

Introduction

Education is most effective when it is relevant to the community, students, and teachers. In Brentwood Bay, Canada and Chiapas, México communities and teachers are working to improve their member's lives through Indigenous education. Indigenous education in these respective places is created from community values which centers the history and current relationship with the community and land (WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council.) Both communities employ community members to provide education so that students have access to learn cultural knowledge and their language (School for Chiapas.) Additionally, Indigenous education is extremely important for non-Indigenous educators and students. It is used as a tool for decolonization because it deconstructs racism and privilege; two main factors that benefit the colonizer groups (Denis, 58.)



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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to research the values of the WSÁNEĆ people and the Maya people, in the state of Chiapas, and how these values create their education systems. In both multicultural countries Indigenous education is important because it equally values Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching (Marr, 8.) Monolingual and monoculture education systems fail properly education the multicultural countries (Lewis and Vaughan, 182.) Today, multiculturalism is integrated into education as celebrations and traditions without the knowledge and history of the people. Indigenous education values history and knowledge of the many groups along with valuing celebrations and traditions (Friedel, 11.) Indigenous education integrates cross cultural work; it is a tool at anti-racism work and decolonization because it challenges the three most socialized assumptions by the colonizer group that are: "race does not matter, everyone has equal opportunity, and individual acts and intentions can secure innocence (Denis, 54.)



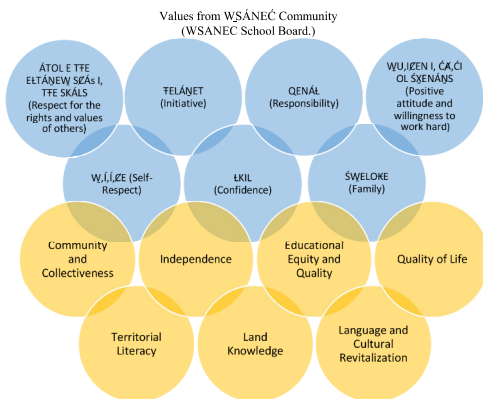
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Indigenous Education as Decolonization

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Decolonization Diagram



Shared Learnings

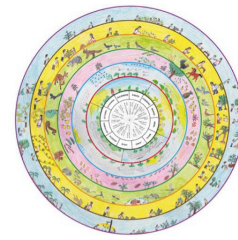
- Students can access their culture and therefore their identity (Spillet and Donovan.) Communities' employ their own members as teachers so that classes can be taught in their own languages. Education is held on the land and which allows students to have a broader variety of learning (Nigh and Bertely, 5.)
- Indigenous education develops a better understanding for the lands we are on; the stories provide this understanding; for example, The Legend of LAU, WELNEW, as told by YELKÁTTE (late Dr. Earl Claxton) (WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council.) Therefore, territorial literacy promotes healthy living and a knowledge of the land that only one with cultural experience can have (Nigh and Bertely, 4.)
- Two-eyed seeing, a term created by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, values and uses the strengths of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of being (Marr, 8.) Indigenous education creates strong relationships within the community since Elders, teachers and young people work together to learn and produce what is necessary for community (Nigh and Bertely, 11.)
- Non-Indigenous communities can take part in reconciliation through the understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories (Marr, 9.) Indigenous education presents multicultural learning in a way that examines the of history, privilege, racism, and oppression of each cultural group while honoring culture and tradition (Friedel, 10.)
- Indigenous education is a tool for anti-racism work (Marr, 10.) Indigenous education challenges societal assumptions held by the colonizer group (Friedel, 10.)



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Conclusion

The people of the WSÁNEĆ School Board and the Maya people in the state of Chiapas, Mexico built their education systems from their communities' values. These values allow for students to feel safe, and for learning spaces to be culturally appropriate and relevant which makes for successful education. Rooting these community values into the education systems allows the access of identity through the promotion of culture, ensuring that culture is not appropriated, but understood by all. These values contribute to a decolonization of societies because they challenge the colonizer education system, individual and collective social assumptions, and therefore, structural racism.



Calendar (Nigh and Bertely, 11)

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