



Truth-Telling in Social Studies Instruction: A Native Lens

Competency

Educators will critically deconstruct, and challenge commonly held misconceptions and mistruths in social studies curriculum and instruction. They will also be able to teach accuracy and truth using AIAN-authored and vetted resources.

Key Method

Educators will evaluate an existing social studies unit with an Indigenous perspective, revise a unit using AIAN-authored resources, and demonstrate a culturally responsive understanding of historical events, geography, culture and society, civics and government, economics, as well as current and ongoing implications of colonization by creating a professional development workshop to present to peers.

Method Components

Common Stumbling Blocks to Truth

Read [The Seven Essential Understandings](#) through the lens of Indigenous groups in your area (if you don't know who they are, a Google search of your state +



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Indigenous peoples/Native Americans should be helpful). Consider some of the essential understandings and anti-bias concepts described in the article:

- Cultural diversity exists among different tribes
- Personal diversity exists among individual tribal members
- Indigenous cultures and tribal histories are unique, extensive, complex, and valid
- Tribes were not given their homelands or reservations; the federal government negotiated with tribes for land on a nation-to-nation basis
- American Indians are not extinct; for the most part, interactions between the U.S. government and indigenous people have not been benign or neutral
- American Indians' experiences of historical events frequently differ from those of non-Indians and are worthy of study
- Tribes are sovereign nations and have not relinquished their inherent sovereignty: tribes continue to exercise their sovereignty today

Guiding Questions:

Consider how these concepts fit (or do not) within most common social studies instruction and curriculum. What are the implications of omitting Indigenous perspectives in social studies instruction? Who benefits from framing social studies instruction through the dominant culture's perspective? Who is best served by limiting perspectives and mistruths?

Combatting Mistruths & Intentionally Teaching Truth

Read [Critical Orientations](#):

- PLACE: You are always on Indigenous lands
- PRESENCE and the PRESENT: Indigenous people are still here
- PERSPECTIVES: Indigenous perspectives can challenge Eurocentric curriculum
- POLITICS AND NATIONHOOD: "Indigenous Peoples are nations, not minorities" (Wilkins & Stark, 2010)
- POWER: Challenge power dynamics within curricula

Guiding Questions:

How do these concepts compare to frameworks for your current teaching methods? What might challenge you about these concepts? How might you integrate these concepts into your teaching practice?

Applying What You Know



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Read [Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources](#) and consider how your social studies teaching materials might reinforce bias and stereotypes such as those described in the article:

- Omission
- Avoidance of controversial issues
- Selectivity
- Tokenism
- Ethnocentric bias
 - Primitivism
 - Paternalism
- Value judgment
- Blatant inaccuracies
- Biased language
- Stereotyping
- Objectification
- Dehumanization
- Generic Indian identity
- Historicizing

Guiding Questions:

What is the "truth?" How do we know it's the truth? How do we teach the truth, especially in this political climate?

What are our responsibilities as social studies teachers in today's world? What are our responsibilities as members of various groups, with varying degrees of privilege and access, etc.?

How can we be both effective and compassionate as social studies teachers? How can we be both "employees of the State" and advocates for change/social justice?

Conclusions

Watch this TedTalk: "The truth behind 'We the People' - the three most misunderstood words in US history"

[Mark Charles: The truth behind 'We the People' - the three most misunderstood words in US history | TED Talk](#)

Guiding Questions:

What did "We the People" mean to the founding fathers? Who was excluded and how does that compare with the present-day implications for those communities? What steps can we as educators take to positively impact these communities and support their sovereignty?



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Optional Note/Recommendation:

You may wish to do further research on the tribes local to your community and share what you learn with your school and/or district leaders about the importance of establishing a relationship between the school and community. Utilize the [NIEA Building Relationships with Tribes guide](#) for a better understanding of how to establish authentic and respectful relationships.

For more support or recommendations, reach out to niea@niea.org.

Supporting Rationale and Research

A Critical Case Study of Selected U.S. History Textbooks from a Tribal Critical Race Theory Perspective <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss3/1/>

Beyond the Margins: Evaluating the Support for Multicultural Education Within Teachers' Editions of U.S. History Textbooks
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15210960.2015.1079491?casa_token=zklU2i5RTSAAAAAA:OCT0bGmbnGIrtQ5JYHS-75yPsJsxyyreNquW6Lf5Ba_4cR9HmiXpWi7Nkqd3BPcbIVdVkJ0ifln4CI4s

Hearing the Story: Critical Indigenous Curriculum Inquiry and Primary Source Representation in Social Studies Education
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00933104.2012.723242?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=utrs20>

Resources

Essential Readings

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)

[Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom](#)

[Five Critical Orientations to support Indigenous Studies Curriculum](#)

Classroom Resources



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[Home | Native Knowledge 360° - Interactive Teaching Resources](#)

[Honoring Tribal Legacies \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

[Honoring Tribal Legacies](#) (University of Oregon)

[Indian Education for All](#)

[Indigenous Authored Children's Book List](#)

[Indigenous Peoples Lesson Plans and Resources](#)

[Integrate American Indian Studies Resources - Wisconsin First Nations](#)

[Native-Land.ca](#)

[Oklahoma History from a Native American Perspective](#)

[PBS: We Shall Remain](#)

[Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State | OSPI](#)

[Teachings of Our Elders](#)

Further Readings

[Building Relationships With Tribes: A Native Process for Local Consultation under ESSA](#)

[If You Don't Know Treaties and Sovereignty, You Don't Know History](#)

[Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts - Margaret Kovach - Google Books](#)

 Seeing Our Native Students copy

['Starting the truth-telling': Northern Cheyenne woman's search for indigenous children's remains taking on new significance](#) from the Billings Gazette

 Talking Anti-Racism: Teaching Tolerance Interviews Tiffany Jewell

[Zinn Education Project](#)



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Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(250-500 words)

Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Should relate to the current needs of the educator.
2. Should relate to the current needs of the students (including demographic information etc.)
3. Should relate to what process the educator followed to learn the new skill

Please answer the following questions with your current classroom environment, curriculum, and students in mind:

1. Describe to the best of your recollection the content of any AIAN resources, curriculum, or education that was provided during your teacher training, professional developments, continuing education, or other means of development as a teacher. How prepared do you feel to teach truth to students regarding Indigenous perspectives in social studies? What do you need to grow in this area?
2. Who are your students and how might truth-telling impact your Indigenous and non-Indigenous students?

Passing: Response provides reasonable and accurate information that justifies the reason for choosing this micro-credential to address the specific needs of both the teacher and the student. A learning goal that clearly states what they hope to gain from earning this micro-credential.



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Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following three artifacts as evidence of your learning.

Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

Artifact 1: Unit Review with 10 Mistruths flagged + noted

Choose one unit of study from a social studies curriculum you have taught in the past or will teach in the future. Highlight/flag at least 10 mistruths such as those listed in the reading [Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources](#), and label what type of mistruth is being represented in each example.

You may want to scan or upload digital copies of your unit of study to digitally mark up using a PDF document editor, or you may want to make photocopies to physically mark up in pen and ink, and then scan and upload. Just be sure your annotations are legible and easy to read for the reviewers.

Artifact 2: Unit Revamp using Truth Telling Resources

Once you have identified the mistruth examples, rework the unit of study to accurately teach the revised truth-telling social studies unit. This may include research to find Indigenous-authored resources to support your chosen unit of study. For this artifact, you will need to upload:

- Two examples of specific lessons, worksheets, or texts in which you addressed the mistruths or lack of representation.
- The artifacts should include notes or documents such as texts or worksheets that demonstrate the changes in instruction that would be delivered to students.

Artifact 3: Reflection Summary Presentation Comparing Before/After

After teaching the revised unit of study using the truth-telling you have learned in this micro-credential, prepare a brief professional development workshop in the form of a PowerPoint or Google slides presentation with the following components. This is a 10-slide minimum:

- At least three slides showing/describing examples of different mistruths or absence of representation presented in your original unit of study
 - Ex. Westward Expansion taught as a proud opportunity for the growth and development of the nation (Manifest Destiny)
- One slide for each of the above three examples showing/describing how you would change/address it and why it is important to do so
 - Ex. Omission of Native American perspectives in teaching Westward Expansion is harmful because it neglects to address the impact of the genocide of millions of Indigenous peoples as a tactic to make way for white settlers



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- At least one slide, in conclusion, to explain why this is important work to you and your students

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Unit Review	Artifact includes copies of one unit of study with 10 notations of mistruths or absence of representation	Artifact includes copies of one unit of study with 5-9 notations of mistruths or absence of representation	Artifact includes copies of one unit of study with less than five notations of mistruths or absence of representation
Artifact 2: Unit Revamp	Artifact includes TWO lessons, worksheets, or texts that demonstrate changes for instruction that address any of the 10 mistruths or absence of representation	Artifact includes ONE lesson, worksheet, or text that demonstrate changes for instruction that address any of the 10 mistruths or absence of representation	Artifact is not complete or does address one of the 10 mistruths or absence of representation identified in Artifact 1.
Artifact 3: Professional Development Workshop	Artifact includes at least 10 slides which include three examples of mistruths or lack of representation and one example of addressing EACH of these. Artifact also includes a conclusion slide that summarizes the importance of the activity	Artifact includes at least eight slides, which include two examples of mistruths or lack of representation and one example of addressing EACH of these. Artifact also includes a conclusion slide that summarizes the importance of the activity	Artifact includes only one example of a mistruth or lack of representation and one example of addressing EACH of these. OR Artifact does not include a conclusion slide that summarizes the importance of the activity



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Part 3 Reflection

(~500 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe how truth-telling for AI/AN content in your social studies education practice impacts you as an educator. Why is it important for educators?
2. What are the implications of reimagining social studies education to reflect truth to students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous?
3. Identify your “why?” for truth-telling and let it drive your will to continue to do transformative work, even when it is difficult. Who will benefit from your continued growth in truth-telling and in what ways? How will you persevere in truth-telling when obstacles present themselves?
4. Additionally, review your content area and grade-level state standards then describe the presence or absence of Indigenous perspectives. How does this impact the urgency and priority of truth-telling?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.

NEA acknowledges the [National Indian Education Association](#) for its review and endorsement of this micro-credential.



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