

# Reclaiming Higher Education as Indigenous Space: Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute

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**Abstract:** There is a lack of Native American faculty in the United States. Out of full-time faculty there are still 75% white faculty represented and less than 1% of Native American faculty (that's about 15,000 or less) (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). At the time of the creation of this institute, there were only three full-time Native American faculty on our campus. That is 3 out of 209 full-time faculty on campus. This means there are 206 faculty, not including part-time faculty/instructors, who are non-Indigenous and have limited knowledge and/or experience with Indigenous/Tribal communities and knowing how to interact and work with Indigenous students and their communities. Even with more Indigenous faculty, there needs to be professional development for all faculty who do not identify as Indigenous. A yearlong Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute was created that centers an Indigenous-based pedagogy model and praxis. It has challenged faculty/instructors to understand their bias/privilege in teaching and to develop decolonial praxis and community-centered approaches to teaching and engaging students. This also provides opportunities across campus to deepen the faculty's knowledge and understanding of Indigenous/Tribal communities via professional development. This will inherently increase best practices and knowledge of working with Native American students on our campus. The Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute developed a broader learning space through gatherings centered on Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge where faculty could learn from Indigenous faculty and local tribal community members, as well as having non-Indigenous faculty share their evolutions in decolonizing classroom space and curriculum. This article will share the creation, development, and call for actions built in this institute for higher education spaces to be reclaimed and centered in Indigenous narratives and knowledges.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Pedagogy, Decolonial Pedagogy, Native American students

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing this article, the author was living and responsible to the spuyaləpabš at the University of Washington Tacoma.

## Opening

I start this article by acknowledging place and what essentially guides my heartwork. I work and live on the ancestral lands of the spuyaləpabš (Puyallup Tribe of Indians)<sup>2</sup>, which the University of Washington Tacoma occupies and where my home was situated at the time. It is important to acknowledge that place informs my writing through the ancestral presence of the spuyaləpabš along with my own familial ancestors guiding this work in ways that are a part of my consciousness and praxis that is informed by the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. I am grateful to be in community with the spuyaləpabš people. It is our responsibility to uplift and center their narratives and co-create spaces for tribal members and communities to thrive.

Now, we connect to why this heartwork is imperative. There is a lack of Native American faculty in the United States. Out of full-time faculty, there are still 75% white faculty represented and less than 1% of Native American faculty (that's about 15,000 or less) (U.S. Department of Education). At the time of the creation of this institute, there were only three full-time Native American<sup>3</sup> faculty on our campus. That is 3 out of 209 full-time faculty on campus. This means there are 206 faculty, not including part-time faculty/instructors, who are non-Indigenous, who have limited knowledge and experience with Indigenous/Tribal communities and with knowing how to interact and work with Indigenous students and their communities. Even if there were more Indigenous faculty, there always needs to be intentional professional development for all faculty who do not identify as Indigenous/Native American.

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<sup>2</sup> For access to the Puyallup Tribe's land acknowledgement:

<http://puyallup-tribe.com/ourtribe/Land%20Acknowledgement.php>

<sup>3</sup> I will use "Indigenous" and "Native American" interchangeably for faculty. I acknowledge that when we refer to "Indigenous" it broadens the context to individuals who are Indigenous to their countries/lands across the continent, whereas "Native American" refers to people who are connected to a tribal community in the United States. I use "Native American" for students because it is preferred when referring to students who are connected to local tribal communities in Washington and in the United States.

Hence, a yearlong Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute was created that centers an Indigenous based pedagogy model and praxis by Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn. The purpose of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute is, “. . . to cultivate safer spaces for Indigenous students in the classroom. We are reframing classrooms into decolonial spaces that center community and Indigenous approaches that will have a ripple effect in student retention, faculty consciousness, and community building. We have a chance to support a positive shift for the University of Oklahoma to strengthen our institutional capacity and center Indigenous narratives and ways of being that should always be at the epicenter of higher education institutions.” It has challenged faculty/instructors to understand their bias/privilege in teaching and to develop decolonial praxis and community-centered approaches to teaching and engaging students. The Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute provides opportunities to deepen the knowledge and understanding of Indigenous/Tribal communities with faculty through this professional development opportunity. This has inherently increased best practices and knowledge of working with Native American students on our campus. The Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute has developed a broader learning space through gatherings centered on Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge where faculty can learn from Indigenous faculty and local tribal community members, as well as having non-Indigenous faculty share their evolutions in decolonizing classroom space and curriculum. There were fifteen faculty who participated in the first cohort of participants across six of the seven schools on campus. The institute was funded through the Chancellor’s Office, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Office of the Tribal Liaison, a Puyallup Tribal grant, and a University of Washington grant. This article will share the genealogical connections, creation, development, and call for actions built into this institute for higher education spaces to be reclaimed and centered in Indigenous narratives and knowledges.

## **Genealogical Connections**

In this heartwork, I also acknowledge the genealogical connections, otherwise known as scholarship, that inform its creation and situate it in Indigenous notions of place, criticality, and honoring Indigenous student and community perspectives in higher education. In this section, I intentionally share pieces of each work of scholarship and its connection to the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute under the sections of connections to place and Indigenizing pedagogy, instead of offering a “traditional” literature review. Each work is necessary to expound upon to understand their uniqueness and their contributions in connection to Indigenizing and reclaiming higher education spaces. The two areas of Indigenous scholarship that I highlight as necessary to the foundation of thought for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute are Connections to Place and Indigenizing Pedagogy. These two areas of Indigenous scholarship have helped shape the creation of the institute and have impacted the Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn in her heartwork engaging with tribal communities and building opportunities for faculty and students to Indigenize their pedagogy and spaces in intentional and meaningful ways.

### *Connections to Place*

In this section, I share about *Power and Place* (Wildcat and Deloria), *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the teachings of the seventh fire* (Cajete), and “Place in Education” (McCoy et al.). Each is essential when we consider connection to the sacred knowledge of Indigenous peoples that situates us in relationship to place. They provide a deeper understanding and connection to how we conceptualize and anchor ourselves to a physical and metaphysical place in ways that honor our conceptions and interconnectedness.

*Power and Place*. This book is a pivotal connection to conceptualizing the notion of Indigenization. Wildcat and Deloria propose that we need nothing less than an effort toward

Indigenization, including “an act of making our educational philosophy, pedagogy, and system our own” (vii). They discuss the importance of recognizing Indian metaphysics, which acknowledge that knowledge is relational and connected to place and experiences. Yet, they expand on this through asserting how “Power and Place constitute a declaration of American Indian intellectual sovereignty and self-determination” (7). The notion of Power and Place is tethered to the understanding and need for us to acknowledge our Indigenous life lessons that have derived from our experiences. All of this is essential as we consider how to progress in an authentic way of Indigenizing pedagogy inclusive of honoring Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and conceptualizing spaces.

*Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire.* Cajete brings a deep connection and conceptualization of how we move towards a critical pedagogy. This he says can only be done if we acknowledge how the legacies of colonization, genocide, and oppression are impacting our communities. It is in this process that we understand the philosophy of education as well as a social movement through bringing awareness to this history so that we can dismantle the oppression that has plagued us and our realities: “Critical pedagogy is also essential for restoring our sustainability” (121). Later on, Cajete brings into being what he suggests as a fourfold orientation that is connected to the four directions, which includes sustaining our resources, spiritual purpose, relationships, and commitment. These are all necessary ways to approach Indigenizing pedagogy in ways that are critically grounded and connected to directional orientations that are Indigenous-centered.

“Place in Education.” In this collection of chapters from a special issue of *Land Education*, McCoy et al. recenter the notion of land education as being essentially connected to place in ways that are not essentialized but in ways that are intentional and connected through story, ways

of being, and spirituality. What is further recentered is the connection of this concept to settler colonialism and how that has been entangled in how we consider “land education” or “place-based education.” There is an undeniable connection to Indigenous cosmologies, which is tied to the relationship that Indigenous peoples have with place. They further expand on what land education is in connection to “Indigenous epistemological and ontological accounts of land at the center, including Indigenous understandings of land, Indigenous language in relation to land, and Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism” (13). This further explicates the notion of centering Indigenous relations, conceptions, and connections to land that non-Indigenous and settlers should prioritize and understand when Indigenizing pedagogy.

All three of these pieces are interconnected in ways that build on conceptions of Indigenous values and connections to place in meaningful ways. Deloria and Wildcat have created ways for us to conceptualize space and Indigenous education as Indigenous scholars, Cajete broadens and connects place in a way that embodies an Indigenous community to futurity. Lastly, McCoy et al. recenter land education as a way of approaching pedagogy that places land in the crux of how we connect as relations and how tribal language and cultures are an integral part of this. These pieces build on each other and provide context to how we understand how place and land education should be at the center of how we approach professional development in Indigenous contexts like the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute.

### *Indigenizing Pedagogy*

In this section, I will share about Grande’s *Red Pedagogy*. This was a necessary contribution to our understanding and thinking about how we approach critical pedagogy and Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as acknowledging the political discourse and connections to tribal sovereignty and understanding Indigenous realities. The other essential piece to understand is

the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (Pewewardy, et al.). This provides us a model of transcending through our understandings of negotiating our critical consciousness and Indigenizing pedagogy.

*Red Pedagogy*. *Red Pedagogy* in its 10th anniversary edition is re-conceptualized to the social justice movements (such as Arab Spring, Indignados, Occupy Wall Street, and Idle No More) taking place that Grande connects to the need for our work in critical pedagogy and Indigenous/Indian education, which cannot move forward without the ability for us to work across global movements and contexts of coalition building. Grande speaks to “Red Pedagogy as privileging ‘revolutionary critical pedagogy’ as a mode of inquiry, it does not simply appropriate or absorb its language and epistemic frames, but rather employs its vision as one of many starting points for rethinking Indigenous praxis” (32). It is about cultivating and generating new visions that include questions and frameworks that serve Indigenous approaches to pedagogy and that it builds across contexts and communities. Later, Grande shares, “what distinguishes Red Pedagogy is its basis in hope...one that trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge...Most of all, it is a hope that believes in the strength and resiliency of Indigenous peoples and communities, recognizing that their struggles are not about inclusion and enfranchisement to the ‘new world order’ but, rather, are part of the Indigenous project of sovereignty and Indigenization” (32). This conceptualization and connection to critical educational theories that bridge sacred Indigenous knowledges in ways that are in tandem with what we have experienced in an entrenched settler colonial system is one of the necessary ways we can cultivate hope and healing that honors who we are as Indigenous peoples.

*Unsettling Settler Colonial Education: Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model.* The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM) has been in conception over the last 30 years for Dr. Cornel Pewewardy. This conception was informed by his experience as an educator and administrator within Indigenous education contexts and later his years as a professor. He adapted portions of James Banks' multicultural education and Michael Yellowbird's decolonization frameworks. The article that introduces the TIPM, *The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model: Stages for Developing Critical Consciousness in Indigenous Education*, shares more about the four dimensions (at this time referred to as stages and more hierarchical) of contributions, additive, transformation, and cultural and social justice action (Pewewardy et al.). Later, TIPM is conceptualized as non-hierarchical and non-linear in that, pending the situation and time, we move between dimensions and that there are possibilities of wave jumping and resistance that are faced by the educator who is seeking to increase their own critical consciousness and move towards Indigenization (Pewewardy et al., *Unsettling Settler Colonial Education*). In this edited book that seeks to unsettle the settler colonial systems of education examples are shared of how TIPM shows up in varied ways from community education to higher education and educational leadership. This is important to share in praxis and for others to see how they can move between and within the TIPM model to Indigenize their pedagogy. Both textual pieces are deeply connected to Indigenizing pedagogy and decolonizing spaces in the academy and education in general. They conceptualize and bring in sovereignty and tribal communities in ways that articulate the political and living realities we have. The non-Indigenous faculty who participate in this institute need to have a foundational understanding of sovereignty and the social justice movements happening with local tribal communities. Grande provides space for this in her scholarship that the author has connected on



a local tribal community level. Pewewardy has provided space to conceptualize the TIPM framework that he has shared with participants during their one-day long engagement at the beginning of the Institute. So, Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute participants meditate on this teaching at the beginning and throughout their experience in this yearlong journey of Indigenizing their curriculum. Thus, all of these pieces of Indigenous scholarship have created space for this Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute to exist because they manifest how tribal sovereignty, tribal communities, land education and pedagogy can live and cultivate meaningful learning spaces.

### **Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute Creation Story**

The creation story for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute is shared in this section. The importance of it is connected to the gap in Native American faculty representation on campus. Having three Native American faculty<sup>4</sup> on campus is not enough for the University of Washington Tacoma and even if there is an intentional cluster hire of Native faculty across schools on campus there needs to be continued professional development provided to non-Indigenous faculty. Even with more Indigenous faculty, there needs to be professional development for all faculty who do not identify as Indigenous/Native American. The assessment of need and how we moved forward in action was determined through a survey/focus group of inquiry with Native students to ask what type of support and changes they would like to see in the classroom through faculty and curriculum development. The feedback we received was used to help create the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. Lastly, in this section, I share the intentions that were conceptualized for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute.

#### *Indigenous Student Classroom Climate Survey/Input*

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<sup>4</sup> At the time of the creation of this institute there were only three Native American faculty. We have now increased our numbers to five Native American faculty.

Our intention was to conduct listening sessions/talking circles with Native American students on campus to understand what they would like to see non-Indigenous faculty know, and understand, as well as how to work with them. We weren't able to do this because during this time there was a surge in COVID-19 cases in spring 2021. Instead, we focused on a survey option for Native American students to participate in. This was completed by the end of spring 2021. We received input from Native American students on the need for changes in curriculum and classroom climate. We received 12 responses for the survey which is about 12% of the Native American student population at the University of Washington Tacoma. The survey was distributed by the University of Washington Tacoma tribal liaison through a mass email to all the Native American students on campus. This was sent a few times, including an initial invitation with a few reminders afterwards. We also were able to provide a few gift cards to random Native student respondents. One question students were asked was: "What was the most positive experience you have had with a non-Indigenous faculty member?" Students had positive experiences when a professor followed them on their educational pathway, acknowledged the Indigenous lands, understood the dynamics of small community politics, provided support and involvement, and supported connections to the writing center. Another question was: "What negative experiences have they had with a non-Indigenous faculty member?" They shared having to speak up about Indigenous issues being relevant, being put on the spot and asked to lead or talk based on their ancestry, not having many faculty of color (and never a Native faculty member), and not acknowledging tribal lands in class. We also asked: "What basic knowledge/understanding they would like to see non-Indigenous faculty have when interacting with Native American students?" The students shared that many Native American students are first generation and are coming from trauma, that not all Indigenous students look Indigenous, that faculty should respect their

past, find Indigenous resources and perspectives, and acknowledge the land they are on. Lastly, it's important for non-Indigenous faculty to know that every tribe is different and has a different set of values and beliefs. The feedback from the student survey was incorporated into the development of the modules and webinars/speakers provided over the 2021-2022 academic year.

### *Intentions*

There were specific intentions that were held when the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute was created. It is important to acknowledge that the institute was shaped and formed through my interactions with our Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion and with the Tribal Liaison at the University of Washington Tacoma. This provided an opportunity to understand the context of faculty life and understandings of Indigenous people while also connecting to the Native American students on campus. There were several initial intentions for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. One of the most important intentions was to incorporate the feedback received from Native American students regarding the gaps in knowledge and climate in the classroom that would enhance their learning and connections to curriculum and academic programs. Another was to provide opportunities across the University of Washington Tacoma to deepen the knowledge and understanding of Indigenous/Tribal communities with faculty via professional development. This also lends to increasing best practices and knowledge of working with Native American students on the University of Washington Tacoma campus. The hope was that it would challenge faculty/instructors to understand their bias/privilege in teaching and to develop decolonial praxis and community-centered approaches to teaching and engaging students. This also included providing long and short-term professional development. The professional development being referenced is the different engagements held for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute (long-term over the course of an academic year) and events shared with

participants on and off campus (short-term professional development). The participation would start off with a few faculty within each school with hopes to broaden out to faculty across each school to develop an Indigenous Pedagogy Institute where faculty who participated received a certificate. Lastly, one of the intentions was to develop a broader learning space through an annual or bi-annual gathering centered on Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge where faculty and part-time instructors can learn from Indigenous faculty from the University of Washington system, and local tribal community members, as well as having non-Indigenous faculty share their evolutions in decolonizing classroom space and curriculum. These intentions were shared in a proposal that was developed and shared to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion.

#### *Planning the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute*

As we began to develop the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, we considered how long to make the commitment to learning. Instead of it being a one-time commitment over a few hours it was developed into a multi-session engagement to build connections over the academic year. The reason this was decided was that there are other faculty development institutes and initiatives that require a short time frame commitment but because this is specific to building connections to tribal communities and place as well as Indigenizing curriculum it could not be done in a few days and needed to be integrated across the course of the academic year. Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn developed a form with questions for the potential participants to fill out on their reasons for being interested and what they hoped to learn from the institute. Once the call for applications to participate in the institute was out, I held information sessions and shared what was being planned for the institute. If potential participants had not joined an information session, I met with them one-on-one to get to know them more and to connect. Once all institute

applicants were accepted as participants, I followed up with them and offered to connect with them and sent them pre-readings to read over the summer before our in-person connection in the autumn. The pre-readings shared with them were: a link to the Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854: <https://goia.wa.gov/tribal-government/treaty-medicine-creek-1854> as well as copies of articles from *The Transformational Indigenous Praxis: Model Stages for Developing Critical Consciousness in Indigenous Education* (Pewewardy et al.), “Colonized and Racist Indigenous Campus Tour” (Minthorn and Nelson); “Centering Indigenous college student voices and perspectives through photovoice and photo-elicitation” (Minthorn and Marsh); and “Silences in Stewardship: Some American Indian College Students Examples” (Covarubbias and Windchief). These provided opportunities for faculty to engage with the treaty that is connected to the spuyaləpabš and to my (Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn) heartwork, and to Indigenous scholarship that could guide their growth and connection to the institute. This process to connect and share intentions was important as well as an opportunity to build trust and relationships with the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute participants.

### **Overview of the 1st Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute Participants**

The first Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute cohort had a total of fifteen participants. Three were not in designated full-time faculty roles but were connected to professional learning or part-time instructors. Six out of the seven schools (School of Engineering and Technology, School of Urban Studies, School of Education, School of Nursing and Healthcare Leadership, School of Social Work and Criminal Justice, and School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences) at the University of Washington Tacoma were represented by the 12 full-time faculty participating. Teaching faculty and tenure track faculty were also represented. The mixture of faculty represented from across campus is important to note. The highest representation was from the

school with the largest amount of faculty on campus, the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. The faculty were able to build relationships through our various interactions even though the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of participants mostly participated via Zoom. They were able to connect in-person at the trip to Tomanamus forest and the Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge Gathering. Because our campus is smaller, they were familiar with each other, but this allowed their relationships to strengthen and build further collaborations across campus.

### **Responsibilities and Ways to Reciprocate for the 1st Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute**

When the call for participation in the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute was shared there were ways to reciprocate communicated to them, so they knew what they were expected to commit to doing over the course of an academic year. The first was to participate in a one-day virtual Indigenizing Pedagogy September Engagement. This included an opportunity for them to understand their own identity(ies) and how that impacts their teaching and a way for them to connect to the local tribal community (virtually); then they were able to engage in a presentation and time with Gabe Minthorn (University of Washington tribal liaison). Once this was complete, they continued to build community through getting to know each other and to share their hopes for Indigenizing their pedagogy. They also participated in quarterly connections with Indigenous faculty/community. Another important layer of support was that I offered quarterly one-on-one check-ins for them to talk through their thought process on Indigenizing and shared resources. I also encouraged them to connect with the Gabe Minthorn and to use the space that was cultivated for Native people and presence on campus, the *syayə?adi?* or family room in the Twulshootseed language.

Throughout each quarter they were provided with opportunities to connect with each other and to learn more about the local tribal communities. During the Indigenizing Pedagogy Winter

Connection, we engaged with Amber Sterud Hayward, Puyallup Tribe Language Department Director who shared regarding the background of the Puyallup Tribe's language history and current efforts to revitalize and situate it in the lives of their tribal members and community members. For the Indigenizing Pedagogy Spring Connection, we went to the Muckleshoot's Tomanamus Forest. This experience was an important way to connect the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute to the land and to hear from an Indigenous Forest educator about the local plants and medicines. The participants were also expected to engage in monthly discussion boards/reflexivity time or opportunities to meet one-on-one with all Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute participants via Zoom from each quarter. One of the last ways to reciprocate was to Indigenize their classroom space, syllabus, or curriculum by the end of the spring quarter. All these ways to engage and connect were important to their own personal development: to connect to a deeper place of understanding themselves through the conceptualization of their identity and teaching by being connected to the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model. Their opportunities to connect to the Puyallup and Muckleshoot tribe were a necessary way for them to understand what sovereignty looks like in action, through reclaiming and revitalizing language to being in the physical ancestral space of the Muckleshoot tribe to have a deeper connection to place. The hope of this was that they could see outside of their disciplines and daily interactions to have a deeper and more meaningful connection to place that they could bring into their classrooms and curriculum. They also were able to form or strengthen relationships across schools and the university campus, providing an opportunity for them to honor relationality and collaboration in new and meaningful ways.

*Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge Gathering*

The Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute participants were expected to participate in the Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge Gathering in the spring quarter. Most of the participants were able to physically be there or provide a video. The participants shared their reflections on learning in decolonizing classroom space. We had tribal community members and leaders and two employees from the Office of Native Education present, as well as one undergraduate student and three of the Muckleshoot doctoral cohort students. When considering creating this opportunity for reciprocity with the participants and Indigenous educators/leaders, I wasn't sure of what would unfold. Surprisingly and gratefully, this ended up being a powerful gathering in which the participants shared, and the educators, leaders, and students shared their support and encouragement for them to continue to Indigenize their pedagogy and their own lived experiences. It was a wonderful way to close this annual event and for the participants to continue to move forward in Indigenizing their pedagogy for future courses and academic years.

### **Impact of Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute**

During the 2021-2022 academic year and forthcoming academic year, the anticipated incorporation of Indigenous perspectives, content, and connections is estimated to have reached 400 University of Washington Tacoma students. Note: this number could be significantly higher since some faculty Indigenized multiple courses.

### *Highlights from the First Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute*

We now have a public site that will continue to be developed over time and continues to be built on with the 2nd Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute:

<http://robstarr.ds.lib.uw.edu/indigenizingpedagogy/> One of the faculty participants went through the approval process with the Puyallup tribe and received tribal council approval to work with Puyallup tribe departments. She worked with her students on three different projects with three



different Puyallup tribe programs over the spring quarter and gave all of this back to the tribe to use at their discretion. One of the faculty shared a Muckleshoot language meditation video with her class of 60 students and out of all of those students this was their first time ever hearing a tribal language being spoken. An article was put together from one of the faculty participants with her students on the impact of creating Indigenous focused curriculum and work. It came out from the Tacoma Ledger highlighting the impact on students' learning:

<https://thetacomaledger.com/2022/05/31/letter-to-the-editor-reflection-on-indigenous-rhetoric/>

There are also three faculty who are now working together to develop a course in the future on ethics working with Indigenous communities. This Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute has influenced faculty not only in their classes but their grading and their scholarship. For instance, an engineering faculty member reconceptualized grading that was student-centered and collaborative, and another faculty member recently published his work in an Indigenous/Native studies-focused journal that lends to a deeper connection to his research and self.

#### *Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute Participant Impact*

The additional assessment is doing a pre-reflexive piece with participating non-Indigenous faculty regarding their current knowledge and hopes for the programs and post-evaluation to understand the impact of their participation in this program. All of this helped determine the future direction of an Indigenous Pedagogy Institute. Some of the quotes from the evaluation highlight the success of the program. One of the faculty members shared, “I have a concrete plan on how to move towards indigenizing my Pedagogy. How fundamental to the human experience connection to the land is (and how to incorporate this in my Pedagogy).” This is a testament to the opportunity to go to the Tomanamus forest and connect with the land in deeper ways such as understanding plants and medicines from an Indigenous-centered perspective.

Another faculty member shared how it impacted their grading, “I totally changed my grading! This is a big deal in the STEM fields, but the institute made me very aware of how harmful traditional colonial grading can be. I also worked hard to help my students focus on community rather than equations. I think I can do even better on this in the future, but it was a big effort for me this year.” This speaks to the opportunity this faculty member had in bringing in a decolonial lens and centering Indigenous approaches to grading through a communal values lens. Another faculty member shared the impact of their understanding and use of land acknowledgements, “My biggest takeaway was actually a rehabilitation of the ‘land acknowledgement.’ Most I’ve witnessed rang hollow/performative and I had decided I wouldn’t do them because they seem to do more harm than good. But after hearing that University of Washington Tacoma students want them, and after attending one of Adrienne Keene’s workshops and hearing how my colleagues are handling them, I feel equipped to responsibly incorporate land acknowledgements into my classrooms.” Many of the participants wanted to be intentional and mindful on how to acknowledge the land without doing so in a performative way. We were able to have a discussion on this and I was able to share resources with them on this. Lastly, a powerful quote shared of the impact the institute had on the faculty member’s connections to learning was, “A key takeaway for me is that it is not enough to decolonize. Thinking about how to indigenize higher education and our society is more productive.” This was a key intention for the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. Instead of calling it a Decolonizing Pedagogy Institute, we centered Indigenizing. Decolonizing is understanding and separating the colonial influence on something, whereas Indigenizing is centering Indigenous thought and approaches in ways that are mindful and intentional. This demonstrates that they got it and they understood the importance of going

deeper so that the curriculum and spaces they are creating are safe and places that Native students can see themselves in.

### **Calls to Action for Indigenizing Pedagogy and Space**

Through the creation of this Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute in the time it took to plan, receive feedback, engage the Tribal community and faculty, and research what is currently in existence in the United States, I know that this way of engaging non-Indigenous faculty across campus is unique. The recommendations and calls for action on a broader level are to create a similar campus wide opportunity for faculty connections, provide sustainability for institutional support, create mentorship opportunities and connect with Native American students and expand to non-Indigenous/Native American staff.

#### *Create Similar Campus Wide Opportunities for Faculty Connections*

In understanding that this is a unique campus wide opportunity for faculty development and learning, it would be impactful to create a similar opportunity at other institutions for higher education. It would be helpful to create something that is a similar length of time that requires faculty commitment and opportunity to build relationships and connections. This is a part of the Indigenizing aspect in regard to creating opportunities to learn about and with Tribal communities, and to build a community of faculty on campus with similar intentions.

#### *Sustainability for Institutional Support*

One of the most important pieces is for institutions to have sustainable funding to support an initiative like this in ways that are intentional and do not require piecemealing funding to support its existence. This includes funding to give faculty stipends and to honor the time for tribal communities to engage in this heartwork. The other part of this is providing avenues for growth

and intentional scaling of impact (i.e., how many non-Indigenous faculty do they hope will engage in this learning opportunity over time).

*Create Mentorship Opportunities with Faculty Participants and Connections with Native American Students*

It is helpful after this institute or something similar to it to plan for opportunities for mentorship across cohorts of faculty participants, or at the very least for them to learn from each other's experiences. The other piece is for faculty to hear from Native American students about their experiences in higher education and to learn from them what they would like to see non-Indigenous faculty understand and include in their pedagogy.

*Expansion to Non-Indigenous/Native American Staff*

Beyond this Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute or other faculty learning opportunities, having something similar with student affairs or professional staff on campus would be a way of continuing to address campus climate and belongingness for Native American students. If there are ways for cross-learning opportunities with Tribal communities, that would help in not overwhelming their capacity and for them to see the intention for the university community to learn with and from them.

**Closing**

The Indigenous Pedagogy Institute is a first of its kind and has opportunities to broaden space for continued professional development and to cultivate best praxis(es) for working with Native American students in the classroom and supporting them through their academic programs. In cultivating safer spaces for Native American students in the classroom we are reframing classrooms into decolonial spaces that center community and Indigenous approaches that will have a ripple effect in student retention, faculty consciousness, and community building. “When

we center and include Tribal/Indigenous communities through building reciprocal relationships, something powerful happens and Tribal citizens envision themselves as part of the living history that ties their Ancestors' stories to their contributions of building for future generations” (Minthorn, *Indigenizing Doctoral Programs: Embodying Indigenous Community Ways of Being*, 190). This heartwork and the development of Indigenous doctoral cohorts and education provide a pathway to conceptualize and center tribal community consciousness. This is being shared out in hopes of encouraging others to dream of ways to engage faculty and staff in intentional ways with the Tribal community and Native students at the heart of their pedagogy and praxis.

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