

TRANSCRIPTION

Robin: Good afternoon, everyone. Can everyone hear me okay? Give me a thumbs up if you can hear me. Cool, thank you. My name is Robin Jackson and I am the Products Lead an...with the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, and I'm serving as your Host and Technical Director today. Thank you for joining us for our first *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable* of the 2021 year. Today's *Roundtable* is entitled *Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, or OSEU: Lakota Language and Culture in an Elementary Classroom*. South Dakota Department of Education adapted the Oceti Sakowin Essentials for Understandings in 2018. This adoption by the State Department of Education demonstrated the importance of South Dakota citizens to understand the history and the cultural makeup of Indigenous people. How do we use these understandings to center Indigenous culture? How do we foster students' mathematical identities through the OSEU? In this *Virtual Roundtable*, we explore how the OSEU can be integrated into any classroom as a starting point to honor students' voices, experiences, and identities by centering Indigenous culture in the learning environment. I want-

Lisa: One thing I would like to say before we get too far is South Dakota is made up of Lakota and Dakota and Nakota tribes. Nakota [crosstalk 00:02:09] So it would be nice if-

Robin: We will get into that later.

Lisa: If we could acknowledge that.

Robin: It will be acknowledged later, thank you for that though. So, I want to reintroduce myself. My name is Robin Jackson, and I am joined by my esteemed colleague Erin Sanborn, who is also a Doctoral Research

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

Assistant here at the MAP Center, and you'll hear from her in just a little bit.
Erin? Erin, are you there?

Erin:

That's that moment when you confidently start talking on mute. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Erin Sanborn. As Robin mentioned, I'm a Doctoral Research Assistant here at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. I will be serving as your Assistant Technical Director today, so please feel free if you have any questions to put them in the chat either publicly or privately. *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtables* are intended to be interactive. Participants are asked to interact in real-time via our teleconferencing format. Also, to reduce noise, we ask that all participants mute their microphones when they are not speaking. Lastly, the video camera function has been turned on thus, if you have a webcam and you'd like to join, please feel free to do so by clicking the camera icon at the lower right corner of your screen.

Erin:

Please feel free as I mentioned to send me a chat message directly if you're having any kind of connectivity difficulties. Again, please don't forget to mute your microphones when you are not speaking. A little note about access. As we begin today's *Roundtable*, please ensure that you make yourself comfortable, you move about as you need to, take breaks when you need to, and we wanted to let you know that alt-text is used on all slide images.

Robin:

Thank you Erin.

Erin:

Thank you.

Robin:

One of our goals with the MAP Center is to engage participants in well-defined, content rich technical assistance, such that knowledge and expertise are shared in a way that results in transformative systemic

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

change, as well as personal reflection and growth. To this end, we aim to make this unique learning available on our website via recording and transcription. Additionally, sharing photos of today's conversation on social media platforms. We encourage participants to consider this disclaimer as they share and engage today.

Robin:

A note about that group photo: we will be taking one towards the end of this *Virtual Roundtable*. If you want to be in the photo, you can turn your camera on, but we certainly understand if you are not interested in being in a group photo, so you can turn your camera off at that time. You will be warned when we are doing this, so it won't be off-guard, and you'll be able to fix your hair and pose however you need to have a group photo.

Robin:

During today's *Roundtable*, we align to the Four Commitments when discussing the topic. First, stay engaged. Second, experience discomfort. Third, speak your truth. And lastly, expect and accept non-closure. And now I will stop sharing my screen so that you can...we can...you can be introduced to our facilitators today. Yeah. So, Dr.-- there we go, Dr. Stone.

Jami:

Well, welcome everyone. My name is Jamalee Stone, and I am an Associate Professor at Black Hills State University, and an Equity Fellow for the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, and I'm pleased to introduce our two facilitators today. Matt Rama, who is the K-5 Curriculum Director at Red Cloud School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, and a Lakota Immersion Classroom Instructor at Red Cloud. And Tamera Miyasato, who is Mdewakantowan Dakota Technology Innovation and Education, or TIE as we call it, learning specialist from Rapid City, South Dakota.

Jami:

Our anticipated outcomes for today are for participants to learn about or review the Oceti Sakowin, and how they can foster students' cultural and

mathematical identities, to learn about culturally responsive resources that engage learners and affirm their mathematical identities, and to share culturally responsive resources, and to develop a support network to empower teachers and learners as they strengthen their cultural and mathematical identities.

Jami:

Throughout this presentation, I would like for us to think about the curriculum and address these three questions: Who's writing the curriculum? Who's benefiting from the curriculum? And who is missing from the curriculum? If you attended, Tamera and Urla Marcus, and Sarah Pierce's *Roundtable* last year about at this time, those three questions framed the *Roundtable*. And so now we're moving it forward to Lakota Immersion. All right. And so, I'm going to hand it over Tamera, I'm excited to learn from you today.

Tamera:

[Lakota language] My name is Tamera Miyasato and great try on that, Jamalee. I am Mdewakantowan Dakota. So a comment was made earlier and so yes, we just want to acknowledge that yes, the Oceti Sakowin translates to the Seven Council Fires. And within that Seven Council Fires, there are three distinctive groups: the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota. Today however, we do center our discussion on Lakota practices, simply because we are focusing our attention in the Immersion School at Red Cloud on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. But that's not to say that we still don't honor our other Dakota and Nakota relatives, myself being included in that and those other groups.

Tamera:

We also recognize a lot of the similarities in culture, customs and language among the Oceti Sakowin. So, thank you for that acknowledgement. So, we want to begin with a discussion on culturally responsive pedagogy. So, we know that there's quite a few frameworks that help us understand culturally

responsive practices and approaches to education. And essentially, these practices are meant to engage learners, especially learners whose backgrounds are different from dominant society. So different I mean, in terms of culture and experience.

Tamera:

Gloria Ladson-Billing is pretty...much I've just absolutely idolized her for her work around culturally responsive pedagogy. And she has three goals that are centered at her framework. But teachers' practices should be grounded in these three areas: they should yield academic success, foster and develop positive cultural identities, and recognizing the social inequities impacting them, their communities. and their learning. So, if educators are constantly working towards these three goals, learners who are historically marginalized can thrive socially, emotionally, and politically.

Tamera:

So, the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, we refer to as the OSEU. Much of the mainstream books on culturally responsive practices, they only touch minimally the surface on the Indigenous students' experience. And so what happens as a result of this is what the Zaretta Hammond calls "stereotypical nonsense."

Tamera:

So now some understand the unique history of Indigenous peoples, we have huge loss of language, loss of culture, loss of identity and this is all due to genocide and forced assimilation. So many of our communities need a strong historical understanding of who we are as Indigenous peoples. But if we center all of our culturally historical practices on the history of Indigenous peoples, we run the risk of perpetuating the vanishing Indian. So this is evident in course materials that talk about Native people in the past tense. So while intentions might be good, without that sociopolitical awareness piece, we run the risk of doing just as much harm as excluding Indigenous culture from the classroom all together.

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Tamera: So we're going to share today on how to blend the past with the present in a way that centers Indigenous culture, so it's not the stereotypical nonsense. And we bring into the discussion how technology can support all three elements of Gloria Ladson-Billings' three elements, but also how we can use this in a math classroom.

Tamera: So we understand in this day and age, technology plays a critical role in cultural experiences. So we're going to share a resource on how you might integrate, through the use of technology, integrate some math concepts. So let's quick just do a deep dive into what the OSEU will look like. So *OSEU 1: Lands and Environment*, excuse me. It's important that we understand where we come from, the land bases from which Indigenous people originate. But we also consider contemporary issues that impact the land and environment, and how does that impact Indigenous nations as well as general society.

Tamera: Okay, *OSEU 2: Identity and Resiliency*. We're promoting a strong sense of self, Malakota, or Damakota, meaning I am Dakota, I am Lakota. So we understand how we cultivate a positive cultural identity and tap into historical resilience and fight for who we are.

Tamera: *OSEU 3: Culture and Language*. How can we access culture and language in the 21st century, or in current times this past year of social distancing? If you haven't had a chance or if you're a member of Facebook, there's an amazing group called Social Distance Powwow, where literally Indigenous people from all over Turtle Island, the North America, come together to share in language and culture.

Tamera: *OSEU 4: is Kinship and Harmony*. So it's critical that Indigenous people, especially our learners, understand traditional kinship systems. But what do

they look like today? Is there a difference between today and historical concept? And are those systems the same?

Robin: Sorry about that.

Tamera: No worries. Slide number five... oh, sorry *OSEU 5: Oral Tradition and Storytelling*. So we still have access to some amazing storytellers within our Indigenous communities. Sadly, the past year we have seen a loss, a great tremendous loss, that many of our knowledge keepers and language keepers. And so I show share a picture here of Albert, who is unfortunately no longer with us, he's been gone for some time. But he's left a lot of his amazing stories in books and videos. And so his stories have helped me and my former students access and develop our own Indigenous identity. But we also wonder how we can make storytelling accessible. So in the time of COVID and virtual learning, you can access a Facebook storytelling group called Indigenous Storytime where we share stories, again, not just of the Oceti Sakowin, but other Indigenous nations around the country.

Tamera: And then *OSEU 6* addresses the critical discussion about *Sovereignty and Treaties*, and how these treaties impact Indigenous communities both historically and in the modern day.

Tamera: Finally, *OSEU 7*. So it's great and important to discuss traditional ways of life and how that impacts, drives, and informs, but also how it's evolved into our current Indigenous way of life. So this Essential Understanding helps us critique and discuss how we might prioritize education, and specifically Indigenous education through economic development and language revitalization. Matt is going to be sharing some of the amazing work that he and Red Cloud Indian School is doing through the Lakota Immersion Program.

- Jami:** All right. So let's take a few minutes, two or three minutes, to pause to process about how do the Essential Understandings that Tamera just reviewed, fit into your lived experiences? And again, if you think about who's writing the curriculum, who's benefiting from the curriculum, and who's missing from the curriculum? And if you would like to, please type in the chat feature.
- Robin:** Or if you feel so inclined, you may unmute your microphone to speak.
- Jami:** Thank you Robin.
- José:** I may share relatives, those who are missing from the curriculum are the First Nations of this continent. What is told is a story about the success of the development of the government. But not the loss, the cost, the violence, the genocide, the trauma. The gap that has occurred in knowledge, and how that has affected our youth, how that has affected our elders and how it affects our relationship with institutions. Thank you.
- Tamera:** [Lakota Language]
- Jami:** Makes me think of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. two books about that, so.
- Dana:** I agree with the... who answered before on who was missing. I grew up here. My name is Dana Daylight, I'm with the Osage Nation, and I'm a Certified Language Teacher in our public school system. I teach 9th through 12th grade. And so I'm certified under the World Languages and this is... I'm very pleased that we have this in our classes now. And through this focus that everybody has had is in being able to tell our own story, and be a part of that, and to make us to where we're here, we're not going nowhere, we survived, we're still here. They weren't able to get rid of us. And we've excelled, and we're doing all these great things. And I'm just happy to be

able to come in and teach this to my class, and share, and all the positive things that we are taking part in. But also to be able to be a part of these types of trainings where there isn't any. There's no training really, for those teachers that are trying to teach Native languages in a public school setting where they're letting us in.

Dana:

So while I'm there, I'm not only teaching the language, but I'm also sharing our culture because you can't teach language without culture. And so they're going to learn about all of us. And my classes...they're about 80% Osage, and the other 20% are non-Native. And that's fine because my non-Native students they're doing great. I think my Osage students, they're just kind of like, "Oh, yeah, I'm Osage, I know." But that's not it, they're learning in there, but they're also learning how to be positive role models. And we spend quite a bit of time, because I want them to know what sovereignty is, and what it means, and how they need to always put that out there. You know that you've got to... you have to show what sovereignty is and you have to stand up for it. So anyway, that's my little take, and thank you for letting me say something.

Jami:

Thank you for sharing.

Tamera:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay, so I wanted to first thank everyone for their input. I'm really looking forward to our continued discussion as we move forward. But I wanted to share with you a specific example of how we're centering Indigenous culture in a classroom. So this particular story is called *Winter Storytime*, and it's by an author by the name of Rita Kohn. And it's actually not a Lakota author. This is actually a story from the Lenape Nation. And so it's basically a young boy coming to his grandma during the first snow, and so excited because that's traditionally the time where they can tell stories. So he goes to grandma and grandpa [Lenape

Language] and says, "Tell me a story." And so they tell the story of the beginnings of a particular game, a traditional game. And so this story could be used and integrated across all content areas because it touches on Social Studies, History, Geography, English language.... English ELA, Art, Science, and Math.

Tamera: So Dr. Stone, if you want to go ahead and quick just share that video, I'm going to just show you an excerpt of this story, and the story is also in the resources, but this is from Indigenous Storytime And we're going to show you how it will work in a math classroom.

Jami: Hey, let's see. I apologize for my... I have it up here somewhere.

Tamera: I also have it here, it looks like I'm still able to share if you want me to just pull it up really quick.

Jami: Yes, let's just do that.

Storyteller: Okay. So earlier, I took a picture of how to make it. And basically the story told you how to make it. And then you can find some of these things at home. If you can't, you can probably make them. And let's get to trying it, shall we? It has a stick and this looks like it's made out of bone, actually. And then it's just tied on to a piece of leather. And you can see the deer toes at the end. And the strings of beads. And they all count for points. And then you can see this one has holes in it, which if you're really good at it, you can scare through when you catch them. Most of the time we'll do three tries, and see who gets the most points. So here we go, I'm going to try. Try to get one in the hole, here we go. One, that was horrible. Two. Okay, I got two loops.

Storyteller:

So depending on what you want to... how many points you want to assign to them, I got a green and a red. So thank you guys. I hope that you have a good rest of your day, and I hope you had fun, and I hope that you will have fun playing that game hopefully after you make your own. All right, you guys. [Lenape Language], I'll see you again at the next read. Bye.

Jami:

Thank you for sharing that, Tamera. [inaudible 00:23:39]

Tamera:

Yes. So, one of the reasons why we focused on that particular game, of the kokolesh, is because Oceti Sakowin communities actually have a very similar game, and I'm a little remiss it, remember what it's called, but I will share that with you in the resources because Jennifer Eastman, my colleague, she's our expert on those traditional games. So I think you can go ahead and share the slides again Dr. Stone. So we're going to take a look at... Okay, so if we're engaging in this story for centering or anchoring in this story. And we've created our kokolesh, or our game piece, what are the math standards that we could align, or what lessons could we create? Very obviously counting and cardinality because we're having learners keep score. They can develop their own point system however they want to do that. Numbers and operations and base 10. Operations and algebraic thinking and measurement and data. If you're a secondary teacher, we could even bring in standards around statistics and probability.

Tamera:

So the beautiful thing about this is, not only are we centering their story, we're centering who they are in their Indigeneity, but also we are having them play games and they don't even know that they're doing math standards. So that's just one example of how you can anchor that particular story and traditional games into your math classroom. Okay.

- Tamera:** So this is just an example of how you're infusing and centering culture in the classroom to yield academic success to all of those three things of Gloria Ladson-Billings', but also what...the thing that I think that is the most beautiful about this, and I've seen it in my own classrooms, is the engagement and the excitement that Indigenous learners finally come into the classroom with. When my son was a student at Red Cloud Indian School, actually one of Matt's former students, I would ask about his day. And the only thing he wanted to talk about was Lakota, all he learned in his Lakota language and culture classes, and all of the things that he brought home in that. So culture in the classroom does work, it does increase engagement and student achievement.
- Tamera:** So moving to the next slide then. And we'll have a deeper conversation at another *Roundtable* next month. But by integrating the culture into the classroom, you very effortlessly change the culture of the classroom. So a picture of some amounts, again, some of his students when they were babies who have been engaging in culture, learning cultural values and norms, and they really created a culture of taking care of each other. So we're going to take another pause to process here.
- Jami:** All right. So again, that culture of learning, how do you establish it in and of the classroom? What are some strategies that you have used that have been successful?
- Robin:** Feel free--
- Dana:** I'm sorry.
- Jami:** Oh, go ahead.

Dana:

In my classrooms, what I have done... and I love how this is going. It goes along with what our Tribe does, of course. Our storytelling is after that first snow. So after that first snow, I tell them "hey, we're going to have stories so bring your," we call them hookies, and through those animal stories about creatures and different things that have happened, and how things came to be and why they are. And so I'll tell those stories, and while telling it, I'll tell it in our language, and then I'll give them the English version. But I also use that to help them listen to words that we've already learned, but also explain how this has happened in their home. Like in your home, what are some things that you've heard your parents or grandparents or whoever tell you and talk about our culture?

Dana:

And so we're sharing those and it's giving them that voice to be able to talk about in their home, what do they know? Because we know every home is not the same, and what I've also noticed is that I might have a lot of students in my class that are Osage, but they're not all raised in our Osage ways. So hearing that and then also being able to bring in what I do, and when I teach I say, "This is what we do in my family." And I want them to know that as Osages, as we all have a home, we all come from three different districts, each district has a different way of doing things. We're very similar but it's different. And so letting them know that there's things happening differently in different homes, then I think that helps in it and shows them the different... our culture, but also the different sides of our culture and how they've kind of changed a little bit here and there.

Jami:

Thank you for sharing and thank you to everyone that shared in the chat feature. We're going to next watch a short video that gives more background with the Lakota Language Immersion Project at Red Cloud School. Now hopefully, there we go.

- Sierra:** [Lakota Language] The traditional standard education system hasn't been working well for Indigenous youth. I feel like this emergent program will help raise an entirely new generation of fluent Lakota speakers who will be strong leaders, and who will ultimately help heal our community.
- Children:** [Singing in Lakota]
- Sierra:** We also center our classroom around our Lakota values and traditions, which means that a lot of our lessons are based off of traditional stories that are passed down through generations, as well as learning about the medicine wheel, and our Lakota values and what they mean, and what it means to walk in that way. And they also learn about the plants and the trees that we traditionally use for tea or medicine. Everything comes back to us being Lakota people, learning through that lens of being a Lakota person.
- Man:** [Singing in Lakota]
- Sierra:** You can't learn the language without being immersed in the culture, you can't learn about the culture without being immersed in the language. They are linked in every way possible. My grandfather was taken from his family, from his mother, when he was really, really young. And there he lost his culture and his language as well. And that affected our family heavily.
- Sierra:** My grandfather, he was able to see before he passed, our language being revitalized. He was able to see his grandchildren going into school, learning Lakota, being in a Lakota classroom, rather than what he experienced as a child. And so we're at this point now where we're reclaiming that in our classroom, and it's a beautiful movement to be a part of, and we can't do this alone. This is a call to action. We need everyone's help in any way that they can. We're working day and night to revitalize this language, and we

will succeed as a community. [Lakota Language] I thank you all and I'll see you again.

Jami:

All right, now we're going to hear from Matt and what he's been doing with his immersion classes at Red Cloud School.

Matt:

All right, so [Lakota Language]. It's a pleasure to be able to speak to you all. I wanted to start off with a little story on how I got in this journey. So I started coaching basketball at Red Cloud quite a long time ago, and we were struggling around. Kids were really having a hard time with behaviors. So we wanted to do something to change. I was talking to the Medicine Man he was like, "You need to add prayer and language." So we started doing some little prayers, a little language, I didn't know anything at that point. And within a year, we went from a 10 and 10 team to a 16 and 4 team. And then we...and then we got the first time ever...the team got the state grade award, academic award, first time they ever got that Red Cloud so I was like, "wow. This was the big change."

Matt:

So I thought to myself, "well for my own kids personally, I need to learn this language so I can raise my kids, so they can be strong like that, too." So I started on a language journey. And those two little girls that were in the video, those are my little girls. And I raised them in Lakota since they were babies. There's even one story my wife, she... I was raising them in Lakota, and we started a daycare, an immersion daycare, and they were going to immersion daycare all day. And I was talking to them in Lakota, and brothers and sisters were talking to them in English a little bit. But they had gymnastics in [inaudible] one week, and I had a basketball game, so I wasn't there. And she calls me up and she said, "these kids don't even know English. The lady was telling her what to do, and they didn't know what to do. We got to start teaching them English." And I was like, "Yep,

yep, we do," and then I got off the phone I was like, "Yes, I did it, they learned Lakota as a first language." So they speak English fine now, but that was a little triumphant moment.

Matt:

So we're starting off in the classroom, we haven't been in school all year...we haven't been in school actually for about a year now. And then my classroom is still little...got my first bulletin board up today, so it looks a little crazy. But this is how the classroom usually looks. It looks very similar to a regular classroom I guess. But some of the things that are on the wall, you can't see one of the posters. But one of the posters on the right side is a poster of the seven trees that are native to this area. We have a different kind of classroom management system, which we'll talk about in another session is called Woose Sakowin, where we try to foster positive behaviors instead of punish. So that's what that blue and white poster is, that's their classroom management poster.

Matt:

Then like on the... there's a poster of the South Dakota that has the tribes because we want to teach from a place of here first; we want the kids to learn about here and themselves, and then move out. But this is most important, they are most important, and being in Lakota, and being on Pine Ridge, and these kinds of things are their essence, and they're so lucky to be born to this, and we want to put that into them from the time that they enter school. And then of course, the medicine wheel, because we want to have all of our teachings come with that kind of understanding, and so that's that slide.

Matt:

So this is a project that we've been working on, too, and this is just to kind of show you the kind of things that we do in our classroom. So like my oldest daughter, she's that...she's the one that's talking on that video, and she went to Red Cloud and she went to Black Hills, and she I felt like

something was missing in her educational experience. And so as like...when we started talking about reimagining our curriculum, like what do we need to include? What do we need to really have? What do we need to bring in? And I think it was [inaudible 00:36:36], I think she says something like, “we stand on the prayers of our forefathers,” or something like that. And that was like a really strong statement to us that, like, we have got to step backwards to step forward.

Matt: We got to go back to what people were praying and hoping for you to have, and make sure that you have it. And this is from Ella Deloria, which is an open-source resource, we had to have had an artist draw it. So these are some of the old, different Deloria’s book tales in text. So this is one of the stories for a third and fourth grade book where [Lakota Language], the Hawk and hot got mad but so... Okay.

Matt: This is some other things that we have in our classroom. This is like the things that make our classroom different, but still yet the same. Because we still have academic expectation, we still want to have a rigorous experience for our kids. We want our parents to feel like that their child can grow up to be whatever they want them to be, and still hit these Western pinpoint highs, I guess in educational system, but still remain truly Lakota. So we have like a singing, the top two pictures are a singing curriculum that we have, which is online right now because we're at home.

Matt: So they click on those different objects and they can learn that song. We sing two songs every morning. We start the day with a prayer song, and then we sing like... we sang this one this morning, actually, it was a [Lakota Language] song because we're getting ready for powwow season hopefully. So they're starting to learn their songs so they can be ready to do that. On the bottom, in the middle, that's our listening...that's our listening station. So

these are books that were written by letter Red Cloud, and that's a picture of one of the girls from the classroom. So she's... one of the biggest things I saw someone put in the chat. One of the biggest things I think about is like imagery, right? We want to have Brown kids everywhere with dark hair and brown eyes.

Matt:

We really want the kids to see that as the norm. We want their experience to be filled with Brown kids, and brown eyed people, and for them to think that, that's what normality is, and normalcy is not the opposite. And so you see that in her...in that little middle picture and it has like... there's books that's about the wachipi, there's books about house so they can listen to those books when they're in kindergarten. And on right was the same kind of idea of like, here's [Lakota Language] learning their W. So there's a little picture of a little Brown girl. Now on the left is a 4th grade math, just to show you that the similarities are still the same. Like we're still...we score very well on our testing, we've actually done really, really well the last couple years, better than the mainstream classrooms because we still have high expectations for what they learn in their regular classroom.

Matt:

Okay, so like I said, it's going to touch on this a little bit but there's seven... So this was introduced to me by Tamera, I didn't know a lot about this. And most everything that we've done, and like Sierra talks about in that video is like we have to do a lot of work to learn. We really have to learn a lot of things because it's...we don't have the resources, or like having to seek them out from different people, from different elders, from different books, to try to find the things that we can, like, still pass on to our students. That might have been lost, or might have had it...a pass...that didn't get passed down. There's a gap, right there was a gap that was created not by...it wasn't...it's just like she said about...because my kids' grandfather went to

boarding school too. And he was...got left when he was four, and he never went home till he was 16.

Matt:

So he lost all his culture, his language. So he was able to pass those things on to his... to my wife and to our kids. So we had to learn these things ourselves, right? So that was like...it's a lot of work. One of the things that Tamera taught...showed us was about Woose Sakowin, which came from an elder, Virgil Killstraight, I think? And this was handed down to the people the seven...they call it Woose Sakowin, Woose like, in English, you might want to call these values, but it translates to almost as like the seven laws, like how you should live, these seven laws. And we're going to talk about it some more in a different Roundtable. But we use that as our classroom management. So we're not trying to, "What? You didn't do your paper, then you're going to sit over here in the corner," like how I was brought up.

Matt:

We're trying to say that like, "Look at this, look at Tamera. She got all her work done today and did her very best." Wóksape, you're walking with knowledge, you're working in the way that a Lakota person should walk. And then it's really just this spreading effect where all the kids are like they want to walk with knowledge, they want to walk with respect, and it's been a really beneficial thing...beneficial change to our school. So.

Jami:

All right. So taking a look back then, how would, or how do these resources foster cultural identity? And again, think about who's writing this curriculum, who's benefiting, and who's missing. Give you a couple of minutes to process.

Jami:

Thank you to everyone who's been posting in the chat.

Robin:

I wanted to highlight some of the commentary around this Pause to Process. Let me see. I'm not sure where it started. I know Tamera said

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

some things. There was some good conversation between Sarah and Kristen. Erin, do you want to share what you put in the chat?

Erin:

Sure. I was just responding. There was some strong...there were some questions a bit ago about how to support non-Native educators in centering the lived experiences and the voices and perspectives. And so and there were a lot of, like Robin mentioned, there were there was a lot of great back and forth between members. And then I was sharing that two takeaways that I heard, and Matt correct me if I got this wrong, but two things that I took away was just the idea of one being culturally responsive in the sense of what you're...how you're choosing to create the physical space, and the resources and the curriculum and what is on the walls and kind of disrupting what we think of as the traditional normal that we've been socialized into, but reversing that and creating a new normal, where students are able to see not only students and families and community members that may look like them, but also just that have been marginalized and erased historically.

Erin:

So that was one takeaway I had. And then the second was just to do the work to know...to be willing to look within yourself and recognize and know what you don't know, and then do the work to learn and increase your own knowledge. And then there were comments about the classroom environment being infused with language and culture, children need mirrors, not just windows into other experiences. Yeah.

Jami:

Thank you for sharing, Erin.

Erin:

Thank you to everybody who's been having a rich dialogue in the chat, it's been great.

Matt:

I do want to comment on one of those things we're talking about, like how we like help non-Native or people of non-Color to be trained. But I think part

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

of the thing that we had to do here was we had to re-educate ourselves, because we went through the same system. We went through the system that we were trying to put our kids through the same exact system, right? And like we're trying to fit into something that we weren't, I think any person of Color can have that same experience that you're trying to achieve something that you were like...they were hanging...this way you have to be, but the person you're supposed to be, looks like a certain way or do this certain thing. When you're like, but it's not the norm of your community, or the norm of your household. And so how do you how do you re-educate yourself, so that you can pass on different types of knowledge to...in different kinds of expectations to your children? So that's just a comment. That's-

Tamera:

And I appreciate it. A lot of the comments too, in there, about having community partnerships, bringing in the experts because we don't want to run the risk of, "Well, I heard it done this way," unless you're really inviting. And it all comes back to the culture. So again, in your approach...in your attempts to integrate the culture into the classroom, you change the culture of the classroom and of the school. You're creating these relationships with the community as well, because the community... I always talk with colleagues and my family about who are the rich sources of knowledge? And they're usually the elders. They're the people that dominant society doesn't normally view as professionals, but they're the ones with the language, with the culture. And so really starting to figure out how to build those relationships, and bringing them in. One of the practices that I'm doing with some of the teachers at Red Cloud right now is I'm providing one-on-one coaching for non-Native teachers who are coming to us from the east coast, who have been hesitant to integrate the culture because

they just...they don't want to do it wrong, or they don't want to get something wrong.

Tamera: So having conversations with Matt and the Immersion staff, having that one-on-one coaching with them to show how they can still integrate culture without teaching a culture that is foreign to them, if that makes sense.

Erin: Tamera, can I piggyback a question off of that based on a question I have, but then also it connects to something that was said in the chat? Which is, could you speak further, if you will, to how you build those relationships with non-Native teachers? I'm thinking particularly...the question in the chat was about cultural appropriation, but also how to build relationships with elders or members of the community not in a way that's, that's coopting or positioning those individuals to find exhaustion in teaching non-Native? Does that question make sense?

Tamera: Well, as Matt was saying, a lot of it is the re-education of the self, and so it does start with having some hard conversations and hard realizations about...and I'm speaking generally here, about our role in education and how we kind of perpetuate those practices that have been ingrained in our system. So if we were talking about a non-Native or a white educator, how do we start to engage in the learning journey of as Gloria Ladson-Billings says, what are the social inequities in the school that I'm working with? What are the traumas? I think another person had said that. What are the traumas, the genocide? What are the things that I need to recognize before I can start?

Tamera: I mean it's hard to say, "yep, just put yourself out in the community and say, "I'm here to learn," because there's a lot of trust that needs to be built. So it is a long process and it starts within, it starts with the person themselves.

And we do talk a little bit about that in our next session, too, about what that process looks like. I don't know if I answered your question, it's not an easy question to answer, but the community experts, the cultural experts, having those authentic consultations and having them... I always call... when I brought elders into the classroom, they were my guest teacher partners. They weren't guest speakers, because they were partners, and I was not the expert, not having grown up with the culture myself, but that kind of keeps it from appropriating or having non-Native teachers appropriating the culture. They're centering those community voices.

Jami:

Thank you for sharing that. All right, so now we're going to look at some of the technology resources that Matt has been using in his classroom. And I do have these on a... we have them on a Google Doc that we'll be sharing in the chat room when Robin takes over the screen.

Matt:

All right, so we're kind of getting short of time. So I won't elaborate too much on each of these, but we're trying to always have a foot in the past, and a foot in the future. And then I think realizing where the kids are at now, we definitely have to meet them with technology. You know, any of you that have little kids that are two, three years old they're on the iPad, they're on your phone, they're moving around, you're not telling them anything, they know how to do it. So if we're like ignoring that space? We want to be in all the spaces, we want the language to be in all the spaces that they're in. So for the Lakota Language Arts we...we don't have lots of time. So we tried to piggyback off lots of different stuff that's already created.

Matt:

So can you go back one. So Owóksape is language learning app that was created by Lakota Language Consortium, we use it for our Lakota Language Arts, we're actually a dual language school. So it's got some English and Lakota in there but that's one of the resources that we use.

Okay. eduActiv8. There's a professor that I met that was actually from Nebraska, and when we started the immersion daycare, I met him and he was interested in doing Lakota Wikipedia. And so we did some of that with him, and he's a technology professor, so we worked on this app together. So we made two apps, we actually made three apps now. Number Delver. And these two eduActiv8's. One's for like language arts, the other one's for math, but it's...all the kids have them on their iPads, we have one-to-one iPads, and it's all in the language.

Matt:

This was a partnership that when I was...I used to work at Thunder Valley, that we did with 7 Generation Games. 7 Generations Games is interested in like meeting kids of, especially like Native American heritage and Hispanic heritage, through game playing. So this is a math game, and they do lots of different math games. They have done some other math games. I called them and was like, "Can we do this version of a Lakota?" They did an Ojibwe version first, they did it in English, but I was like, "We could do it all in Lakota and the English version." So we did that, and it has videos of culture, it has some of the past of like trades and doing things, they have to solve problems that are word problems that are, like, relate to the story. So this is another app and you can also get that online.

Matt:

We also...I found this site, these guys they're from Ireland, and they work with minority languages in Ireland. And so they have like, I don't know, 12 different games that you can input your information in and make these fantastic games. So we use this, this is our phonics program. We use syllabic learning to teach kids to read. And so this is some of their games that they see when they go into their Canvas site.

Matt:

These are boom cards. These are boom cards, I'm sure that lots of you that are educators know about boom cards, but our boom cards look different,

right? Because it's just like that imagery thing. So we're still teaching expanded form or counting money, just 2nd grade one, there's a 4th grade one. But, but we want the imagery to look how we want the kids to see things so same skill, different look, and definitely on the iPads or on the computer.

Jami: All righty, so we do have a little bit... a couple of minutes anyway to think about how would these resources foster students' cultural and mathematical identities?

Jami: I'm good at sitting in silence.

Robin: Oh, Adrian says connecting language, culture, and math in organic ways through design of curriculum materials.

Jami: Organic, I like that.

Paula: Hello, my name is Paula, and I'm actually chiming in from Kansas. I am also a school board member for our district. So while I'm listening to this, because we have tribal university in our district, and I would like to see how we can partner better with that tribal university with our school district to implement something like this into our classrooms for our American Indian students. So how would...how... what would be your advice in terms of supporting teachers to come out of their comfort zones to be more open to this?

Tamera: Do you want that Matt, or do you want me to comment?

Matt: Well, I mean I'll make a quick comment, then you can comment on it too. But for one thing, for here at Pine Ridge, it's like there's like a loss of identity in a big group of kids are... I'm getting old enough to where I can

stop saying “kids,” but young people, right? And they want to find a place where they want to be. And so when we started doing immersion and talking about language, and really talking about doing things where you can become fluent speaker, there was like this resurgence from these young people. So our youngest teachers...our young teachers, like kindergarten 1st, I mean, are all young, and they're learning the language as adults. And I think that like if you give... and we're trying to change how our school looks, right? Because before our school was like 95% Wasi'chu, but now it's changing...it's changing to more Natives because we're teaching through a different way. So I think that's starting to get those programs into your young people, and getting them interested, and they'll take the lead because they're still...they're at that place, right?

Matt:

They're at that place where they want to really lead and find something that's them. And that's that we found, and they really helped. It's not really like it's me moving it, but they're the ones that are making it move forward and making it exciting. Go ahead Tamera.

Tamera:

Yeah, just to kind of piggyback off of that. I always say identifying your champions. So who are the ones that are already kind of maybe doing this work that you might not know about? I know that in a former school where I taught, a lot of us teachers were very siloed and we didn't feel like we could do stuff like this, especially in South Dakota, where unfortunately, we have a very bad racial tensions between Indigenous communities and our Wasi'chu counterparts. So a lot of us didn't really feel empowered to announce that we're doing this. But when we would get into the classrooms, and we'd see the beautiful things that were going on, I would say start with those champions. Kind of do an assessment of who is doing it, who's open to doing it, and then starting small because eventually if it's done in such a way that people start to see the improved attendance, the improved student

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF EQUITY
CENTER

engagement, the increase in student achievement, people are going to ask that question, “what are you doing?”

Tamera:

They did that in the high school where I was, and so we eventually were able to ripple it out. And it does take some time, sometimes you'll be surprised at how quickly that process can happen as well, though, so I don't want to diminish that fact. But overall, it takes time because there's a lot of learning and unlearning that goes into the process. If you want to visit a little bit more, Paula, we can because I think that those university partnerships are also very important. But also having discussions about how can you start to have conversations and develop Essential Understandings for your community that are specific to your people.

Jami:

So thank you for that, Tamera. And just to give everyone a heads up, that we will be continuing the conversation, but focusing primarily on the role, the Sakowin, on April 8, 2021, at the same time, and also Universal Design for Learning, which to me is what we should be doing in all education classes. And a recent book came out from CAST on Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning. So that will be those two things, the Wooke Sakowin and UDL and anti-racism will be the main focus there. So. Alright.

Robin:

Thank you Dr. Stone, if you wouldn't mind unsharing. So I'm going to hand this over to Erin just really quickly before we close out. Erin will be doing our group photo.

Erin:

So, we want to go ahead and thank each of you for participating in today's *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable: Oceti Sakowin*, I hope I said that correctly, *Essential Understandings: Lakota Language and Culture in Elementary Classroom*. We want to also provide a special thank you to Matthew Rama, Tamera Miyasato, and Jami Stone for taking the time to be with us today to

share their expertise and insight. In addition, we would like to highlight two *Roundtables*, and I'm going to put these in the chat right now, two *Virtual Roundtables* located on our website both facilitated by Dr. Stone. The first is entitled *Critical Conversations into Action: Fostering Students' Mathematical Identities*. In this *Roundtable* participants learned productive mathematical beliefs about student learning, learned how to encourage students to see themselves as problem solvers capable of making valuable contributions to mathematics, and reflected on how current mathematical environments can be strengthened to further promote equitable learning for all students.

Erin:

The second resource shared is implementing the Oceti... I'm so sorry, *Oceti Sakowin Standards in K-12 South Dakota Schools*, which also features Tamera Miyasato. This *Roundtable* highlights how Oceti Sakowin, Seven Council Fires Essential Understandings of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people are being integrated into South Dakota K-12 schools, serving as a model for other K-12 school districts and universities. Lastly, we want to encourage you to visit our website for tools and resources in our Equity Resource Library, such as quarterly *Equity Dispatch* and *Digest* publications, our *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*, and our *Equity Tools*. You can access all materials on our website, as well as stay abreast of upcoming events via our Calendar of Events.

Robin:

Finally, if you all are not following us on social media, please feel free to do so. We are on Facebook at Great Lakes Equity Center, and on Twitter at @GreatLakesEAC. And feel free to answer this question if you so choose: How are you going to apply what you learned today? And Erin already, and it's going to again, put our PSQ link in the chat for you all. We take this information that...the feedback that we get on our PSQ very seriously. So please be as candid as possible when you are completing this. And thank

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF EQUITY
CENTER



Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU): Lakota Language & Culture in an Elementary Classroom

Equity Spotlight Podcast Series

Jamalee Stone, MAP Center Equity Fellow Alum – South Dakota



IUPUI
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

you all for being with us today. It was a rich, wonderful conversation.

Remember April 8th, next month, same time, will be continuing this conversation, thank you all.

[End of Audio]

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 