age, racial, and class related. It is also a form of production that helps human agents, through their use of language
and other material resources, to transform society. In this case, culture is closely related to the dynamics of power and produce asymmetries in the ability of individuals and groups to define and achieve their goals. Furthermore, culture is also an arena of struggle and contradiction, and there is no one culture in the homogenous sense. On the contrary, there are dominant and subordinate cultures that express different interests and operate from different and unequal terrains of power. (116-117)

Of key interest to myself are the ideas of culture as a form of production that helps individuals to transform their society and as a “terrain of struggle” where because of the asymmetry between the dominant society and Native peoples we see differing abilities of Native peoples to “define and achieve their goals” within the K-12 educational system in the state of Washington.

Giroux, at the beginning of his discussion of culture, states that we are discussing the relationships that are attempting to be represented and how those representations are shared with others—of particular importance is that culture is more than just the knowledge and the ways that knowledge has shaped members of a given society but that the ability to represent and re-present, present anew, are formed at a given point in time and within unequal relationships. That Native peoples within the state of Washington are struggling to show their non-Native neighbors that their goals, their dreams and aspirations, for their children may not be the same as what the “dominant” society imagines to be best for the education of all children.

Part of the reluctance to dive headlong into this project on the part of some Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington is expressed by Brayboy and Castagno (2009), “The values, ideas, and priorities embedded in NCLB are not necessarily shared within tribal nations and Indigenous communities” (34). The reasons for this attitude on the part of some Native peoples
seems patently obvious but there still needs to be some explanation as to why this may be the case. If we understand just a small portion of Native-White history within the state of Washington we can understand the reticence of Native peoples to trust another plan put forward by the government and teachers, even Native educators, to address the shortcomings of how the educational system is serving the needs of their communities and their children. The primary roadblock to acceptance of a new education plan is the still-present pain and destruction, the historical traumas that were brought about by the era of Native American boarding schools. Where the U.S. federal government, in an attempt to more completely assimilate Native nations into the national body politic, chose to authorize Indian agents and others to remove children from their communities to be taught at boarding schools, generally off-reservation, in an attempt to undermine and destroy the culture and the community connections of Native children. Who can blame Native parents for again not completely trusting what a new round of government agents are telling them will be best for their children?

One of the primary challenges to implementing culturally responsive schooling comes from the writings of Angelina E. Castagno and Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (2008):

We want to suggest that although the plethora of writing on [culturally responsive schooling] that we review here is insightful, it has had little impact on what teachers do because it is too easily reduced to essentializations, meaningless generalizations, or trivial anecdotes—none of which result in systemic, institutional, or lasting changes to schools serving Indigenous youth. (942)

In this project of Indigenizing the curriculum with the help of digital technologies this particular warning must be taken seriously and written as a warning for every plan, action, and follow-up that occurs when articulating the theoretical and methodological goals of integrating Native
American histories, cultures, and governance (peoplehood and self-determination) into the mainstream K-12 curriculum. What is required of education administrators, teachers, and school board members is the task of doing some extensive *homework*. This entails a deeper understanding of the historical relations between Native peoples in Washington State and their newly arrived neighbors, it requires that they grapple with the history of cultural assimilation and acculturation and how this project has not ended but only changed forms, and it requires that they stretch themselves, working through their fear and ignorance, to establish connections with tribal leaders, and the community members of their local tribal nations. This *homework* will ask them to be vulnerable and listen to the voices and histories of the Native children whom they are entrusted with and requires that they heed Geneva Gay’s challenge (2002):

> Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly. (106)

These conduits will require that educators pay attention to the lived histories of their students, that they will be asked to learn about more than diversity as mere *difference*, rather, the demand will be placed before them to understand the complicatedness and complexity of the living histories present before them and how these living histories demand their focus, time, and care to successfully assist these Native youth as they matriculate through a still foreign and, more often than not, adversarial educational system. This may be a small piece in the puzzle that those
who espouse critical pedagogy (Giroux 2003, Kincheloe 2008, Malott 2009, McLaren 2003) are articulating and rearticulating as their theory meets the street.

Our current ways of addressing the continuing crisis in the education of Native American youth across this nation, and specifically within Washington State, can be addressed but we need to attend to the multifaceted issues that are attached to the “proper” education of Native youth. If we are to address the whole of the educational dysfunction, not as a deficit in Native children, but rather a malfunction, defect, flaw, glitch, impairment, breakdown, failure, or anomaly in the western educational theory and method we must balance what is working and what has failed Native youth. In order for us to grapple with the complicated and complex nature of this issue of Indigenous representation in western curricula and the re-presentation, presenting anew, of Indigenous histories, cultures, and governance we need to look through new eyes at the situation. One of the ways of “seeing” anew can involve information technology (digital storytelling, digital tribal nation historical archives, tribally created video productions, etc.). Using digital technologies will help increase the likelihood that teachers will use these histories and those students; both Native and non-Native who already have a familiarity with the technology will more easily access tools that will allow them to re-envision local Native American histories, and their current relations with local tribes. This is not a panacea, but rather one more tool that will help to overcome the fractured relationships that have yet to be healed.

**American Studies as another “place” of transformation**

Initially it seemed that the right place to look when examining the institutional and structural changes that needed to take place in K-12 education in the state of Washington was within the colleges of education. They seemed to be the natural place to examine because they are the sites where future educators would be learning the history and skills necessary to not only
receive accreditation as teachers, which however valuable is just the starting point, they also would be learning the history, philosophy, and best practices of teaching and learning as a way of understanding their mission in creating a learning community within their classrooms. This initial vision of what departments, disciplines, and programs might have the greatest impact on the success of the STI digital project was too limited, more educators *must* be included to realize a more complete vision of what Indigenizing education can both mean and do.

The critique of not only how we have been teaching Native students and how we are teaching about Native histories fits solidly within the project of Indigenizing the K-12 curriculum in Washington State—it is not the case that we should be angry about whitestream ways of seeing the world; rather, we can be righteously angry that the system is still telling young Native children that the way to succeed is to relinquish their Indigenous luggage at the gate in order to get a ticket to ride into the 21st century in the United States of America. Amy Kaplan echoes this critique when she calls out Leo Marx (2005) for claiming that, “the political commitment to equality, social change, and social justice can emerge only from the founding [American Studies] fathers and not from many other experiences, traditions, and hard-won struggles” (143). Paul Giles (1994) has an eerie prescience of Kaplan’s critique of Leo Marx, “Thus a reconstructed American Studies needs to acknowledge how interdisciplinary perspectives involves a blurring of definitions, a collapsing of frontiers, not a nationalistic synthesis” (351).

These American studies scholars help us to see that Indigenizing the academy means more than integrating Native American histories, cultures, and governance into the K-12 curriculum, more than changing the way we operate with colleges of education—it means that to be truly Indigenizing we need to be about this work in multiple departments and programs. That
much of what we have taken for granted within these other disciplines can either be of great assistance in changing the way we think about history, in decentering Western epistemologies and ontologies, or they can continue to be roadblocks in our struggles to integrate Native epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies into higher education coursework and classrooms. These “places” in higher education can work in conjunction with education departments to support a new way of understanding the study of history and culture; both the study of Indigenous histories and cultures and the ways we understand mainstream history and culture.

This digital project can be a part of the work that Enikő Bollobás (2002) refers to as “new American studies” which is de-centered, de-privileged, de-hegemonized, and exhibits traits of diversity and postcoloniality (571). The work that American Studies has the potential to do for this digital Indigenous histories project is to “uncover…how things are being produced or constructed—as well as perceived, represented, imagined, or fictioned” (571). American Studies in its fluidity, both historically claimed and presently imagined, has provided ample time and space for us to attempt to think through the complexities of what citizenship means for peoples who were differently considered by the U.S. and considered as to be so different as to be “Othered” by its leaders, by its citizenry, and by its institutions. At certain points in time Native American peoples have been viewed as “continual foreigners”—an irony not lost on them—and at other times they have been viewed as the native host who would not go to bed and let the newly arrived guests do as they pleased. Indigenous peoples in the Americas have been seen with different eyes since contact, whether by missionaries, fur traders, military groups, or new settlers/explorers—and yet, the end result is that they/we have been viewed ultimately as obstacles. What kind of obstacle would change the treatment received but it never ultimately altered the misconceptions. Like the Emancipation Proclamation for African Americans, the
slaves were freed but they were still viewed as chattel; the treatment changed, yet the racism remained the same.

Those misconceptions are at the heart of what drew me and this project of looking at digital technologies as a tool to share Indigenous worldviews to stay established and to be nurtured in American Studies, both the program and the broader theoretical and methodological approaches, by the very contradictions which I found and which seemingly were/are part of the “business-as-unusual” of American Studies scholars. I found a place of temporary encampment where I could pause to rest and think about the contradictions in the “American story” that I had been told through my own elementary and secondary and even my ivory tower educational experiences; and yet, here I found a place that I was relatively free to go about creating a space and time where my own questioning of the “foundation stories” that I had received was welcomed and even encouraged. At times I felt that I had to scratch and scrabble to create the space where my different understandings, my different takes on the world could be understood. Even though it seemed difficult, extremely difficult at times, to fit Native American studies within such theoretical and methodological realms such as post-colonialism—since when did the colonization ever stop in the Western hemisphere?—to even more far-flung ideas such as queer theory or using post-structuralism to even begin to think about ideas like tribal sovereignty or self-determination, American Studies, both the “discipline” and the “place” were seemingly welcoming the kind of questions that I was bringing to bear upon the institutions, including higher education, that were both part of the problem and part of the solution.

With these critiques of my disciplinary home it becomes important to explain why American Studies is the perfect anti-discipline, the perfect transnational amalgam, and one of the scholarly locations left where a thoroughgoing critique of Empire can be done through the
subversive and yet innocent act of Indigenizing K-12 educational curricula. This critique of Empire is not going to be simple or easy and it is not going to be accomplished without heavy resistance from mainstream society. American studies scholars, especially those who agree with Kaplan, Bollobás, and Giles, can be valuable allies in working in solidarity with Native peoples in the state of Washington who want to challenge the business-as-usual approach that has been the way we educate in the United States.

Haig-Brown’s sharing of Dale Turner’s warning was mentioned in an earlier chapter, “Whether these [Indigenous] ways can be explained to the dominant culture, and understood by it, or at the very least respected as legitimate, remains to be seen” (10). This question of basic respect has been one that this author has wrestled with while matriculating through an American Studies program. That also becomes the challenge for Native peoples in Washington State who may be hesitant to share more than they feel their non-Native neighbors are capable of caring for in a responsible and reciprocal manner. This is not a small point and is part of what could be a revolutionary change or what could be just another add-on in the multi-cultural mélange is at stake here. When attempting to persuade those who are responsible for teaching the children in Washington State that Indigenous epistemologies are a valuable addition to the curriculum it becomes even more important to understand what will be shared with teachers and students to enable them to see anew their Native neighbors, how that new knowledge will approached and shared, and what effects it will have upon the behavior and words of all who come into contact with these other ways of seeing. The challenge will be in helping all the residents of Washington State to see that the stereotyped images need to be cast aside in favor of complex and complicated understandings of peoples who have lived here since time immemorial, but more
importantly, the value of seeing them as still-present and having a voice in the future of the state of Washington State and of the United States as a whole.

Out of the dozens and dozens of texts that were required for the American Studies coursework at Washington State University, and even the coursework through the Cultural Studies program, less than handful explicitly discussed Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, theories, or methods. The majority of this author’s scholarly reading of Indigenous scholars, activists, educators, and public intellectuals has occurred outside of the classroom and outside of the curriculum of American Studies. This cannot be a unique experience and speaks to the challenges of Indigenizing the academy, let alone Indigenizing the curriculum in elementary and secondary education in Washington State. As stated by Carter Meland and his co-authors (2005), “American Indian cultural patterns are intrinsic to the practice of American studies as a central and original—if too often overlooked—way of generating understanding in America...there is no American studies without American Indians” (391-392). This throwing down of the gauntlet, this challenge to the accepted ways of doing American studies’ business is vital if we are to see both Native scholars and Native scholarship in any way transforming the ways that we understand the United States and the scholarship that bears its name, American studies.

I deeply feel the observation made by Jean M. O’Brien (2003) who asks, “if American studies is such an ideal location for American Indian studies, then why is the ASA only an occasional visit for many, and a completely foreign country for most Indian studies scholars?...why has the ASA failed to catch on as the premier scholarly location for American Indian Studies?” (689). I could answer her supposedly rhetorical query by saying that I, as an Indigenous scholar, feel unnoticed and at times unwanted at these gatherings, there is a dearth of other Indigenous scholars, let alone scholars who are doing their American studies scholarship in
Native American studies. Her next question is what drives this project and my scholarship, “Rather than conceptualizing Indian studies as “itinerant” without a venerable pedigree, what could it mean for American studies if we conceive of Indian studies as central?” (690 emphasis added). This refocusing of our disciplinary purposes in American studies helps us to see that we do not have to go far afield to be doing transnational work. Those who do American studies within the borders of the United States can simply visit the closest Indigenous peoples and they do not have to visit a reservation as many of them are already their close neighbors.

Part of this mission of wanting to assist in the larger project in the state of Washington of integrating Native American histories, cultures, and governance into the K-12 curriculum, and more thoroughly into higher education, is that it feels like there has been a wedge discovered that will help to both hold open the door of the academy to different ways of knowing and being and yet also split wide some of the long-held beliefs about Native studies scholarship, its methods and theories, and their place at the table of decision-making about the future of Indigenous peoples in the stories that we tell future generations and the relations that we build and change as we begin this new storytelling. To even think about Indigenous knowledge in higher education we must embrace Haig-Brown’s (2008) working definition of Indigenous thought—epistemology, ontology, and axiology:

I am referring to the contemporary knowledge that arises from innumerable generations of people living in relation to a specific land and seeing it as the source of all their relations. And by land, I reach beyond any simple material notion to the spiritual, intellectual and emotional dimensions thereof. Land includes rivers and streams, air and wind as animate beings in our existence. Indigenous thought is founded in a deep understanding that we all live in relation
to land. Whether we are city dwellers in profound denial or Aboriginal people
drawing on old ways to regenerate new knowledge, we live in relation to land—
we bundle up when the snow comes, we fuss when spring is late, we breathe
deeply and restore our souls when the sun warms us into a new season. (12)

We find ourselves making new understandings and relationships through discovering the value
and power of the comprehension of “place” in all of its manifestations. Haig-Brown helps us to see that when we see ourselves and our lives as being about relationality then we can improve our understanding of what teaching and learning can be transformed to be and mean within more formal settings. Perhaps if we take up this challenge of rethinking the idea of “place” we will see that the physical school can never be enough for us to learn better how to relate with one another. That even the digital tools that are being developed have to point us in the direction of stepping away from the classroom spaces and away from the digital “spaces” to relating to one another upon the landscape—even that “place” can be thought of as more than the land we stand upon; place is the relationships we create, honor, and nurture.

This way of understanding education and schooling, of understanding teaching and learning, pushes us to see how the radical transformation of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational curricula and institutions is absolutely necessary to meet the goals of Indigenous nations who are hopeful that their living histories will be integrated into the formal curriculum and will be able to assist their children in navigating, surviving, and thriving as both members/citizens of their respective Native nations and as citizens of the United States of America and the state of Washington. Angelina E Castagno and Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy in their article, *Culturally Responsive Schooling for Indigenous Youth: A Review of the*
Literature, put forward why we need to be extremely cautious and thoughtful as we go about attempting to integrate Indigenous living histories into the academy:

Furthermore, we want to caution researchers, educators, and policy makers against the relatively simple integration of the material aspects of culture at the expense of systemic change within schools serving Indigenous youth. Hermès’s (2005, 2007) work with the Ojibwe highlights how inserting cultural knowledge as self-contained curricular material fundamentally changes the meaning of culture, forces students to chose between being “academically successful” or being “an Ojibwe” (p. 57), and fails to alter the culture and structure of schooling. We share Hermès’s (2005, 2007) concerns and fear that much of the scholarship on CRS encourages educational approaches that assume culture to be something that can and should be taught as a discrete school subject. Our discontent with these tendencies provides yet another impetus for our suggestion that sovereignty and self-determination, institutional racism, and Indigenous epistemologies must take center stage in future articulations of and for CRS for Indigenous youth.

This integration is anything but simple and is especially challenging in the state of Washington as it is not even a requirement that these different ways of knowing and being should be integrated. There is reliance upon the willingness of non-Native people—teachers, administrators, community members—to see the necessity for changing the way all children in the state of Washington are educated about their “common” history. Those Native living histories have been invisible, at times purposefully erased and forgotten, and at times have suffered from benign neglect in terms of historical remembrance. Systemic change, truly
Indigenizing the curriculum, is what is required if we want to see Native children and youth succeed in mainstream education.
Chapter 5

RELATIONAL ETHICS AND CULTURAL SAFETY:
Respecting Indigenous Presence and Participation, Reverence, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Resisting Exhibitionary Pedagogy

The legislature finds that there is a need to establish collaborative government-to-government relationships between elected school boards and tribal councils to create local and/or regional curricula about tribal history and culture, and to promote dialogue and cultural exchanges that can help tribal leaders and school leaders implement strategies to close the achievement gap [of Indian students].

—Washington State SHB 1495, 2005

In this chapter different theoretical models that are forwarded as being potentially effective in addressing the “gap” experienced by Native American youth in K-12 education are examined. What binds these ideas together, what is woven from all the different theoretical and methodological strands, is that in attempting to integrate the living histories of Native American peoples into the curriculum of elementary and secondary education we have to do more than look at the instrumental effects, where the Indigenous curriculum is serving solely as a means, agency, or influence—rather, we are talking about the relationships that are developed from the ongoing process of reshaping the curriculum through the integration of this “new” curriculum; of working with Elders and other teachers from the Native communities; of respecting living histories which are deeply connected to particular places, that are intertwined with and arise from a specific landscape; and of recognizing and respecting the power, gifts, and talents of all the Native youth who are the reason for this project.

These theoretical and methodological—pedagogical—approaches are attempting to disrupt the gaze that creates the “Other” in the mind of the mainstream, and even the Native,
student. They are resisting the work of exhibitionary pedagogy as named by John Willinsky in *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire’s End*:

The themes of discovery, conquest, possession, and dominion are about ways of knowing the world, of bringing it to order, of surveying, mapping, and classifying it in an endless theorizing of identity and difference. . . . We need to think about how people have been trained to view the gulf between West and East. How has a public been educated in the value of Western hegemony as an expression of civilization? (85-86)

The public has thought of colonization as something that happened elsewhere and yet in making this move they disregard the lives and experience of Indigenous peoples within the United States. There is assumed to be a naturalized separation between Native peoples and the newcomers to the western hemisphere. This separation is assumed to be an irreconcilable gulf between starkly, and forever, different peoples. By assuming that mainstream Americans and Native Americans inhabit different spheres of existence mainstream people and mainstream education are able to deny relationality.

**Relational Ethics**

In the book, *Relational Ethics: The Full Meaning of Respect* (Bergum and Dossetor 2005), we read about the heart of relational ethics as an understanding of people as interdependent and, in particular, the quality of the commitments between them. The distance between people is named by the authors as an ethical space or a relational space. This is a “space” that requires nurturing and respect in order for the relationship to be considered ethical. The authors contend that attention needs to be focused on the particular details of the
relationship, on the context in which the interaction takes place, on the process rather than just looking at the results, and on the dialogue that develops and is part of this ongoing progression.

Mutual respect is acknowledged as the fundamental premise of a truly relational ethic. In order to understand respect in this way we must see it as both reciprocal and interactive, with a vital focus on the respect for and acceptance of difference in others. To develop mutual respect it is not enough to respect others but we must also respect ourselves. In order to have an authentic connection with others requires that we be truly present, that we exhibit sensitivity in our responsiveness to others’ lives and needs and that cultivating empathy are all are powerfully vital pieces of all our interactions. This dimension of relational ethics is very closely related to an ethics of care (Noddings 1984) and communitarian ethics (Denzin 1997). Research and teaching using relational ethics invites us to attend to the values of mutual respect, connectedness, and dignity in the work that is being done between community members.

This praxis of relational ethics reminds us that in order to achieve the transformation we are seeking after we must reflect upon our relations—our words, actions, and even our thinking will all be a part of what we must pay careful attention to in order to change how we interact with Native and non-Native students using these Native curricula. The idea of love is a necessary element to understand in thinking through and implementing this ethic of care. The students must know that we have their welfare, their success, as paramount in all that we say and do. Curriculum is more than books, or tests, or lesson plans—truly compassionate curriculum is about transforming our foundational relations and showing through our pedagogy that we mean more than can be found in mere classroom management or high-stakes testing. It also means that we must trust in the ability of Native people to use their power of self-determination to shape a curriculum that will best serve their communities. The very least that mainstream society can do
is to step back and let this “new” curriculum unfold. If mainstream society in its drive to assimilate and acculturate Native children was putting such great trust in the power of Western education to “lift up” Native youth were now to put that same trust, if not more, in this Indigenous curriculum then we could see how many generations it would take to heal the damage done by the previous failed experiment. Another valuable point to take away from the idea of education as an “experiment” is that it is critical to not use methods that we can see are serving only a select few and under-serve and in many cases do extreme harm to Native youth in their intellectual, social, and cultural development.

**Cultural Safety**

Another approach that merges with the previously described approach of relational ethics is the idea of cultural safety. In the article, *Creating Culturally-Safe Schools for Maori Students* (MacFarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, and Batemen) we hear it described as “…safety is taken to mean freedom to be who (individually) and what (collectively) we are” (69). This idea relates to what Native peoples in the state of Washington are attempting to accomplish through integrating their living histories into the mainstream K-12 curriculum. What is important to note here is that cultural safety asserts that we do not have to jettison who we are in order to be a member of a learning community. In fact, cultural safety asserts that in order for us to *feel* and *be* safe that; first, we must feel and have the freedom to be who we are as individuals; and second, we are not individuals without care and concern for the forces that, and individuals who, have shaped our community identities. What Native peoples are asserting through their desire to integrate this “new” curriculum is that the relationships that they have already formed within their communities—particularly those of strength, health and vitality are fundamental to what has helped them survive and know all that they are asking is for the next generation of their people to
be able to follow those who came before and build upon their resilience. In the same article cited previously the authors argue that:

Relationships are the key to a successful school and a key motivator for students….Ideally, relationships with students should focus on welcoming each student, developing a personal rapport with them early in the school year, helping each child to feel successful about their learning, seeing themselves as successful learners from the beginning of school to the end, treating them fairly in an open and honest manner, giving them feedback, and making it fun. (70)

We find ourselves constantly circling around the idea of relationships—of being required to recognize the power that good relationships mean for developing teaching and learning experiences, for nurturing Native identity, that will result in the success of Indigenous students. Comprehending relationality means that we must grapple with the paired ideas of love and vulnerability. Teachers must recognize the vulnerability of Native students; they must see that culturally sensitive pedagogy requires that they see their students’ lives as unique and yet recognizing their common humanity. Additionally, teachers and administrators must recognize their own frailty and vulnerability in these relationships. Facing history honestly requires a deep commitment to truth-telling, of grappling with fears and uncertainties when it comes to their pedagogy, and that above all else they must be completely forthright with their students about their recognition of their frailty.

The frailty that teachers and administrators must exhibit and recognize within themselves is tied to the requirement that their own epistemologies and ontologies will be undergoing a shift as they attend to the living histories of Indigenous peoples. As Jessica Ball and Allan Pence

relate to us about the ties between relationality and teaching and learning we discover that:

It is perfectly possible, however, to view maturity as an ever deepening relationship with one’s roots, as an ever evolving understanding of whom and where we have always been in relation to our ancestors, our traditions, and the place we live. This alternate view of development promotes the cultivation of wisdom rather than the accumulation of knowledge. Knowledge and wisdom both are necessary to the development of human potential. Western culture, however, tends to respond to every challenge as if what is inevitably needed is more knowledge—a commodity that often requires going farther afield—when what is wanted may be greater wisdom—a state that sometimes is reached by remaining where one is and patiently waiting for understanding to emerge from the situation.

This invitation to attend to our roots is more than just the recognition of the idea of generational connections inherent in the notion of “time immemorial” for Indigenous peoples. It is also a request that non-Native peoples need to attend to their roots, to their histories, and that in doing their own homework they will discover that they have been harmed by the same forces of colonization that have disrupted the lives of Native youth. This is where the vital element of love comes into what this pedagogy is all about. When we attend to our relations then we are required to remember the responsibilities that we are bound by because of our relationships. We do not act in fundamentally different manner unless there is a strong enough driving force that helps to both remind us and enervate us when we feel uncertain or fearful. That driving force is the love that we have for our relatives, who have gone before us—those who opened a path for
the generations to follow after them even when they could not see all of what was coming. Non-natives need to understand that when they recognize the common humanity of their Native students that it will also help them to see their own humanity reflected back to them. That they need to attend to the ways that these colonizing projects have changed the landscape that they live on and blinded them to the commonalities that they hold with their Indigenous students. That attending to their “buried” histories will help them to see and understand why the process of attending to their roots is an ongoing process and not a one-shot proposition. It is an “ever deepening” relationship—this means that new truths will be uncovered in the process of peeling back of the layers of the history of colonization.

Lastly, formal education does not ask us to attend to the process of cultivating wisdom. We are told that we need to memorize facts and figures in order to successfully pass exams that test our power of recall but fail to ignite our passions or ability to critically think about the world around us. If we understand knowledge as a commodity then we will always be looking for what we can exchange for that prize—even if it means that all we end up giving up is our precious time, our very lives, in chasing this illusive chimera. This idea of chasing after knowledge stands in sharp contrast to being still in a place and seeing what wisdom arises from where we stand and from the relationships that we have developed there with others and with the land itself.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Schooling

Culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally responsive schooling (Aylward 2007, Ball 2006, Belgarde 2002, Brayboy 2005, Castagno 2008, Gay 2002, Gay 2000, Klug 2003) are necessary to understanding what can be done in addition to the curriculum itself to change the relationships that non-Native teachers and school administrators have, not only with Native children and their
immediate families, but also with the local tribes that this Indigenous curriculum is
recommending that educators incorporate into their classroom instruction. This means that
according to Angelina Castagno and Bryan Brayboy (2008) that, “…truly culturally responsive
learning for Indigenous youth is a highly complex endeavor that requires systemic change within
and across a number of levels in our schooling system” (943). They cite others in listing off the
characteristics of successful culturally responsive schooling. These include such things as the
learning experiences that “make sense” to those have not been assimilated or acculturated into
the mainstream culture, the idea of “building a bridge” between the school experience and the
child’s home culture or community experiences, the idea of drawing upon a child’s identity and
background to help develop a successful learning environment, and a critical piece of cultural
responsive schooling is that the teachers be culturally competent.

According to Diller and Moule (2005) cultural competence is understood as “mastering
complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that taken
together, underlie effective cross cultural teaching” (5). All of these are part of what will make
the STI curriculum successful in the state of Washington. Teachers will need to spend time with
the Native communities that are sharing their living histories with the school districts. This will
require extra time outside of the classroom to attend events such as powwows and other
community gatherings, simply visiting the nearest tribal nation and spending time on the
reservation getting to know the dynamics of the community, and this could even include teachers
volunteering to work on other projects with Native community members outside of the
curriculum project. Part of getting to know the students’ home culture would entail getting to
know the history of the tribes in a way that is more substantive than just reading the curriculum
provided online. Understanding could only come about through contact with both the
community members and actual trips to the local reservation communities. This would be daunting for a teacher who only had received training in culturally relevant pedagogy but had not know what that would mean when it would be required to be put into practice. Part of the idea of communicating with the community members would mean that there would have to be some relationship building from the tribe outward and from the members of mainstream society outward. The teachers, in order to avoid the “Othering” of the tribal community members, would have to arrange meetings with members of the tribal community. However, this might require someone from the community to act as a go-between and perhaps what would be strongest in terms of relationship building would be for teachers to first attend community events and introduce themselves as teachers in the school district that was incorporating these Native living histories. The idea of breaking the ice for the first time would be daunting but it could be done with good relations developed first by those teachers who are already comfortable with stretching themselves and reaching out form new relationships—those veteran teachers who already are aware of the value of creating a welcoming environment, of developing real relationships of trust and care, and who know their Native students’ lives and are comfortable talking about the issues that the local tribal members might bring up in regard to these attempts at “bridge building” by teachers and administrators.

The teachers and administrators will need to grapple with the possibility that their attempts to reach out to their local tribal communities may be rebuffed by some members of these respective tribal nations. Again from Castagno and Brayboy (2008) we hear why some might find this outreach to not be acceptable, “Indeed, to equip a child with the capability to exist in the world requires value judgments about what that child needs to succeed. The values, ideas, and priorities embedded in NCLB are not necessarily shared within tribal nations and
Indigenous communities” (946). So this relationship building will need to be with more than just those who oversee tribal education or those knowledgeable about tribal history. What will make the STI project truly successful is when members from the mainstream community are able to form lasting relationships with tribal members—friendships that may not every directly be about the education project but may be more about simply recognizing the need to be better and more friendly neighbors.

**Community Cultural Wealth**

The linkages between community cultural wealth (Cammarota 2007, Huber 2009, Huber 2006, Liou 2009, Martin 1996, Moody 2005, Smith 2007, Yosso 2006) and education help us to see the connections that are necessary for Indigenizing the curriculum. Community cultural wealth is about recognizing the power that children and youth of color have and are able to access when navigating the education system. However, this recognition will generally come from those who are mentoring, teaching, or otherwise serving these youth.

Tara Yosso (2005) advocates for an active understanding of communities of color with particular attention to the ways that community cultural wealth is used by young people of color to not only survive within white, middle-class educational systems, but to also thrive and:

Indeed, if some knowledges have been used to silence, marginalize and render People of Color invisible, then ‘Outsider’ knowledges, *mestiza* knowledges and transgressive knowledges can value the presence and voices of People of Color, and can reenvision the margins as places empowered by transformative resistance.

(70)

This most definitely includes Indigenous ways of knowing and can prove invaluable in understanding the place-based, Indigenous epistemologies and their necessity in the K-12
curriculum. All of the six elements that Yosso applied to Latina/o and Chicana/o students can be applied to Indigenous students—asperational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital and resistant capital. When one considers the long, and continuing, struggle toward having the right to self-determination in educational decisions recognized it becomes invaluable to be able to list the community strengths that support and nourish Native American youth in Washington State. What connects this idea of community cultural wealth to this particular project is the work of Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (2005) who discusses TribalCrit and its application to Indigenous education. He defines knowledge as “the ability to recognize change, adapt, and move forward with the change” (434) and he states that there are three forms of education for Indigenous peoples: cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and academic knowledge. In discussing the linkages between the three he describes academic knowledge and the challenges to blending different ways of knowing, “While Indigenous ways of knowing and “book smarts” are often seen as diametrically opposed, these different forms of knowledge do not necessarily need to be in conflict. Rather, they complement each other in powerful ways” (435). This is one of the greatest challenges of this project—to have Native American students see that the blending of their home cultures, histories, and ways of being with western educational forms of knowing does not mean that they have to be seen as sell-outs or “acting white,” rather, they can see it as code-switching and themselves as powerful and talented for being able to walk in multiple worlds, they can understand themselves as Native and more (Native-plus) and not as a failure or a victim.

Aspirational Capital

Native youth are being identified through this curriculum project as members of communities who are dreaming of the possibilities for their success in the future. The
curriculum project, even in its nascent stage, testifies that there Native adults who also have a vision of the possibilities that this Indigenized curriculum has for the future success and wellbeing for the next generation of Native youth in the twenty-nine tribes inside the state of Washington. They are seeing beyond the “gap”, beyond the high dropout/“pushout” rates and imagining what will be created through the integration of these living histories. That even though this project is merely in a pilot phase and even though it currently is struggling to seek funding that there are great things that the Native American leaders and educators see this project creating in terms of strengthening their communities, in building bridges with their non-Native neighbors, and perhaps even beginning to heal the wounds that have been created through previously unjust relations. These stories are stories of hopefulness and are about nurturing a “culture of possibility” for future generations.

**Linguistic Capital**

For some of the Native students who attend these off-reservation mainstream schools a part of their intellectual and social skills are learned by their experiences in communicating with the members of their communities in more than one language or dialect. This linguistic capital is reflective of the idea that many of these Native students, because of their relatives and because of language revitalization programs that are being developed by tribes that they are entering the mainstream schools with multiple language and communication skills. Currently this may not be as well identified because of the lack of support within mainstream schools for these Native children’s bilingual abilities. Additionally, these children have more often than not been engaged as participants the traditional Native storytelling—these stories are there to teach correct protocols in terms of their relations with their family members, community members, and even with the land itself. Part of what storytelling does for Native youth is it teaches then how to
shared these living histories and the importance of remembering the stories, what the stories mean to their respective tribal nation, and it also serves as a way for their community to bond together and recognize their responsibilities to one another. Another facet brought forward by Tara Yosso (2005) in relations to Latina/o youth that linguistic capital can also refers to their ability to communicate through poetry, music, and the visual arts. Visual arts for many Native students includes basketweaving, carving, the construction of their regalia that they wear during powwows or for ceremonial purposes. The power of linguistic capital for Native youth is that it includes for many of them the revitalization of drum groups whether it be with great drums or even hand drumming and singing. This piece of linguistic capital has a long tradition within traditional drum groups as singers pass on songs that they have learned from their elders to the next generation.

**Familial Capital**

For Native youth this is a form of social and cultural capital that they often are very familiar with because much of what they have learned about their identities has through the cultural knowledge that as a living history is a history of their community, and a greater memory of who they are as members of a specific tribal nation and these remembrances are nurtured within their immediate family circle, within the circle of their extended relations, and within the “family” of their tribal nation. Because of all the conflicts that occurred over the very idea of attacking and undermining Nativeness itself this form of cultural wealth expresses Native youths’ commitment to their community’s well being and as was mentioned earlier family becomes a much larger term that encompasses an understanding of kinship and responsibilities tied to those relations. Family within Native communities includes aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other Elders and it also includes ancestors. As these kinship ties are recognized,
remembered and honored Native youth are being taught how to heal themselves from historical trauma and create healthy relationships within their community and be able to tap into resources of strength that they otherwise have been missing. As Native youth with the help of this curriculum can begin to see their community members represented as contributing to the history of the communities, both Native and non-Native, that they share membership across their familial capital will grow.

**Social Capital**

For Native students this can be understood as the web of people and also their community resources. With friends, family, and other connections Native youth are provided with instrumental and emotional support to navigate through the institutions, like mainstream education, that they will need to achieve educational goals that they, their families, and even their broader community may hold for them. Other family members or friends who have graduated high are not only role models but also are valuable resources in helping to understand the challenges and the opportunities that come from successfully completing high school. For those Native students who have felt support throughout their elementary, middle, and high school years family and friends can serve as mentors and answer questions about how to survive the culture shock that may come for those who decide to pursue a college degree. There is a reassurance that the Indigenous student is not left alone and that they have emotional support in their goal of pursuing post-secondary education. Like other groups tapping into social capital for Native youth allows them entry into better opportunities in striving for more formal education, in dealing with the legal system, in gaining employment and even navigating the complexity of health care options. Because of the value of this knowledge and the resources that they may gain many Native youth carry this information back to the members of the tribal nation. For
Native people the idea of “giving back” is an important part of social capital—when going to get an education in particular many Native students talk about how they will use their degrees and educational experience to help nurture their home community. One of the common experiences for Native people is to find other Natives, particularly in urban situations, to directly seek them out so that there can be a social network of support for those who away from their home reservations and community members.

**Navigational Capital**

Navigational capital for Native peoples is a powerful one because of the idea of two-worlds when talking about Native youth. More often than not the differences between mainstream society and Native communities is referred to as the idea of two separate worlds and Native youth need to posses the navigational capital skills that allow them to make their way through the institutions and the gatekeepers in mainstream society. These institutions, like educational institutions, were not created with the success of Indigenous peoples in mind. Native students trying to make their way through the school system have to deal not only with a foreign and ill-fitting curriculum but additionally they must often endure racial hostility which often can eat away at their other forms of social and cultural capital and increase the likelihood that they will drop out or be pushed out. A group of scholars (Stiffman, Brown, Freedenthal, House, Ostmann and Yu 2007) have recently conducted a “strengths-based” study to examine why Native students stay in school rather than conducting yet another study about the “deficits” of Native youth in academia. Resilience is a key factor that is studied in the health and well-being of Native students and their ability to successfully matriculate through the mainstream education system. Navigational capital is valuable but it necessary to acknowledge individual actions within the obstacles that are faced within different institutions—educational, legal, healthcare—
and that often success is reached in spite of and because of the institutional and societal
“roadblocks” that Native youth run into as they attempt to survive and thrive in two worlds.

**Resistant Capital**

The knowledges and skills that Native youth have fostered through oppositional behavior can be understood as their way of challenging inequality within their lives and their communities. They are doing what their ancestors have been doing since the arrival of newcomers to their lands—the resistance to being subordinated and dominated by outsiders. The ways that their ancestors resisted in many cases has been passed on and besides serving as a legacy of resistance it has also served a way to carry forward the practice of resistance for the current and future generations. In Native communities it is those who have gone before who carried these many forms of social and cultural capital, who have nurtured and protectively guarded these ways of being and ways of knowing. Part of the resistant capital of Native youth is the refusal to be dehumanized and the assertion of their intelligence, their strength, and their pride and respect for themselves and the members of their respective tribal nations. This wellspring of strength and pride is necessary because of the constant barrage of negative images that Native youth still must endure that members of mainstream society believe represent what it means to be Native. Many Native parents work very hard to teach their children pride in themselves and to stand up to these racist stereotypes and to behave with the kind of character and bearing that will quash these gross misrepresentations. Part of resisting is not accepting the status quo because to do so would be to accept the mission of assimilation and acculturation that has been the goal of mainstream society for some time now. Obviously, as it has worked out for other marginalized groups, the forms of resistance that Native youth practice are not always productive or creative in their power. Many times the resistance takes the form of acting out or
dropping out. This is why this digital Native curriculum project is so valuable; because, in the end it is about transforming the perceptions of both non-Native and Native youth in their understanding of what it means to be Indigenous in the twenty-first century. However, many Native youth today recognize the racism and other forms of oppression that they face. Therefore, their resistance capital becomes transformative as they use their Indigenous cultural knowledge alongside their knowledge of the structures of racism as a way to motivate themselves and their peers to dismantle these oppressive structures and transform their lived experience into a more positive and empowering experience.

**Decolonizing and Indigenizing Teaching and Learning**

The relationship of all of the aforementioned theories and methods to projects of decolonizing (Castellano 2000, Cornell 2007, Faircloth 2009, Grande 2004, Holder 2008, Simpson 2004, Wane 2009, Wootton 2010, Wotherspoon 2006) and Indigenizing education are important to understanding the outcomes that can be possible with integrating this Native curriculum into what children and young adults learn in elementary, middle, and high school in the state of Washington. Decolonization is more than simply deconstructing and disrupting the stories of colonization. It also is about transforming the dysfunctional relationships that have grown out of that continual colonized relationship. It is about resisting the exhibitionary pedagogy and replacing it with a face-to-face relationship; a relationship of caring, concern, and deep respect towards one another.

A warning is given Leanne Simpson (2004) in her article, “Anticolonial Strategies for the Recovery and Maintenance of Indigenous Knowledge” where she states that:

> When knowledge is made into a text, it is translated from Indigenous languages into English, locking its interpretation in a cognitive box delineated by the
structure of a language that evolved to communicate the worldview of the colonizers. It is also stripped of its dynamism and its fluidity and confined to a singular context. It is void of the spatial relationships created between Elder and youth. It becomes generalized and depersonalized. It is separated from the land, from the worlds of the spirits, from its source and its meaning, and from the methodologies for transmission that provide the rigor that ensures its proper communication. It becomes coerced and manipulated into a form that cannot possibly transform or decolonize. (380)

What is clearly being expressed is the fear of what will be lost in the translation in this decolonizing effort. What can alleviate this concern is that the written text is going to be decided upon by those communities who are sharing their living histories. This does not mean that the warning should not be heeded. It simply means that the colonizing relationship is beginning to shift and there is hope that this will continue and that through this relational pedagogy that stronger community ties between Natives and non-Natives can be formed, that more Native youth will successful navigate the mainstream educational system, and that the digital form it is taking will be malleable enough to work through the interpretation issues.

A final piece of advice comes from Njoki Nathani Wane (2009) in his article, “Indigenous Education and Cultural Resistance: A Decolonizing Project,” who in writing about decolonization efforts in the continent of Africa helps us to understand what may be required on the part of Native peoples before they can hope to “build bridges” with their non-Native neighbors:

A decolonizing project may mean a myriad of things to different people. From my own perspective, it is important to note that to decolonize, one must first start
from within oneself in a reflective process. Decolonization may mean questioning one’s education and the acquisition of knowledge, what is learned in schools, who writes history, whose story is legitimized, and how power plays a role in the production of knowledge. It can mean rejecting the compartmentalization of knowledge in terms of disciplines such as biology, psychology, and philosophy, and thinking of all knowledge forms as interconnected and intersecting. Decolonizing may mean dismantling the use of binaries (such as East and West, First World and Third World, etc.) and questioning how these binaries are constructed and how they have affected the delivery of what is learnt in schools globally.

Wane’s insights are invaluable because they point out that the idea and project of decolonization in the state of Washington alone may mean that we are facing twenty-nine different working definitions of the term and what Native peoples want it to accomplish. Also, he brings forward the idea that Native peoples will have to start the healing from within their communities, that healing and reconciliation with their non-Native neighbors is an important goal, however, true healing cannot occur unless all parties approach as healthier communities to begin the process. He also brings forward the necessity, when Indigenizing curriculum, of paying close attention to the power that Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies bring to this project. Without them we are not truly decolonizing; we are only moving the furniture of colonization around the room. This point is reinforced by Terry Wotherspoon (2006) who sharing in his article, “Teachers’ work in Canadian Aboriginal communities” the pointed observation that:

Sad try, Indigenous education systems will not reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, unless there is political will to hand over total jurisdiction of Indigenous education
to Indigenous people without fear of reprisal for the content of their curriculum.

This will only happen when both Indigenous leaders and people are ready to assume full responsibility and accountability for Indigenous education. (116)

Indigenous living histories will only be living if they reflect the relational respect that is necessary to transform the curriculum, the relationships on and with the land, and the understanding that Native peoples have already been contributing to the story of this place for thousands of years.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

That's the spiritual part of it. If you talk about research as ceremony, that's the climax of the ceremony, when it all comes together and all those connections are made. Cause that's what ceremony is about, is strengthening those connections. So maybe when research as a ceremony comes together, when the ceremony is reaching its climax, is when those ideas all come together. Those connections are made.

—Shawn Wilson

How do we think about ourselves as Indigenous peoples without the requirement to juxtapose our existence through comparison, contrast with, or in opposition to non-Native peoples? This is one of the primary research questions that started this research journey and has altered the shape and the path that this thesis has taken. Out of the previous chapters the “discovery” has been made that it is not required of us to know Western epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, pedagogies, or even the theories and methodologies of Western scholars to begin to engage with Indigenous peoples’ living histories. What is required is a humility and vulnerability on the part of non-Natives to bridge any gaps toward working at relationality, learning in place and from place, and the necessity of planting and nurturing the seeds of a deeper understanding of the lived experience of Native peoples within the state of Washington. In order to understand the new history of the United States of America requires recognition that Indigenous peoples are not merely a bookend to the history of the U.S. Rather we are called to see that their living histories are intertwined with those of their newly arrived neighbors. The histories of Native peoples in the state of Washington are integral to understanding a shared past with their new neighbors and, more importantly, a shared future will be shaped by Native peoples as they exercise their peoplehood and their self-determination.
Additionally, the question was posed earlier: What about and how does this Indigenous curriculum shift the power in K-12 education in the state of Washington to eliminate the deficit view of Native American youth and their learning styles and their learning outcomes? This is a poignant question because for far too long Native peoples have been viewed as inferior in relation to their newly arrived neighbors. Strangely enough this has included both those who have considered themselves white and those who were labeled as people of color. Because of the work of racial formations (Omi and Winant 1994) within the United States, Native peoples have been the recipients of a peculiar project that required their assimilation while at the same time it would make their Indigenous “difference” (character/nature rather than cultural identity) irreconcilable with the citizenship within the dominant society that was thrust upon them. The idea of competing sovereignties, or even the stronger notion of peoplehood, has not yet been resolved. This irreconcilable difference has led to the idea that the unfinished work of assimilation and acculturation, the failure to successfully integrate Native peoples into the larger body politic, has led to a long-standing and seeming unshakable faith in the idea that it is not the failure of the project of “normalizing” Native peoples rather there must be some quality inherent and fiercely embedded in Native children and youth that has caused them to fail at this project of Westernization. Unfortunately, at this moment in time, we are still left with no clear answers as to how this digital curricular project will shift the power relations in the K-12 public education system within the state of Washington.

Another question posed at the start of this thesis was the question of how this “new” curriculum will benefit the Native communities that are offering their living histories as a bridge to creating new respectful relations—how does this digital project “give back” to the Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington? The reason for putting the word new in quotation marks is
due to the fact that within Western society in the U.S. that Indigenous epistemologies, ways of knowing, are not recognized for their exceptionally longer tenure upon this land. That for far too long Western epistemologies have held sway in deciding what versions of historical remembrance are considered both valid and reliable. This presumption of superiority still holds true within both K-12 educational institutions and within post-secondary institutions within the state of Washington. This presumption of truth-telling will require more than this “new” curriculum to unseat Euro-American epistemology and ontology from its position of ideological and curricular dominance. As has been argued throughout this thesis grappling with decentering these “common-sense” understandings will require a new understanding of historical memory—the integration of these Indigenous living histories must be seen as more than merely placing Native histories alongside Western historical remembrance, rather it is about unsettling the assumed centrality and superiority of Western historicity and replacing this distorted recollection with a more balanced and honest remembrance. The idea of “giving back” to the twenty-nine federally recognized Native American tribes in the state of Washington will be accomplished through this forthright memory work as the idea of building more just and respectful relationships both now and into the future requires this degree of candor and integrity on the individual level and from the level of community bridgework.

In looking for answers to how this digital decolonization project can serve as a corrective to the absence of place-based pedagogy it will be necessary to wait and see how much of local history is taught in and through the curriculum, both of Indigenous peoples and even of their newly arrived non-Native neighbors. The questions have been already posed of the accuracy of the stories being told and how we will be able to measure their veracity and who will be our guides in this journey. Beyond the digital materials, both the STI website and the website for the
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the state of Washington, we will have to see precisely how the consultation with the tribes/elders about the veracity of the tribe’s living history occurs and whether this will be an ongoing process. As it stands now, the curriculum is far too generic and there is not enough material of the local tribal histories to even know what effects the living histories will have on the knowledge of students, both Native and non-Native, in the state of Washington. It is still too early to tell if the stereotypes will be grappled with in a substantive manner, if the stories about colonization will be included, if the history of the state of Washington will be recognized to be a history that has been contributed to and shaped by many of its citizens—that Native peoples within the state will be recognized for their deep and profound contributions to the social and cultural landscape. In thinking about place-based education a question is put forward of where we will we be able to pair Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), or Indigenous Knowledge (IK), and place-based education in a way that will see the successful incorporation of both Indigenous ways of knowing and this critical pedagogy. This pairing becomes a valuable and vital aspect of the idea of collaboration put forward by SHB 1495 in that understanding local history requires that students actually understand more than just the people who have come before, and who are still here, but also understand their relationships with the land. That mainstream society’s understanding of history is always about where the “place” is that they are in relationship with in order to understand who they are or who they can become.

What will learning about and from these Indigenous living histories do for us and to us? This two-part question is powerful in that forces us to look honestly at what historical remembrance does when we open ourselves to hearing, and engaging with, more honest stories about our relationships. In looking at the past we are required to examine what our current
relationships are and to see where we have gaps in our learning, gaps in our ability to relate and to be accountable for building healthy relationships. The question of what these Indigenous living histories will do to us is trickier—being able to predict with any degree of certainty how this relationality and relational accountability will change us is difficult as we will have to recognize that Indigenous peoples and non-Native peoples will be changed in these interactions and that the goals for what the future will look like is going to take a lot of dialogue so that we can even approach something resembling consensus. Consensus means that we may not agree on every outcome but that we are going to have to ensure that every voice is closely attended to; this is more than mere hearing.

The pitfalls and promises of collaboration when it comes to the re-presentation of the image of Native peoples is dependent on understanding what has been taught in the K-12 educational system up to this point in time. This includes not just the standard curriculum that teachers use within the classroom setting but also understanding how the history of Native and non-Native relations has colored their relations in the past up to the present day. This can include such seemingly simple subjects like truly understanding how relations have been shaped by the conflicts over fishing in “usual and accustomed places” as a treaty right and not a special right. How the attitudes of non-Natives have shaped the racial and racist experiences that Native youth have had to face in mainstream education. That seemingly innocuous activities like the celebration of the first Thanksgiving have relied upon a distorted understanding of Native and non-Native relations, that having children dress up and “play Indian” is dehumanizing and offensive, and that telling more truthful accounts can occur even with students in the elementary schools. That within the state of Washington that conflicts over retiring racist/racial Native American mascots and names has affected the relationships that Native American students, their
immediate families, and Native communities, both on and off the reservations, have had with non-Natives. That part of the struggle against these imagined understandings of Nativeness is a key part of the struggle to successfully counter harmful racial stereotypes. That through using the living histories of Indigenous peoples in the state of Washington that there is an understanding that some things will be “lost in translation” and though this is recognized part of doing this kind of historical memory work that perhaps all those involved in this digital curriculum project also recognize that so much will be gained by our making these tentative first steps toward understanding, healing, and empowerment.

In addressing the question of how we go about honoring the lived reality of Native American peoples in the state of Washington while attempting to not reproduce notions of “authenticity” it becomes imperative that the project be two-fold. First, if stereotyped images and imaginings of Native peoples are to be deconstructed and undermined then teachers must first recognize how ubiquitous these mediated images are in mainstream society. Students are swimming in a sea of misinformation and misrepresentations that are very difficult to address through just one lesson about the ideas of racial/racist stereotypes. Absent having contact with Native peoples as their immediate neighbors that the images and stories that they share through this digital curriculum project must show Native peoples as living, present-day peoples who although culturally different are no different in their humanity from the children and youth who are learning about them. The second challenge will be to find ways to re-present, present anew, and represent Native peoples that doesn’t add to the generic view of Native peoples that has been propagated by mass media—movies, television, advertising, etc. This will be a difficult challenge because the moment the words “Native American” or “American Indian” are brought up these images are brought forward in the minds of youth that have been planted and nurtured
through mass media constructions of “Indianness” that have shown Native peoples to be primitive, to be stuck in the past, and to be wholly different, at times incompatible, from mainstream society. Fortunately, the sooner that the living histories of the specific tribal nations are included in the digital curriculum spaces the more likely it is that students will have tribally specific histories that will act as counter-narratives to the flattened, generic, and ahistorical view of Native peoples that has been part of their daily “education” through mass media sources.

One of the final pressing questions is about how this project of alternative Indigenous remembrances will be able to traverse the rigid requirements of curriculum design during the era of the No Child Left Behind Act. A parallel question must be posited: How do we successfully Indigenize Washington State’s K-12 educational curriculum? In order to answer either one of these questions about the STI digital project or even the vision brought forward in the study *From Where the Sun Rises: Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State* (2008) we, Natives and non-Natives alike, have to look forward and be able to envision what “quality” education will mean as we move forward. We have to see everyone involved as equal stakeholders in this process, including the children and youth who we are serving, and together we have to redefine what it means to be educated and how Indigenous living histories can be used to transform the way that mainstream education is both shaped and delivered in the state of Washington. This is why I have stated firmly from the start of this thesis that Indigenizing the curriculum is transformative—it can be nothing else or it is not Indigenous. Success will mean that *all* children and youth who are served by public schools in the state of Washington will see their relationships strengthened and with this mutual respect, this reciprocity, that the goals of retention, of improved test scores, of higher graduate rates will improve for *every* student.
In an attempt to answer the questions posited in the preceding chapters, I return to my original project *Indigepedia*, a thought exercise, which started this whole dialectical journey. In the state of Washington there has been an ongoing effort to create a digital clearing house that is an online space to share the local histories of Native peoples. Because this project is in its nascent stages at this point the majority of the information shared has been of the general information type as the initial thrust of the digital project has been to focus on the issue of tribal sovereignty. This focus on tribal sovereignty allows teachers to integrate these materials at their will because of the language in the original bill that this material is at present only recommended for integration into the K-12 curriculum.

The twist that this digital decolonization project is bringing to the re-presentation (Smith 59) of Indigenous peoples and their worldviews is in the model I am discussing in its adoption and adaptation. When looking at the ways that digital technologies are used we often find discussions about intellectual property and ethical research protocols. What is never forgotten in this is the idea of authorship or, in this instance; it is the case of Indigenous digital historiographies.

When looking at the *STI* website and its accompanying links we can see the efforts being put forward by Native peoples within the state of Washington to find a platform where they can share a Native American curriculum that fits within the curriculum demands of the EALRs and the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act. What makes this website wholly invaluable is that it becomes one of a very few places in the nation where Indigenous living histories are being shared in an attempt to educate the next generation of Natives and non-Natives about their nearest Indigenous neighbors. What becomes of vital importance in this project is how
widespread its effects and information may find itself shared nationwide. There is enormous value in people across the nation having access to accurate, up-to-date, and relevant information regarding these Washington tribal nations and their relationship with the residents of this particular state.

The tribes in Washington State in attempting to share their varied living histories run up against a model where they have to translate their storytelling from an oral tradition directly into a digitized space. This is a daunting project at best and will require time and careful reflection, collaboration and attention to the varieties of ways that Native peoples within the state of Washington are sharing their epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. Additionally, if the STI project is understood as more like the wiki model as this digital Native American clearing house is created then it is hoped that we can see a further transformation in how the teaching and learning of history occurs. In this case the wiki model is one where information is not frozen—this is not the word definition, where the first meaning of the term can be understood as a statement conveying fundamental character. In fact the wiki model disrupts the notion of authorship through a mutable intervention in the ways that we think about knowledge production and knowledge sharing. Visitors are able to add, remove, edit and change content and thus focus on knowledge production as a process and not solely an outcome. In particular, my proposed model would be more along the lines of an intranet—where Indigenous peoples would have control over the content. This changes the nature of the wiki model because it connects knowledge to a physical place (place-based education) and may help to avoid some of the pitfalls of the “public access” model of knowledge sharing—this would require a deeper understanding of just what information would be stored on this site. This model of collaborative authoring mirrors the collaboration that is called for in legislation that is asking for collaboration in the
efforts toward the integration of Indigenous knowledges into the mainstream educational curriculum. *Indigepedia*, as a way of thinking about the STI website, would provide a vision of an online space where those who are involved in the Indigenous curriculum project could share information, approaches, address challenges to implementation, and challenge the “authentic” representations of Indigeneity. Other ideas that could grow out of this wiki model would be the use of creating digital movies of those speaking in their Indigenous languages (creation stories etc.,) the documentation of language, Indigenous place names, traditional understandings and uses of the local plants and animals, and native science relating to health, the seasons, and Indigenous sustainability practices.

This digital archive could serve as tool to connect Indigenous communities and also serve as a way for non-Natives to see how Indigenous ways of knowing operate—this could help them to disrupt their common-sense understandings of education, citizenship, and community. *Indigepedia*, as a way of thinking about this Native curriculum intervention has the potential to be another tool of transformation. The power of this tool is that it can help to re-present Indigenous peoples and be a piece in the process of decolonization. This is not a panacea, but it is another point where Indigenous peoples can use the “master’s tools” to dismantle the false constructions of both colonizer and the colonized. It can be a tool, alongside place-based education, and understanding our relationality and relational accountability to re-humanize so that there can be more peaceful and creative co-existence.

**Areas for Further Research**

This project is only useful if the questions that are put forward in it ever find their way into the implementation process that is being shaped and altered as this thesis has been completed. There has been a great deal of research on the deficit view of Native American
students in mainstream education. Now we must shift our vision and research to understanding how the integration of Native American living histories will alter the landscape of teaching and learning in the state of Washington. This becomes a hopeful vision and a vision of dynamic transformation. Of the questions that I put forward earlier it is imperative that other researchers answer the question of how we go about creating the necessary environment for us to more peacefully co-exist as neighboring peoples. Answering this question in the state of Washington will mean that we have to attend to relations between mainstream society and twenty-nine federally recognized tribes and this further research is both complicated and complex. This idea of peaceful co-existence is not unattainable and is not utopian. Of the important values and practices that have been discussed throughout this thesis have been the paired ideas of relationality and relational accountability. These two powerful epistemological and ontological understandings and frameworks show that in order to heal the harms done in the past and look together toward a different and more hopeful future it is absolutely necessary that we understand how we have related to one another in the past, how we understand our relationships today in the present, and what kind of relations we are hoping to create for the future. If we are to ensure the educational success of all children and the health of our communities, both Native and non-Native, within the state of Washington we must pay attention to our relationships—there is no other way.

Relationality and relational accountability will mean that a further area of research will be in the area of understanding how future teachers are taught about Native living histories as they matriculate through their teacher development and certification programs. Understanding how the STI curriculum and any further curriculum is introduced and taught in colleges of education in the state of Washington will be vital to understanding how and what teachers will
use in the future as they teach all children and youth. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, it will be also important to see how this curriculum impacts the way the Native histories are taught in other departments and programs where we have not traditionally thought of Native American living histories as having an impact.

In the introduction to this thesis I addressed the challenges that I faced when understanding the power and potential of digital archives to help me find relevant material that would help me to better understand Native histories. I was looking for greater coherence of the information about Native American peoples and greater usability of those materials for both research and for helping to “give back” to Native communities. Other researchers will need to examine how these new digital projects are serving to revitalize the traditions of Native peoples and precisely how they are serving to assist in the recovery, revitalization, resilience, and decolonization of Native peoples in the state of Washington. They can help to answer the question of Indigenous peoples are “speaking back” to mainstream society and having their voices both heard and respected.

In understanding the integration of Native ways of knowing and being into the K-12 curriculum it will be necessary for others to address how the teaching of Native languages can be a part of this “new” curriculum that is being put forward for implementation. That a deeper understanding of the living histories of the twenty-nine federally recognized tribes will require that the teaching of each tribe’s respective Native language will be a keystone to understanding their culture, history, and governance practices. Other researchers will need to see how Native American languages are addressed in future articulations of this project to Indigenize the curriculum. As was mentioned earlier in addressing the community cultural wealth of Native
children and youth language plays a primary role in understanding how the educational curricula in mainstream schools in the state of Washington will need to adapt to help them to succeed.

Finally, future researchers can help us to understand what sort of “place” we are seeking to create in both the curricular sense and in the new relationships we are working on. This new way of understanding place means that any future research will have to go beyond the theories and methods of place-based education and actively grapple with ideas brought forward by Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge. The discernment that relationships mean more than just human-to-human relations will be revolutionary for the majority of teachers and students in mainstream education.
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