



# Educating with Indigenous Perspectives: Integrating Native Culture into the Curriculum



Patricia McDaniels-Gomez, Shayna Pond

Published by K20 Center

*This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)*

**Time Frame**      80-90 minutes

## Essential Question(s)

- What are the benefits of acknowledging students' cultural frameworks in classroom learning?

## Summary

In this professional development session, educators explore the benefits of acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds in the classroom. Participants explore lessons that incorporate Native Culture in order to identify strategies for creating culturally inclusive lessons that integrate diverse perspectives and experiences. By the end of the session, participants develop a personal plan to effectively incorporate students' cultural backgrounds in their classrooms.

## Learning Goals

- Recognize the benefits of acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds.
- Explore lessons that are culturally inclusive.
- Create a personal plan to include students' cultural backgrounds in your classroom.

## Attachments

- [Culture-Inlcusive Learning Research Brief—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.docx](#)
- [Culture-Inlcusive Learning Research Brief—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.pdf](#)
- [Educating with Indigenous Perspectives Planning Guide—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.docx](#)
- [Educating with Indigenous Perspectives Planning Guide—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Exploration Notes Organizer—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.docx](#)
- [Lesson Exploration Notes Organizer—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.pdf](#)
- [Presentation Slides—Educating with Indigenous Perspectives.pptx](#)

## Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Lesson Exploration Notes Organizer (attached; one per participant)
- Culturally-Inclusive Learning Research Brief (attached; one per participant)
- Educating with Indigenous Perspectives Planning Guide (attached; one per participant)

10 minutes

## Engage

Starting with **slide 3**, use the [How I Am Feeling? What Am I Thinking?](#) instructional strategy to ask participants to reflect on a time they felt seen and represented in something they read, watched or learned about. Ask:

- How did it make you feel?
- What did you learn from that experience?

Ask participants to share at their table group, highlighting the positive impact it had on their sense of identity and belonging. Ask one representative from each table to give a summary of the benefits of diverse representation.

Move on to **slide 4** and **slide 5** to introduce the essential question and learning objectives for today's professional learning activities.

20 minutes

## Explore

Begin handing out the attached **Lesson Exploration Notes Organizer** and go to **slide 6**. Provide time for participants to locate and browse the Native American Lessons [Google Site](#). Once, everyone has found the site, set up a timer for 15 minutes where each person can explore the site and identify three lessons they could use as is or adapt to use in their subject area/classroom. For each of those three lessons, participants should read through the narrative and attachments and identify a strategy used in that lesson that supports students in drawing on their cultural frameworks. There is also a space for them to take notes on any aspect of this lesson that might be useful to them in their own teaching. After time is up, ask participants to share at their table one of the strategies they found.

20 minutes

## Explain

Pass out a copy of the attached **Culturally-Inclusive Learning Research Brief** to each participant and then move on to **slide 7**. Provide time for reading through the brief and ask them to use the [CUS and Discuss](#) strategy to annotate the reading.

- **Circle** concepts and words that are new to you.
- **Underline** details that support the main ideas.
- **Star** main ideas.

After they've completed reading and annotating, bring up **slide 8**. The quote on the slide, "Integrating students' cultural frameworks into the design of learning experiences leverages a deep well of prior knowledge, motivation, and relevance." represents one of the main ideas from the reading. Have participants discuss what they've marked on the reading in relation to the reflection questions on the slide:

- What's at stake in this claim for students of the dominant culture?
- What's at stake for students of indigenous or minoritized cultures?
- What's at stake for teachers of both these students?

10 minutes

## Extend

Move to **slide 9** and pass out a copy of the attached **Educating with Indigenous Perspectives Planning Guide** to each participant. Have participants reflect on a content standard they will teach in the near future, using the questions in the lesson planner to help them consider how to make their lesson culturally inclusive.

20 minutes

## Evaluate

In the final activity, on **slide 10**, have participants combine the strategies [Chalk Talk](#) and [Two Stars and a Wish](#).

1. Have participants pass their lesson guide to the right.
2. Read their neighbor's guide and provide feedback:
  - Star two things they think are important ideas.
  - Write one note in the margins as an additional idea to consider.
3. Pass to the right and provide feedback again. Do this twice.
4. Pass left three times to return guides to their original authors.

## Research Rationale

For centuries, education for Native Americans has been carried out through forced assimilation. For the success of the first off-reservation boarding school, the mantra was “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” or eliminate their culture so young natives will assimilate into society. However, this ideology has not had the intended outcome. At Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where the leadership was under Col. Pratt who coined the assimilation phrase mentioned earlier, of the over 10,000 students who attended, only 158 graduated (a little over 1%) (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Currently, the United States has a graduation rate of 74.9% of students who identify as Native American, the lowest of all ethnic groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). In the 2014 Native Youth Report, the White House recommended that one way of supporting native youth is by strengthening the integration of native culture and languages into schools and classrooms (United States, 2014). Doing this will boost the students’ sense of belonging and identity that is free from ridicule or bullying. “Culturally relevant curricula connect the student with his or her heritage. It is the bridge between his or her world on the reservation or in the community, with the world of school academics created at school” (Gregory, 2012).



## Resources

Gregory, S. (2012). *Voices of Native American educators: Integrating history, culture, and language to improve learning outcomes for Native American students*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.

K20 Center. (n.d.). Chalk talk. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/197>

K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162>

K20 Center. (n.d.). Two stars and a wish. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/83>

K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking? Strategies.

<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2021, May 20). Common core of data (CCD). Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographic characteristics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: School year 2019–20. [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_RE\\_and\\_characteristics\\_2019-20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2019-20.asp)

Reyhner, J. A., & Eder, J. M. O. (2004). *American Indian education: A history*. University of Oklahoma Press. p. 139.

United States. Executive Office of the President, I. (2014). 2014 native youth report / Executive Office of the President.

[https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport\\_final.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf)