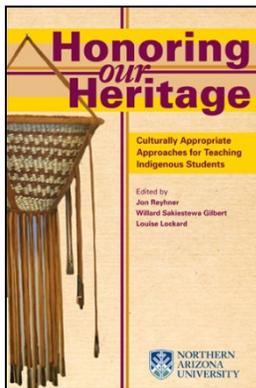


## Professional Book Review

Reyhner, J., Gilbert, W. S., & Lockard, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Honoring Our Heritage: Culturally Appropriate Approaches for Teaching Indigenous Students*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University Press. 198 pp. ISBN: 9780-967055459 (pbk). \$20.00.

Reviewed by John D. Berry, University of California, Berkeley, U. S. A.



This is the seventh book in North Arizona University's series on indigenous issues; this volume targets the teaching of Indigenous students and is dedicated to the memory of William G. Demmert, Jr. (Tlingit/Ogala Lakota), lifelong indigenous educator who helped to found the National Indian Education Association (NIEA). For those who are not familiar with the foundational concepts of appropriate cultural based education, they can be found here; this is your primer. For those who *are* familiar, this is a review, a refresher, and a volume of best practices from around the world.

The volume begins with a chapter by William G. Demmert, Jr., on "What is Culture-Based Education? Understanding Pedagogy and Curriculum." Here, the author states clearly that culture-based education (CBE) is not and should not always be the same; it must be relevant to the community involved. Additionally, he explains that culturally relevant assessment tools must be developed based in the needs and language of community. In this approach, the author diverges widely and appropriately from the dominant culture's standards which are based on competition and on an overreliance on statistical evaluations. Quantitative measurements are problematic at best in Demmert's opinion.

In the following chapter, Navin Kumar Singh's, "Culturally Appropriate Education: Theoretical and Practical Implications" presents background information and rationale for culturally appropriate education based on South Asian examples. It cites the trend generated by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 1953 publication by UNESCO, "The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education," as a founding principle regarding education in a student's mother tongue. Then, the author establishes what CBE is and cites examples from the Alaskan Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) from 1998. He gives a brief review of education history from the Miriam Report in 1928 to the present, before launching into how to make school culturally appropriate, what culturally appropriate pedagogy is, and why we need it. He follows with excellent examples from Canada and Southeast Asia.

The next three chapters, "Developing Culturally Based Science Curriculum for Native American Classrooms," by Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert; "Problem-Based Learning: Valuing Cultural Diversity in Science Education with Native

Students,” by MaryLynn Quartaroli and Frederick Sherman, and “Developing a Sense of Place and an Environmental Ethic: A Transformative Role for Hawaiian/Indigenous Science in Teacher Education?” by Pauline W.U. Chinn, provide examples of how community, students and teachers can be engaged by education and be supportive while students gain knowledge of the sciences and environmentalism through their own community values of indigenous knowledge. Some very useful best practices can be found here.

The next entry “Culture Based Arts Education,” by James W. Bequette and Kelly Hrenko, notes the significance of community Indigenous educational involvement in the arts, and discusses Project Intersect, a federal grant applied to the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in the Upper Midwest of the United States. Using two teachers as examples, the author deconstructs their teaching practices to illustrate the gains made in CBE, offering a very good model of applied colonial deconstruction.

The following two chapters, “Becoming Warriors: The Practice of Deep and Meaningful Learning,” by Sandra J. Wolf, and “Panimatzalam’s Voice of Transformation: An Indigenous Mayan Writing Project for Youth Activism,” by Matt Oppenheim, address the transformative effects of incorporating CBE into varied learning environments, in the first case that of a public, urban American Indian magnet school and in the later the engagement of rural youth into the traditional life of their community via CBE thus strengthening community engagements and commitment. If you want to strengthen your students, look at these.

The final chapter, “Heightening Awareness and Strengthening Relationships: Implications of Public Policy for Aboriginal Students, Communities and Teachers,” by Lorenzo Cherubini and John Hodson, addresses a project in Ontario, Canada, and its implications for the education of teachers regarding the needs of students. More importantly, it concludes the volume with a discussion about how educational policy and informed thinking can affect teacher education practices. Here you enter another realm of application. Each chapter contains numerous citations from the relevant literature, references and sometimes appendices, all of which can be highly, or selectively, useful.

The noted educator in the field of Indigenous education Dr. David Beaulieu, former President of the National Indian Education Association, writes that the book “is an informative and welcomed addition to the literature on culturally-based education illustrating engaging strategies for developing effective and meaningful education programs for Indigenous students.”

I recommend that any educator involved with indigenous students, at any level, add this to their bookshelves and read it repeatedly and thoughtfully. It should be in the teaching libraries of every college and university with an Education program in the United States and elsewhere. With a free PDF version available, all educators, even those who cannot afford the book, can have access to the contents. Get it, read it, and practice it!