# Since Time Immemorial: Developing Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum for Washington's Schools [1]

By

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Abstract: *This case tells the story of the attempts to implement House Bill 1495 which passed the Washington State Legislature in 2005. The bill recommended inclusion of tribal history, culture, and government in the social studies curriculum in the K-12 education system. This bill was intended to address perceived widespread misunderstanding of American Indians' heritage, history, and contributions to society. The bill passed but did not include any funding for implementation. This case discusses the efforts to secure funding for curriculum and staff development and the approaches that were used to develop a tribal sovereignty curriculum. The tribal sovereignty curriculum project occurred as a reform effort within larger reform efforts as the State attempted to improve the K-12 education system and comply with rising federal standards and expectations. The case raises a myriad of larger questions about making change as well as questions about educational innovation, policy implementation and educational equity. This case can be taught as an interrupted case with discussion at the end of each section or as a single case with discussion at the end of the case.*

## Part 1 –A bill becomes law but will it be implemented?

In 2005 the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1495 which recommended the inclusion of tribal history, culture, and government in the social studies curriculum in the schools. This bill was intended to address perceived and documented widespread misunderstanding of American Indians' heritage, history, treaty rights, and contributions to society *(*Doble and Yarrow, 2007). While the original bill *required* inclusion of tribal history, legislative negotiations eventually changed the language to "encouraged." Some saw the change in language as a weakening of the commitment while others argued that this change might actually enhance the opportunity to make change. Lack of funding to implement the bill was also a major issue. At hearings about



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the bill, various stakeholders also raised issues about "unfunded mandates" and an already overcrowded curriculum. Montana passed a similar reform in 1972 as part of its constitutional reform process, and it took decades for that effort, popularly called *Indian Education for All (IEFA)*, to be finally implemented.[3] This was the experience in other states as well.

But the leaders of the effort to pass HB 1495 were willing to compromise to get a bill passed. They argued that curriculum changes could take place during the already scheduled cycles of curriculum review. Passage of the bill would at least give them a beginning, and hopefully a first step towards making deeper changes that would benefit all students.

With very vocal support from the tribes, House Bill 1495 passed with bipartisan support and overwhelming majorities in both the House and the Senate. Agreements were subsequently forged between the tribes and various education agencies. Then State Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson pledged her support for the development of a tribal sovereignty curriculum with the assistance of their Indian Education Office at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Washington State School Directors Association, the State Board of Education, and almost all of the federally recognized tribes. The hope was that each tribe would also develop local curriculum tailored to their own tribal history and culture, an important recognition of tribal sovereignty as well as the reality of a decentralized education system. Many tribes were expanding their efforts in education and cultural resources preservation and management. Language revitalization efforts were flourishing, and a small number of tribes were already developing some local curriculum. A number of tribes had culture centers or aspirations to create one so there was some expertise on which to build, and, in many communities, the elders were carriers of significant tribal history. Unfortunately, most of this curriculum, however rich and engaging, was not written down and the recorded information often remained in "ditto" or type-written format, rendering it

[3] More than 25 years after writing a guarantee of quality education including Indian education into the State Constitution, little action had been taken, but advocacy groups continued to press for change. Finally, in 1999 Montana passed House Bill 528, which became known as Indian Education for All (IEFA), with no funding attached. A lawsuit was filed in 2004 challenging the State's lack of attention to quality and the chronic under funding of education. An Amicus Brief was filed by Montana Indian Education Association pointing to the need to define quality to include Indian education. The Montana Supreme Court upheld a case contending that the State had an obligation to define quality and fund the IEFA. The Legislature did so in 2005, allocating more than $10 million to meet the mandates of the Act and redefining 'quality' to include tribal history and culture. Most of this allocation went to Montana's schools to develop curriculum and the rest to the Office of Public Instruction Office to create a Division of Indian Education which also includes the related areas of bilingual education and the Federal GEARUP program. The Division became sharply focused on closing the American Indian Achievement gap and implementing *Indian Education for All* and built a robust website of resources, a program of professional development, and supported networks of curriculum reformers at the University of Montana and other State universities and tribal colleges. Grants were provided to local schools, creating partnerships with tribal educators. Looking back, one observer noted, "the stars were aligned and we hit our heyday. There was a budget surplus, a supportive governor who wanted to work with tribes, and energy from the State bicentennial and the celebration of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. We are continuing to try to get standards and policies to include Indian education in this State where local control is very important."

inaccessible to the general teaching and learning community. As the months rolled by after the bill was signed, the central question remained: House Bill 1495 had become law but would it be implemented?

**Part 2- Stepping Up: Who were the leaders, where did the funding come from, and who participated?**

**Leadership and funding**

In the year following passage of the bill Denny Hurtado, Supervisor of Indian Education at OSPI, took the lead in keeping the effort on the front burner. A former tribal chair, Hurtado had strong ties to Native educators and leaders. Because he understood the importance of tribal involvement, a first step was to call a meeting of tribal chairs, culture specialists, and other appropriate individuals. On June 6, 2005 the interested parties met at the Puyallup Tribe's Spirit House to begin discussing the concept of a Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum. They explored what should or should not be included and whether and how local school districts could collaborate with tribes on curriculum, etc. Then they formed a Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum Advisory Committee to guide the project. Having the right people on this advisory board and having all the tribes endorse the project was essential. Hurtado often said, "We got one chance to get it right, so we'd better do it right."

The advisory board ultimately included tribal and non-tribal educators with a variety of backgrounds and affiliations. The Board included tribal chairs, tribal elders, and tribal attorneys as well as state representation from the Attorney General's Office, OSPI, the head of social studies at OSPI (then Caleb Perkins), the Washington State School Directors Association, the Washington State Librarians Association, and higher education experts. Over the next several years this group provided crucial advice and direction to the project.

Funding was the main ingredient missing for implementation. Hurtado and the other supporters attempts to secure substantial funding from the Legislature did not materialize. When it became clear that funding would not be forthcoming, the tribal leaders put increasing pressure on OSPI to follow up on its pledge to develop the sovereignty curriculum. OSPI found $20,000 in internal funding in 2008 to begin developing the tribal sovereignty curriculum. After it became clear that the initial funding would not be enough, an additional $50,000 was committed by OSPI in 2009. These funds were used to support three curriculum developers and to provide each pilot school with about $5000 for books, materials, and supplies and several days of professional development support for their teachers. A list of required and recommended books was also provided. The Washington Indian Gaming Association (WIGA) contributed an additional $5000.

The budget was absolutely minimal with no funding for evaluation or bringing the teachers together after the initial workshop. This budget did not solve the long term issue of how to pay for the completion of the project much less provide ongoing teacher training, which was clearly needed. However, it did get the pilot project underway. Everyone hoped that a successful pilot project would build a good case for longer term funding from as yet unidentified sources.

**Participating pilot schools and teachers**

A number of schools and individuals were initially asked to join the effort and become pilot schools. The principals at the pilot schools signed letters of commitment and agreed to have their teacher(s) and either the building principal or district administrator attend the mandatory training. The participants were asked to write action plans and report in over the next year as they implemented the new curriculum. The comments were used to help the curriculum designers refine the units they were developing. The early participants were typical "early adopters," individuals with a strong and known interest in Indian education and a history of being at the forefront in trying out new ideas. The hope was that these early adopters could bring others along over time as well as enrich and guide the writing of future units of study.

In addition to the early participants, others were invited to join the effort through a general invitation sent to all the schools. Interest in the initiative started out slowly but built rapidly as word got out. Ultimately there was overwhelming interest so the project had to narrow the number of pilot schools because of limited funding. Out of the more than 50 schools expressing interest, 13 schools, mostly in Western Washington, were selected for the pilot. The Fife, Marysville, and Enumclaw School Districts involved multiple schools at different levels. In these districts, curriculum that spanned many grade levels was to be developed and offered. A number of schools also sent more than one teacher to the workshop for the pilot schools providing opportunities for local collaboration there as well.

Approximately 64 teachers from the pilot schools attended the first workshop in October 2008. Many of the participating schools served large numbers of Native students. They included the following:

Fife High School/Fife S.D.
Surprise Lake Middle School/Fife S.D.
Hedden Elementary School/Fife S.D.
Tulalip Elementary School/Marysville S.D.
Lincoln Elementary School/Olympia S.D.
Kingston Middle School/North Kitsap S.D.
Ridgeline Middle School/Yelm S.D.
Hood Canal School/Hood Canal S.D.
Thunder Mountain Middle School/Enumclaw S.D.
Enumclaw High School/Enumclaw S.D.
Port Angeles High School/Port Angeles S.D.
Neah Bay High School/Cape Flattery S.D.
Heritage High School/Marysville S.D.

Later, in 2008, two additional schools, Muckleshoot Tribal School and Suquamish Tribal High School, asked to be involved, indicating they would happily pay for workshops at their reservation sites.

Conspicuously missing in the pilot program were urban school districts, either too overwhelmed or uninformed about the curriculum project. Since "word got out" via tribal leaders on reservations, the urban Indian population missed out partly because they have no "central office," no "education department."

In the 2009-10 school year, the Monroe School District, Toppenish High School, and Yakama Tribal School were added as pilot sites. Summer 2009 also brought broader dissemination of the project with additional one-day workshops held at regional locations in Everett, Yakima, Spokane and Olympia attracting more than 100 additional teachers. Clearly there was growing interest in the initiative. How this would play out in each school and whether this "interest" would translate into curriculum development and change was an open question.

**Part 3 – How can we change the curriculum when reform efforts often fail?**

**The Writing Team Emerges**

The leaders of the reform effort knew the design of the curriculum project would be crucial to successful implementation. They were experienced educators who had been through many waves of curriculum reform that had little impact. They wanted this to be different.

A teacher in the Seattle schools, Shana Brown (Yakama descendant), was selected to lead the curriculum development effort under the direction of the Indian Education Office. Brown, a veteran middle and high school US History and English teacher, had extensive experience with the Montana Indian Education efforts that had finally come to fruition decades after the enabling legislation had passed. She co-authored their curriculum, *Tribal Perspectives of History in the Northwest.* The University of Montana had taken the lead in creating the Regional Learning Project which developed and distributes extensive curriculum materials including maps, teachers' guides, DVDs and websites to support the goals of *Indian Education for All.* The project also offers critical ongoing support including professional development activities (www.regionallearningproject.org).

Brown had also been a member of the drafting committee for Washington's social studies grade level expectations (GLE's) as was her colleague Jerry Price who joined the tribal sovereignty curriculum writing team in the second year. Price, a middle school teacher in the Yelm School District, regularly included local Nisqually history in his US History courses and collaborated with his Washington State History colleagues regarding the inclusion of Nisqually history. Elese Washines (Yakama) became the third member of the curriculum development team. A teacher at Yakama Tribal School, Washines had years of previous of experience writing tribal sovereignty curriculum.

Together Shana Brown, Elese Washines and Jerry Price developed tribal sovereignty curriculum units for elementary school (grade 4 Washington State History, grade 5 US History), middle school (grade 7 Washington State History, grade 8 US History) and high

school (grade 11 US History, grade 12 Contemporary World Problems). They also brought together other available resources that might be useful. Hurtado, meanwhile, played an administrative leadership role and pursued funding to bring the effort to fruition.

**Monday Comes –Brown's Theory**

Brown had a theory about the obstacles to curriculum reform. As she put it, "I am a teacher of seventeen plus years; I've learned one very, very important reality: time marches on. You get your rhythm, catch your stride, and once you've gotten it, it's damned hard to let go of it.

Case in point: In 2002 I collected Native resources for the social studies department where I taught. I presented it to the group, got a bunch of nods and "that's cools," and the materials are still gathering dust on the shelf as I write.

My colleagues were not bad teachers, nor were they indifferent to the teaching of tribal history. Okay, maybe one or two were. I think the materials just required "too much"- too much time to prepare, too much time to research, and not too much time in which to teach it. And I'm as guilty as the next teacher…I go to a conference, get introduced to amazing resources, get pumped up, and then…Monday comes…You take a look at what you're teaching, what you have to teach before June, and you just can't decide what to throw out to make room for that new unit.

So you don't.

Undeterred, I took a second, third, then eighth stab at it. And then I got smart. I stopped swimming against the current and started thinking of ways to integrate materials effortlessly and seamlessly into what social studies and English teachers already teach. My goal then, as it is now, is to have at teachers' fingertips *everything they need to teach with confidence*—the materials, the lessons, the research, where to go for further study. And it's for good reason.

Good teachers who don't teach tribal history—or very much of it—are neither racist nor insensitive. I think they tolerate their omissions because they're also afraid of getting it wrong, or they don't know how to start or where to go. Or the task seems so amorphous that already overwhelmed teachers just have to make a choice. Further, the tribes in their areas, though mostly eager and forthcoming with materials and information, can seem so inaccessible to the non-Indian. Teachers may feel like outsiders and choose not to engage at all. The irony is not lost on me, for this is exactly what we teachers try to prevent in our classrooms, especially for those students traditionally marginalized in American history.

The greater deficiency in teaching tribal history on a large scale, however, is the lack of authentic, diverse voices of tribal people. There are the scattered and rare educational gems out there, but unless teachers buy recordings of story-tellings, our *actual* voices are

pretty much silent when it comes to Northwest history. How can this be when we rely on oral tradition to tell our side of the story? It cannot be, nor should it.

**But this is changing**

When I met Sally Thompson, Director of the Regional Learning Project at the University of Montana, her teaching tribal history projects—and DVD series—were well underway. She and her team had interviewed dozens of people from at least a dozen tribes who recounted their memories—and the memories of generations before them—from time immemorial. The interviews, I later learned, focus on history, sovereignty, the land, and how the three converge. And then they go one step further: the retellings *tie directly into tribal present and future*. It's often difficult to convince students that learning about the past helps us understand the future. Not here. That tribal past defines and shapes the present and future of tribes in our area hits students right between the eyes. There is no ambiguity.

Most importantly, there is no publisher's filter through which these oral histories are muddied. There is no chance that difficult history is obscured or trivialized. *Tribal Perspectives* pulls no punches when coming to recounted memories of broken treaties, encroachment, and the subsequent distrust in anything non-Indian.

The Montana curriculum, entitled *Tribal Perspectives of History in the Northwest,* endeavors to enrich and enliven existing curriculum, not eclipse it. Instead of having the parochial Native American unit every November, teachers use *Tribal Perspectives* to complete their units on Lewis & Clark, Westward Movement, Native Cultures, Contemporary World Problems, statehood, and so on, throughout the year. Simply put, tribal history is no longer reduced to patronizing insets in textbooks.

A few years ago I visited my Auntie at the Yakama Nation fisheries office to get more materials. Her boss asked what I was doing. When I told him I was writing tribal curriculum, he asked, "Are you going to get it right?" Sheepishly I nodded, "I hope so." He raised his eyebrows and said, "You'd better."

I vowed that we would.

**Part 4 –How can we build a reform within a reform ?**

**What is Curriculum Reform?**

Periodically, educators, policy makers, and politicians have attempted to improve education for students by mandating particular types of curriculum and by setting uniform standards. These efforts were met with mixed success. Fifteen years ago, Washington State began a curriculum reform effort to raise education quality for all students and improve consistency of curriculum across schools. This state level reform was a response to data that indicated that many students were graduating from high school with inadequate knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and math. Education, business, and civic groups were concerned that these students wouldn't be able to find jobs that paid a living wage and wouldn't have the knowledge and skills to participate in the governance of our state and country. To support improved educational outcomes, teachers, business people, and community representatives worked together to create a system of educational expectations that spanned grades kindergarten to 12$^{th}$ grade. These student learning objectives are called the EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements) and the GLEs (Grade Level Expectations). This system of student goals and objectives was accompanied by guidelines for the types of content (curriculum guidelines) that should be offered at each grade level and by two types of assessment – the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and CBAs (Content Based Assessments) that measure students' knowledge and growth in particular classes (Washington. Office of Public Instruction, K-12 Social Studies learning standards). Efforts at Washington's educational reform efforts continued, and were elaborated, within the context of a federal reform effort mandated by the *No Child Left Behind Act* which was enacted several years later.

**Why did we need a reform within a reform?**

While all students, including Native students, have substantially improved in terms of the pass rates on statewide tests since 1999, a sizable percentage of students, especially students of color, are still not passing the WASL. Furthermore, high school drop out rates for Native students are the highest of any group, and the number of Native students going to college has fallen in recent years. We saw a need to develop a culturally relevant curriculum to address the needs of Indian students. Knowing that teachers may be reluctant to make changes in curriculum for many reasons ranging from lack of knowledge, time constraints, and lack of materials, this curriculum change needed to be carefully thought through.

**How did we proceed with the reform within a reform?**

"We decided to build the tribal sovereignty curriculum, which we came to call *Since Time Immemorial (STI)*, around what we termed five Essential Questions. These had been the framework for the curriculum developed by Evergreen's Center for Educational

Improvement with the Chehalis Tribe. They provided a roadmap to answer the fundamental questions "what would success look like? What do we want students to know, and how will they demonstrate their understanding?"

## Essential Questions

1. *Physical and Cultural Geography of Tribal Lands in Pre-Treaty Times—Essential Question:* How does physical geography affect Northwest tribes' culture, economy, and where they choose to settle and trade?
2. *Nation Within a Nation—Essential Question:* What is the legal status of the tribes who negotiated or who did not enter into United States treaties?
3. *The Treaties—Essential Question:* What were the political, economic, and cultural forces that led to the treaties?
4. *Repercussions of the Treaties—Essential Question:* What are the ways in which tribes responded to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence?
5. *Enduring Cultures: People Today—Essential Question:* What have local tribes done to meet the challenges of reservation life? What have these tribes, as sovereign nations, done to meet the economic and cultural needs of their tribal communities?

These essential questions were further defined and coordinated with expectations for different grade levels. We called these refined objectives "the big five."

**The Big 5**
**Tribal Sovereignty Objectives for all Washington State Students**

**By the time Washington state students leave elementary school, they will be able to**

- understand that over 500 independent tribal nations exist within the United States today, and that they deal with the United States, as well as each other, on a government-to-government basis;
- define *tribal* sovereignty as "a way that tribes govern themselves in order to keep and support their cultural ways of life;"
- understand that tribal sovereignty predates treaty times;
- explain how the treaties that tribal nations entered into with the United States government *limited* their sovereignty; and
- identify the names and locations of tribes in their area..

**By the time Washington state students leave middle school, they will know the above, and in addition they will be able to**

- understand that according to the US Constitution, treaties are "the supreme law of the land," consequently treaty rights supersede most state laws;
- explain that tribal sovereignty has a cultural, as well as political, basis;
- understand that tribes are subject to federal law and taxes, as well as some state regulations;

- understand that tribal sovereignty is ever-evolving, and therefore levels of sovereignty and status vary from tribe to tribe; and
- explain that there were and are frequent and continued threats to tribal sovereignty that are mostly resolved through the court system.

**By the time Washington state students leave high school, they will know the above, and in addition they will be able to**

- recognize landmark court decisions and legislation that affected and continue to affect tribal sovereignty;
- understand that tribal sovereignty works toward protecting tribes' ways of life and toward the development of their nations;
- understand that tribal, state, and federal agencies often work together toward the same goal;
- explain the governmental structure of at least one tribe in their community; and
- distinguish between federally and non-federally recognized tribes and explain the difference.

With the Chehalis Tribe's curriculum as a guide, we began developing the sovereignty curriculum with a brainstorming session with the advisory board. What we came up with was way too much, but we pared it down. Space in the curriculum for social studies has decreased dramatically in the last decade as more and more attention has been given to teaching math and reading, critical areas in the revised Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). We tried to think about all the obstacles to using the new curriculum and how to overcome them. We wanted a curriculum that was locally based, accurate, easy to access, and, whenever possible, free. Most important—remembering about "when Monday comes" --the resources needed to be easy to integrate so teachers would say, 'I can do that.' Our intent was to meet teachers where they are and encourage them to take that first (or third or fourth) step into transforming their curricula into something a little more inclusive, a little more challenging, and a lot more personally and professionally rewarding. We hoped that an online Wiki could be developed to provide a space for posting the new curriculum, sharing materials, and dialoging with one another through an online blog.

So we started off at a full gallop, developing and piloting the curriculum at the same time. The innovative part of the curriculum—what is gaining national attention—is that it does truly meet teachers where they are. Through regularly emailed OSPI social studies updates, teachers will be introduced to materials they can integrate into units they likely will be teaching during that time. I realize that most curriculum endeavors tout the "ease of integration" possibility, but ours walks the walk. Within each of the 27 social studies units are three levels of teaching and learning involvement from which to choose. If a teacher has time for 30 minutes of tribal sovereignty information and materials in her unit, she can do that. While it might not seem like a lot of teaching time, in most cases, it will be 100% more than what was taught previously. Moreover, in the months to come, she has another opportunity to include tribal sovereignty in her upcoming unit and in the next and in the next. It is our hope that, eventually, she'll want to take it to the next level. Next time, perhaps, she will commit to a few days throughout her unit to integrate tribal

sovereignty lessons, and the curriculum provides her this latitude, this *choice*. Finally, if the teacher decides to make tribal sovereignty the focus of her unit, she has means by which to accomplish this—as well as complete one of the state required Content Based Assessments (CBA), because each level builds upon the last, and all units culminate in the completion of a CBA.

As a result of all the changes in state and federal standards and expectations, teachers find themselves at the center of a bewildering storm of changing standards and new expectations. Washington has a decentralized school system and districts have some latitude to vary the sequence of offerings and the ways specific social studies programs are taught. Within schools, teachers often had the freedom to choose their own texts, unlike some states where texts are chosen and used on a statewide basis. At the same time, student mobility and concerns about equitable access to a strong common social studies curriculum is always a concern with decentralized school systems, but there are also great advantages in fostering creativity and flexibility to address local needs and interests. Where the right balance is remains an open question.

**Part 5 –What happens when we put our theory into practice?**

**Obstacles**

Of course, Monday did come. The project moved ahead, though more slowly than we expected. It was a scramble. The funding was slow in coming. Many schools didn't turn in action plans. Some teachers dropped by the wayside in terms of actually implementing the new curriculum. A worldwide recession hit and statewide budget cuts changed the staffing at a number of schools. Very few teachers joined the blog on the Wiki, and we discovered pretty quickly that the Wiki was kind of clunky and needed a professional overhaul.

**And successes**

But there was also amazing, good work going on all across the state, and new units were being developed and completed. A few teachers were sending in valuable feedback for revision. By January 2010 we were about 80% complete with the new curriculum. OSPI is providing the essential piece: a website that houses all of the curriculum – a kind of "one-stop shopping" venue where teachers can freely download units and materials that integrate into whatever unit they happen to be teaching at the time (http://moodle.ospi.k12.wa.us).

In the brief quiet interludes when we looked at what we were accomplishing, we felt good. After all, how often does a teacher get the chance to work on a statewide reform effort that could really engage students and have such an important impact on their communities? Many of the participants are amazing educators who have so much to teach us all.

**Teacher Models**

JamieValadez is one of those very special teachers. A member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Jamie has taught her Native language and culture for many years as well as contributing to important books such as *Native Peoples of the Olympic Peninsula* (2002). In addition to her work with her tribe as a language and culture teacher, she teaches in the Port Angeles Public Schools in both the language arts and the social studies departments. A graduate of this school system, Jamie was inspired by her Hawaiian Native teacher many years ago when she took her Native Studies course in high school. Now she walks in her mentor's shoes, teaching that very same course and redesigning it as part of the Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum.

> Developing the tribal sovereignty curriculum was like a dream come true," she said. "I've always wanted to do this. I got to celebrate my 50th birthday piloting the new curriculum in Port Angeles. Now, I've taught the revised curriculum three times, and it gets better and better. More than 30 students are in my current class. Half are Native American. This term the class is split pretty evenly between freshmen and seniors, and they are all enjoying this curriculum.
>
> Because I teach a Native Studies elective course, I have more curriculum space. It's not just two weeks in the middle of a Washington State History course. It's a whole semester long. I started by organizing the course into three units: first focusing on local, then regional, and finally national tribal history and culture. In the local unit we study the Elwha, the Makah and Quileute tribes, then we do six weeks on the regional Montana curriculum. The final segment focuses on national issues and the *Since Time Immemorial* Curriculum. We look at issues like allotment and treaty rights going from region to region. I try to do lots of hands-on learning as well as field trips and bringing in speakers. With each segment, students did a research paper on a tribe of their choice using the rubrics set by the State as the organizing themes.

Jamie Valadez may be one of the best examples of a teacher expansively redesigning her course. She hopes others might learn from her experience and looks forward to the next step of the project which might include sharing work with other teachers. "I'm hoping," says Jamie, "that many of us can develop and share local history and culture units in the future."

Mary Lou Macala is another example of a pilot teacher who has been a leader in implementing the new curriculum. She teaches social studies courses in Washington State History and World History at North Kingston Middle School on the Kitsap Peninsula. Kingston Middle School has a diverse student body with many Native students from the nearby Suquamish and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes. Over the years she has seen the peer culture among the Native students change towards a more positive view of schooling and academic success. The school has been trying to build closer ties to the local tribes in various ways. They do some of the parent-teacher conferences on the reservations, and frequently bring in speakers from the local tribes. Kingston Middle School sent three teachers to the initial Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum Workshop,

including another social studies teacher who is a member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Macala said "An important component of the state tribal sovereignty curriculum is a partnership with local tribes. By partnering with the tribes, the pilot seeks to involve the tribes in the education of their children, honor the place and contributions of Native Americans in the history of our state, and bring awareness of native cultures to all students. Native American students in my school and my state have the lowest educational success rate of any ethnic group."

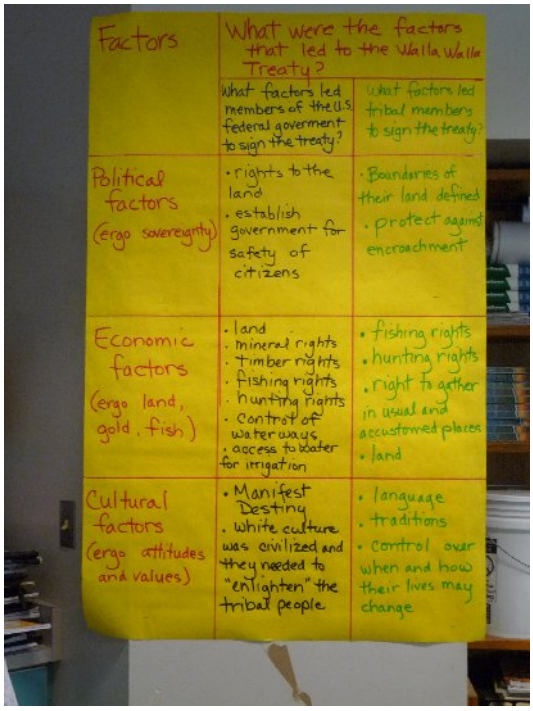
Many aspects of the tribal sovereignty curriculum were a natural fit with Mary Lou's approach to teaching. She used both the Montana curriculum and the new Washington units as they were developed. The Montana curriculum, with its stress on using oral history and original documents, reflects Mary Lou's preferred way of presenting information.

She said,

> The Washington State history book I use has a pretty good chapter on Native Americans but it focuses on the pre-contact period and then they disappear. This new material is helping to fill important gaps. My classes focused on the Walla Walla Treaty materials in the pilot curriculum, but my Native colleague used the Treaty of Point No Point materials. That's one of the advantages to this approach: you can pick and choose based on your own interests and background. We studied all the major historical stakeholders –the tribes, the missionaries, the miners, etc. -- with the students taking on different roles. Students role-played the different perspectives of the stakeholders at the Walla Walla Council, each group describing how a particular stakeholder felt about the tribal people and their growing resistance to encroachment on their homelands. The quality of student work increased as students incorporated information they had gathered into their writing. Tribal stakeholders wrote of their confusion when missionaries poisoned watermelons to discourage theft by the Natives, a story they had learned when listening to an oral history by Marjorie Waheneka, a Cayuse/Palouse Indian as she described how Marcus Whitman tried to protect his property from curious Indians.

"They did amazing presentations that I photographed (see below). At the end we did a 'balancing the scales of justice exercise.' Students came away from this with a real understanding of the legal status of the tribes and the political, economic, and cultural forces that led to the treaties."


Hallalhotsoot
"Everything has gone different from the promises. The treaties were Straight, but they were not carried out"



| Factors | What were the factors that led to the Walla Walla Treaty? | |
|---|---|---|
| | What factors led members of the U.S. federal government to sign the treaty? | What factors led tribal members to sign the treaty? |
| Political factors (ergo sovereignty) | • rights to the land<br>• establish government for safety of citizens | • Boundaries of their land defined<br>• protect against encroachment |
| Economic factors (ergo land, gold, fish) | • land<br>• mineral rights<br>• timber rights<br>• fishing rights<br>• hunting rights<br>• control of waterways<br>• access to water for irrigation | • fishing rights<br>• hunting rights<br>• right to gather in usual and accustomed places<br>• land |
| Cultural factors (ergo attitudes and values) | • Manifest Destiny<br>• white culture was civilized and they needed to "enlighten" the tribal people | • language<br>• traditions<br>• control over when and how their lives may change |

In past years students have asked, 'Are we finished with the Native Americans yet?' suggesting an impatience to end to that chapter after which the rest of the state history could move on. Last spring, students did not ask that question. Attitudes toward Native Americans changed as students gained a greater understanding of the struggles of Native peoples to retain their identity and their land. Conversations about identity were not confined to Native Americans. All students and recent immigrant families in particular, considered how families retain a sense of ethnic and cultural identity while still becoming American.

Recent testing data from the state assessment indicates significant improvement in the performance of seventh grade Native students at my middle school. Last year, students exceeded the state and district averages for Native Americans in all three tested areas: reading, math and writing. Building averages over the last three years have shown a shrinkage in the gap between the performance of Native and non-native students. In 2007, Native students scored 25 points lower in reading, 21.2 points lower in math and 23.2 points lower in writing than non-native students. 2009 data shows that the difference has dropped to 15.8 points in reading, 13.1 points in math, and 0.8 points in writing. This effort is really paying!

**Part 6- Next Steps**

Across the State teachers continue to integrate the tribal sovereignty curriculum into their courses. The remaining curriculum units are well underway, and the curriculum development team is starting to revise the existing units with feedback from the pilot

schools. But the project now stands at a crossroads. The original funding is gone. Finding ways to expand and deepen the initiative is now important. Some of this is an issue of design but it is also about funding so various questions are now at the forefront: Questions are being raised about where we can get ongoing funding, especially now when the State, indeed the entire nation, is in a deep recession? Who might be interested in this effort?? Should we go back to the Legislature, the federal government, foundations, the tribes? The tribes seem like an accessible first avenue of support, but is that the way to proceed? No other "under- represented group" in America has been asked to self-fund an effort to create a curriculum that included them. Still, keeping the effort going is important and the tribes have a vested interest in this work.

The project leaders are also considering what the next phase of the work should look like. Should they expand the numbers of schools into a statewide effort, or should they emphasize going deeper in the schools already on board? If funds were limited, perhaps they should emphasize reaching teachers at schools with large Indian populations, but thinking about how to reach the large urban populations was a perplexing challenge. What about evaluation of the effort and communication across schools? And what about the tribal efforts to develop local curriculum? Should that be a priority? Clearly, a plan with a budget is needed!

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