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**Students in this moment of time**

Thanks for being here. As the conference is commemorating Wounded Knee, we thought we would look at the research around social studies standards and teacher preparation as they relate to the teaching of Native American History in high schools. Kellian looked at Minnesota Teacher Preparation programs and Colin looked at Wisconsin. We will start with a brief overview of some of the issues young people confront now as context. Many the students in high schools in schools are anxious and depressed, with good reason. In *Why American Teens are so Sad*, Thompson (April, 2022) writes, “more than one in four girls reported that they had seriously contemplated attempting suicide during the pandemic, which was twice the rate of boys... Nearly half of LGBTQ teens said they had contemplated suicide during the pandemic, compared with fourteen percent of their heterosexual peers.” Thompson posits social media, clickbait news, and lack of authentic social relations as some of the culprits. (Thompson, 2022). Almost half of American teens fear becoming victim of gun violence or a mass shooting. A survey of more than 4000 people indicated almost half have somewhat easy access to guns. • Approximately 25% of youth have experienced an active shooter lockdown. • Youth know, on average, at least one person who has been injured or killed by a gun. (Southern Poverty Law Center et al, 2023) Young women worry about being the victim of rape. Sixty percent of young people are very or extremely worried about climate change and almost half said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning (Schechter, 2023). Despair and lack of hope follow.

It doesn't help that world finances are dire. Most young people surveyed feel “unprepared to finance their futures” (Junior Achievement, 2022). They feel like it is going to be harder for them to have families and buy homes. *The Economic Policy Institute* reports the minimum wage in 2021 was worth 34 percent less than

1968 (Lewis, 2022). Young people know that they will be amassing college debt and credit card debt and are not convinced that they'll be able to make a financial future as stable or better than their parents.

The American Psychological Association recently put out an *Advisory*, and after hedging social media's relationship to depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation, they urged parents to be *aware* of the amount of time young people are using social media. In addition, kids should be educated about signs of problematic use, strategies for checking for accuracy of the information they access, how to recognize structural racism and critique racist messages, and finally, how to safely communicate about mental concerns in the digital age (*APA Advisory*, May 2023).

Personally, they are victims of unwanted sex and bullying. The Centers for Disease Control (2023) reports that about one fifth of female students are impacted by interpersonal sexual violence, this in a time when many states are legislating women's access to abortions. One quarter of queer kids are bullied in person and a third are electronically bullied. American Indian or Alaska Native students were more likely than students from nearly every other racial and ethnic group to have ever been forced to have sex. Survival sex is common (the exchange of sexual favors for basic needs, like food, clothing, and shelter), with a Canadian study finding that transgender youth are three times more likely to engage in survival sex than cisgendered youth. (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2022). "Nearly sixty percent of female students and nearly seventy percent of LGBTQ+ students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Ten percent of female students and more than twenty percent of LGBTQ+ students have attempted suicide. (CDC, 2023)

But for others, those experiencing food insecurity, kids without mindful parents, even kids without a home, things are difficult. If you don't know where you're going to sleep, things like school and social studies classes can seem less important. The racial and ethnic groups that experienced the highest prevalence of unstable housing were Native Hawaiian, Others were Pacific Islander (10.0%), Native American (7.9%), and Black (5.1%) students, and if you're queer the odds of you being homeless is twice as high (McKinnon, 2023) Some of the other consequences of housing insecurity or homelessness are health issues, mental health issues,

suicide ideation, and *lots* of queer kids are kicked out of their homes. Fourteen percent of LGBTQ youth attempted suicide in the past year (Trevor Report, 2023), Twenty-six percent of homeless LGBTQ youth report being forced out of their homes solely because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2022).

Do young people trust that there is someone who has their back? Short answer, NO. They do not. Not the police—” White Americans trust their local police by a net 11 points (55% trust, 43% do not); while Hispanics distrust their police by a net ten points (44% trust, 54% do not); and Black Americans’ distrust is a net 34 points (32% trust, 66% do not)” (Harvard Youth Poll, 2022) Their neighbors? Not really. Young adults are much less likely than those 65 and older to say they have confidence in the American people to do what they can to help those in need (53% vs. 80%); work together to solve community problems (52% vs. 71%); treat others with respect (48% vs. 74%); accept election results no matter who wins (44% vs. 66%); and reconsider their views after learning new information (40% vs. 61%). (Gramlich, 2019). Only a third trust the Supreme Court to do the right thing (Harvard Youth Poll, 2022).

So, these young people are the audience for the history classes in their social studies coursework in high school. To give an example of one specific school, I will touch on one of the high schools in Mankato. 77 % White, 8 percent Black, 6 percent Latino. Fourteen percent Special Education, 32 percent free and reduced lunch, 4 percent English Language Learner, .5 percent homeless. The students of color in Minnesota are more likely to experience in school or off premises suspensions. There *are* no generic students. In our community, we have Somali, Hmong, new refugees from Myanmar, Lakota, Ojibwe, LGBT and trans kids, and kids with disabilities, both visible and invisible. Besides the demographic data, there are the ones whose stories aren’t counted and if you don’t count it, it doesn’t get addressed. Some kids have supportive parents who read to them, have dinner with them, monitor their homework, play with them in the back yard. Then there are the kids who are worried about getting to school without getting gunned down, whose parents are working three jobs, who have to help the nuclear family or the extended family out by getting a job themselves.

And then there's the differences in technology access. About a fifth of Minnesota, in March of 2020, as the pandemic unfurled, had no internet access. Students with learning disabilities, with behavioral disabilities, got left behind. "School districts did not have the capacity to send one-to-one paraprofessionals or shared paraprofessionals home" (Parr et al, 2022). Minnesota's academic achievement gap is often lamented and the subject of many studies. The Latest NAEP MN results showed dramatically different 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores, 32 percent lower for Blacks, 27 lower for Hispanics, males worse than females, poor kids worse than others. Despite the lamentations and the studies and the plans, the academic gap between students of color and students living in poverty in Minnesota, have not improved since 1998. (NAEP (National Association of Educational Procurement) MN, 2023). History scores have trended downwards for years. Detailed results can be found at the *Nation's Report Card*, but despite the fact that sixty-eight percent of eighth-grade students report taking a class mainly focused on U.S. history in grade 8, Fifty-five percent of eighth-grade students have teachers whose primary responsibility is teaching U.S. history, and higher-performing students more frequently have assignments that ask them to use several historical sources and study cause and effect in history class, (Nations Report Card, 2023) students don't know much about history. Just one example of this is reported in the Southern Poverty Center's *Teaching Hard History* (2018): Only 8 percent of high school seniors surveyed can identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War; Two-thirds (68 percent) don't know that it took a constitutional amendment to formally end slavery.

In addition, poor reading and critical thinking skills make it difficult for even the most ambitious high school teachers to help students wrestle with difficult and complex concepts. The latest NAEP study (2022) found that about two-thirds of fourth and eighth graders in the United States are reading at a basic or below level. (Laskowski, 2023) The pandemic made it worse. Learning loss is still being researched, and every state was different in terms of how they handled the pandemic. One study found that "By 2022, the typical student in the poorest districts had lost three-quarters of a year in math, more than double the decline of students in the richest districts. The declines in reading scores were half as large as in math and were similarly much larger in

poor districts than rich districts. The pandemic left students in low-income and predominantly minority communities even further behind their peers in richer, whiter districts than they were”(Kane et al, 2023).

## **History in the Social Studies Curriculum**

Most social studies programs now require several history courses and one or more each of geography, political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology and maybe an ethnic studies or gender and women’s studies course. Progressives’ philosophy when the first Social Studies curriculum was envisioned in 1916 was a means to a path to good citizenship for all comers and a way to Americanize new immigrants. This is the period when most states had fairly recently started requiring young people to go to school (Library of Congress, n.d.). A lot of students left school after the sixth grade to help on the farm or in the factory to help support their families. In 1916, the National Education Association Committee on the Social Studies recommended 4 history classes--- Ancient, European, U.S. and something like Civics (St. Jarre, 2008). In 1935, historians and social studies groups for the first time met separately. Educational psychologists started being part of the mix to determine not only the what, not that the what didn’t remain controversial, but the how to teach in ways appropriate to developmental stages of young people. In the 1960s, the dilemma in many ways became clearer: ”Is a "good citizen" one who knows the names of famous Americans, the dates and locations of famous events, and the words of famous documents and orations? Or is a “good citizen" one who 'can identify, understand and work to solve the problems that face our increasingly diverse nation and interdependent world ” (Atwood, 1982, p. 10)?

The Bradley Commission, in 1987, concluded that what teachers needed to convey was: cultural diffusion; human interaction and the environment; values, beliefs, and institutions; conflict and cooperation; comparisons of developments such as feudalism or slavery; and patterns of social and political interaction.” The last set of the National Council of Social Studies Standards in 2010 established one of the goals as “build critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills to become engaged citizens”(NCSS, 2010, b.). And their vision was for “ambitious social studies teachers is to know their subject matter well and see within it the

potential to enrich their students' lives; and know their students well, which includes the kinds of lives their students lead, how these youngsters think about and perceive the world, and that they are far more capable than they and most others believe them to be" (NCSS, 2018).

There are shelves of books in MSU's library about how to teach social studies well...lesson plans that recommend active learning, problem-solving, and play-acting. There are a million ways to engage students in questioning their past. But it's easier, and less time consuming, to use a brightly colored and well marketed textbook with pre-made glossaries and exams. Louwen criticizes the textbooks—too literally heavy, too many “main points,” too much altogether: “They portray the past as a simpleminded morality play. “Be a good citizen” is the message that textbooks extract from the past. “You have a proud heritage. Be all that you can be. After all, look at what the United States has accomplished.” While there is nothing wrong with optimism, it can become something of a burden for students of color, children of working-class parents, girls who notice the dearth of female historical figures, or members of any group that has not achieved socioeconomic success. The optimistic approach prevents any understanding of failure other than blaming the victim. No wonder children of color are alienated. After a thousand pages, bland optimism gets pretty off-putting for everyone (Loewen, 2018, p. 6).

In his *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Loewen presents an alternative: students of “successful American history courses know basic social facts about the United States and understand the historical processes that have shaped these facts. They can locate themselves in the social structure, and they know some of the societal and ideological forces that have influenced their lives. Such Americans are ready to become citizens, because they understand how to effect change in our society. They know how to check out historical assertions and are suspicious of archetypal “truths.” They can rebut the charge that history is irrelevant, because they realize ways that the past influences the present, including their own present” (Loewen, 2018, p. 362). What an optimist!

“Successful” American social studies program varies state by state, and right now there are lots of state governments concocting off the wall standards of success. Florida is mandating teaching the “benefits of slavery to the slaves,” but right here in South Dakota, the overwhelming majority of educators charged with teaching social studies rejected the standards that were in fact, adopted in what appears to be a problematic process. Considered a “disaster” by the Director of South Dakota School Boards, the standards rely on memorization, and excludes the subjects included in the *Oceti Sakowin: Essential Understandings and Standards* (topics such as Native sovereignty, resilience, land, kinship, from the Seven Council Fires) adopted in 2018. The process and the outcome were harmful to students, Native and others. While proponents argued that students need heroes, the fact is that young people hate being lied to, especially by their teachers. In Wisconsin, especially, we will see a good faith attempt to incorporate Native History into the curriculum. In Minnesota, we will see how easy it is for pre-service teachers to never have any education about their state’s history, much less the Native History that is pivotal for the past and the present.

Montana’s *Indian Education for All* will be referenced, and the study, “Investigating Curricular Policy as a tool to Dismantle the Master’s House” is well worth a read. The essential understandings that underpinned this effort included making sure students were aware of the diversity of the tribal Nations, the diversity of individuals, spirituality as central to tribal government and practices, federal policies, and the disconnect from the histories related to the children of tribal members and the stories they hear in school”(Stanton et al., 2018). Stanton’s research indicated that both teachers and pre-service teachers needed development activities for self-reflection. Montana has a rich storehouse of curricular materials, as does Wisconsin and Minnesota. Preservice teachers felt they needed modeling in both their pedagogical preparation AND their content preparation. Montana’s Indian Education for All was fed out in “bits and pieces” and non-native teacher candidates “became stressed about creating meaningful lessons and the anger and stress is placed on the Native students in the class” (Stanton et al., 739, p. 2018). Pre-service teachers thought that teachers were incorporating IEFA solely as an additive that made “both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students feel that IEFA is something extra that deters

attention from the “real” curriculum” (Stanton et al., 2018, p. 741). The real curriculum being teaching the standard, colonial-settler narrative of someone arriving to an empty land.

So, the standards, the teaching curriculum must not only perhaps mandate THAT Native American history should be taught, but it must also include HOW it must be taught. Margaret Bérci and Bryant Griffith authored an interesting essay about social studies from a hermeneutic perspective. Hermes being a god responsible for “transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp” (Bérci et al, 2006, p. 46) They argue that the teacher, in the mode of “Hermeneutic catalyst, consists of acting as mediator through which inquiry takes place; clarifying the inquiry for the students; and contributing to the intellectual grow of that student by providing information, comment, analysis and synthesis designed to increase knowledge and understanding needed for effective decision-making (Bérci et al., 2006, p. 58) They note the difficulties of having inquiry-based teaching when No Child Left Behind (now supplanted by Every Student Succeeds Act) marginalizes courses, including history and civics, which require students to be assessed by written essays, and other more active teaching strategies such as role-playing. Again, the reverse engineering of assessment means teaching to the test, which exercises in memorization and regurgitation of lists of bits of information, not thinking through history. It’s always been my contention that studying history keeps you humble. It is virtually impossible to truly understand something that happened in the past. Personalities, geography, technology, weather, timing, greed, sacrifice--there are so many elements at play that must be examined to begin to understand the dynamics that resulted in residential schools, or missing and exploited indigenous women, or sovereignty.

### **Minnesota Social Studies Standards and Teacher Preparation: An Examination of Five Programs**

MN students must complete standards and course numbers, including those students with unique learning needs. Standards are supposed to prepare students for careers, college, & civic life; build equity, define state requirements, shape design of curricula. The Social Studies standards must first be issued as a document that opens it for public opinion. The current draft lists: citizenship, economics, geography, U.S. & World



History. Based partially on the National framework, it seeks to improve students' abilities to develop queries, apply disciplinary tools, evaluate and use evidence, and communicate conclusions. The approved Minnesota Social Studies Draft asks teachers to provide students with instruction on Change, Continuity and Context; Historical perspectives; Historical Sources and Evidence; Causation and Argumentation; and Connecting Past and Present. The Minnesota Social Studies Standards theoretically compel students to: understand the facts, concepts, principles, and perspectives that shape social studies; apply learning to complex situations and contexts; think critically about important issues and communicate their findings and engage in the processes of problem solving and discipline-based inquiry.

Many changes came about this summer. Minnesota teachers renewing their license must now undergo training about Native American history and culture, a poll that came out the last week of August asked teachers what they need to accomplish that. . The Legislature passed a law this year requiring training for K-12 teachers to include "cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Minnesota Tribal Nations," in order to renew their license. The requirement goes into effect in January. 1. (Griffith, 2023)

Legislation was passed this summer (HF 1502) to include Ethnic Studies in the State Social Studies Standards, as well. This means that by 2026-27, all high schools across the state will offer an Ethnic Studies course. The proposal will make ethnic studies part of the needed *three and one-half credits of social studies, encompassing at least United States history, geography, ethnic studies, government and citizenship, world history, and economics* sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in social studies. Those studies will focus on Identity, Resistance, and Ways of Knowing.

There are always concerns when curriculum is being legislated, and the Minnesota ethnic studies debate included folks writing letters to the editor complaining that including ethnic studies would lead to "conflict between students and teachers in promoting a leftist activism rather than academics." (Campuzano, 2022). The

Minnesota Parent's Alliance wrote "Ideology has replaced the basic factual knowledge students need to be informed citizens." Never a forward step without a reactionary one backwards.

Who creates the standards and how is student learning measured? The measurement reverse engineers both the teaching and the learning. Therein lies the conundrum. As one frustrated teacher wrote, "the problem, is not simply the nature of the content of the authorizing entity. It is that teachers are expected to engage in potentially mutually exclusive endeavors. They are to deepen their own and their students' knowledge, sometimes by adding new, counter-hegemonic content, while increasing student achievement as measured by standardized tests" (View, 2012, p.59). View goes on to write about standardized tests that aren't good for much except they are machine-readable, and the previous educational experiences that should be preparing students to critically think and to write is insufficient for current high school students dealing with complex historical realities. She compares teaching history with the impossibility of measuring the depth of the ocean with a six-inch ruler (View, 2022). One article summarized the problem:

Under the constraint of state testing policies, teachers are pressured to use more expository teaching methods to cover content tested on the state exam than student-centered activities like discussion, role play, and cooperative learning. Teachers heavily rely on textbooks, lectures, focus on memorization and recitation, teach literacy skills, and give students formative tests that match the format of state social studies tests for effective test preparation. (Hong et al., 2020, pp 74-75)

When a Native American perspective is perceived and treated as an "add-on," "when added at all, then the issue is increased (Stanton et al., p. 739, 2018). One study of an earnest and well-intentioned attempt of *integrating* Native American History, Montana's Indian Education for All, is disheartening. Despite 40 years of struggling to mainstream Indigenous history and current concerns, despite Native creators of curriculum, there were seen to be still great needs for preservice and current teachers to have a *great* deal more development, coaching, and time to reflect on how to teach hard history (Stanton et al., 2018). Pre-service teachers in that study reported needing better resources, better modeling, and better strategies for not putting Native kids in the

hot seat for difficult conversations. It is important to include various voices both to be fair and to be relevant but that might mean ditching the textbooks. Students when they see themselves reflected in their history courses enjoy it more, see it as more pertinent. One practitioner study, where students' assignments were tied to their histories reported that students were able to make sense of their parents' narratives when they conflicted with the textbook's narrative "He said my class often agrees with his fathers' (version of Mexican history) and this helps him give evidence to back up what his father says." (Martell, 2013, p. 78) On the other hand, if the teacher treats it as an add on, add Native Americans and stir, it's not good for anyone.

## **Minnesota**

The Dakota Conflict is too complex to explain in a few sentences but is one of the defining series of events marking Indian-White relations in Minnesota. Suffice it to say, that, as the late great William Lass put it, "It is difficult to separate fear and prejudice from the economic motives" (Lass, 1963). Those hanged were only the beginning of the deaths. Those transported from Fort Snelling, including more than 600 children, had flimsy tents and scarce agricultural equipment when they were moved down the Mississippi and up the Missouri; thirteen died en route, seventy-seven by July of that same year, and more as the impossible situation unfolded in bad land unsuitable for agriculture. Most eventually were moved to Nebraska. Lass wrote, "That winter, the demands of the state government and people of Minnesota had thus been met; the Indians had been effectively removed from the boundaries of civilization. In the process they had also been removed inadvertently perhaps from the boundaries of concern for human life" (Lass, 1963). Settlers/Colonizers came to what they interpreted to be an empty land, according to the history texts I used as a kid. As Harris wrote in "Were the Americas a vast untouched wilderness when Europeans arrived?" Natives and settlers had such different concepts of land, Europeans thinking that resources were commodities, to be bought and sold and making fortunes for someone. Since the natives weren't doing that. "It was in the interest of European colonists to justify taking land by asserting that the Indigenous people weren't using or improving it" (Harris, 2018, p. 95)

At the hanging itself, thousands watched and afterwards, “some spectators mingled among the bodies to cut off pieces of clothing, beadwork, ornaments, jewelry, and hair for souvenirs” (Clemmons, 2019, p. 36). “In 1879, Minnesota Historical Society placed Little Crow’s remains on display at the Minnesota State Capitol. Only in 1971 was the body returned to the descendants (Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.). In the years following their removal, materials to write and send letters were a top priority, even though the news shared was often tragedies of starvation, illness, and death of family members. Later, boarding schools were established. The whole country did a sweep of children, taking them, sometimes violently, from their families. There were 16 to 24 Boarding Schools in Minnesota. “Methods of discipline at Minnesota boarding schools were harsh. Some schools had cells or dungeons where students were confined for days and given only bread and water. One forced a young boy to dress like a girl for a month as a punishment; another cut a rebellious girl’s hair as short as a boy’s. Minnesota boarding schools recorded epidemics of measles, influenza, blood poisoning, diphtheria, typhoid, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, pneumonia, trachoma, and mumps, which swept through overcrowded dormitories” (Lajimodiere, 2022) Some of the consequences of the boarding schools is outlined in *Shattered Hearts*:

“The large-scale removal of Native children from their families and communities to boarding schools and adoptive homes, which prevented intergenerational transmission of language and cultural norms for community and family roles and individual responsibilities to family and community— The widespread physical and sexual abuse of Native children in boarding schools, which significantly impacted their ability to parent their own children in healthy ways; Prohibitions against practicing traditional spirituality and participating in ceremonies, which impeded grieving of losses and healing from trauma; Urban relocation initiatives that failed to provide the promised resources, leaving Native families in dire poverty and isolated from the community support that had been present on the reservation” (Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, 2009, p. 100).

The intergenerational trauma still reverberates, like a stone thrown in a lake, with every widening circles of the damage done. The American Indian Movement, founded in 1968 in Minneapolis, made inroads into the civil rights issues of Natives. However, of the more 60,000 natives who now live in Minnesota, thirty-one percent live below the federal poverty level, 10 percent lack health insurance, and they are ten times more likely to be in foster care compared to white children. Of self-reporting Indians in Minnesota, one in four will drop out of

high school. *Minnesota Measures* reports that college enrollment is about a third lower than the statewide average. There were 721 missing Indigenous women and men reported in 2022 alone. In Minnesota, American Indians are twenty-six times more likely to be homeless and you can visually see the encampments if you are ever in Minneapolis around Franklin and Hiawatha. Substance Abuse is a huge problem. So is alcoholism.

But there is resistance, persistence, and hope. The University of Minnesota is studying a report that urges the U of M to recognize 'harm and genocide' against Native Americans in its history. A new museum (housed in the old Enbridge Office) will have exhibits from Standing Rock and other Indigenous-led movements to protect the water (Connelly, 2023). The Water Protectors are triumphing. Native languages are being taught at universities and in nests (Katona, 2023) with young children in a natural setting, instead of an academic one. With a theme of “Forgive Everyone Everything,” Reconciliation Park in Mankato was dedicated in 1997 to promote healing between Dakota and non-Dakota peoples in Mankato. The head of the Department of Interior is, at last, a Native American: Deb Haaland, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna and a 35th generation New Mexican. Minnesota’s Lieutenant Governor, Peggy Flanagan, is a citizen of the White Earth Nation. Minnesota now has an Office for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives, headed by a tribal member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community. Minnesota Historical Society has trained more than 100 fellows since launching in 2011 in the Native American Museum Fellowship program, representing fifty-three tribal nations (Minnesota Historical Society, 2023). There is a National Indigenous People’s Day. The Minnesota Department of Education offers teachers online and in person restorative circle training, which include Restorative Mindfulness and Energy Care; Nurturing Professional Wellness; and Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community. Natives are making strides in creating their own futures as they are still with us (not, as some people might think, historical oddities living in black and white photos in tipis) and have agency—They are persistently and actively working on protecting the earth we all share and helping their communities.

It is important that social studies teachers are made aware of not only the changes, but the strategies employed to make them happen. Through the *agency* of Natives, through the demanding work of Natives’ wrestling with intergenerational trauma to create, whole cloth, the groups, the research, the solutions to the

many issues that confront them, change is being actively and successfully pursued. Future teachers will need to be able to address this history with their social studies students.

### **Teacher Preparation**

How are social studies standards reflected in teacher preparation? The American Historical Association writes in its *Guidelines for the Preparation of History Teachers* that future teachers must be given “substantive experience framing historical problems, analyzing historical evidence and sources, and using their analysis of evidence to construct historical narratives, explanations, and/or arguments” (AHA, 2016). The Council of the Social Studies Standards states that teacher candidates **use knowledge of learners** to plan and implement relevant and responsive pedagogy, create collaborative and interdisciplinary learning environments, and prepare learners to be informed advocates for an inclusive and equitable society. (National Council of Social Studies, 2018). So, one would hope to see in the coursework to prepare history teachers the means of understanding a little bit, at least, the lived experiences of the kids in the seats-- Indians, LGBT, Somali, Sudanese, Hispanic, Urban, Rural, Disabled, etc. Is that visible in the curriculum of the Social Studies programs examined? No. First, we must acknowledge that a list of required classes doesn't lead to a full understanding of what students learn during their time in college. They learn from each other's experiences, from their choices for classes outside the requirements, they learn from their own personal readings. In addition, classes are the magic alchemy between teacher, readings, assignments, and students—some amazing, others less valuable. Teacher expectations, clarity, lecture style, active learning strategies, assignments all intermingle with students' interests, willingness to learn, other commitments, and preparation before coming to college in terms of reading, critical thinking, and writing. Faculty members' willingness to assign big papers and give prompt and thoughtful feedback is not contractual. Also, there seems to be a disconnect between teacher preparation and standards, evidenced by the recent poll of teachers asking what they needed to teach the new to MN ethnic studies and Native materials. No mention of a sister poll going out to teacher trainers.

### **College Programs examined:**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato's** curriculum includes general education created for statewide transferability, graduation requirements, and major requirements. The graduation requirements have students dig deeper into writing and diversity. Students who are looking at becoming social studies teachers can “double count” general education and social studies classes: Thus a program has 6 required courses (including the in-service) and six credits each from Europe, “Third World,” & US, but the choice is reduced of the general education offerings as they are required by the social studies degree: Anthropology, Political Science, Geography, and Psychology. Two American history-- pre and post reconstruction, one world history, and some choices for the other three history classes. The “common core” includes 2 Economics, 1 US Geography, one upper-level Political Science course, and 1 Sociology course. They can choose ONE course from between Ethnic Studies, and Gender and Women's Studies Courses. If a student was diligently looking to understand Minnesota's history, there is one (452), but it's not clear how often it is taught OR if it includes much about Natives or the more recent peoples and how they came to be here, such as the Hispanic, Somali, Sudanese, etc. Since we have an American Indigenous Studies program, the savvy student might look to take a number of classes offered, including those on sovereignty, education, American Indian Women, sacred landscapes, etc. I don't know that a teacher from MSU's Social Studies program would be well equipped to understand Minnesota's history, much less the Dakota Conflict and its aftermath, the boarding schools, the urban thrust, AIM or the Water Protectors just from completing the social studies mandated program. Besides the content, it's clear from multiple studies that neither pre-service nor full time teachers feel prepared to teach young people the complex stories of the natives in their midst, both the hard history that is the story of the last 300 years or the complex realities of generational trauma and its impact on a people.

**St Thomas** is a Catholic University, and its core curriculum reflects that: Besides English, Language, Natural Science, Quantitative Analysis, Arts, and Social Sciences, there are historical analysis requirements and Philosophy & Theology. St. Thomas prepares future social studies teachers with both the requisite educational classes and Government, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology and Sustainability as well as one Economics course. The required history classes include World History (2), Early America (1), Other History (1

course from Latin America, or Middle East, or East Asian, Chinese, Ottoman Empire), 1 Geography class, plus twenty-four credits in History. While they have a number of interesting courses, including slavery, women, empires, military history, and a Minnesota history course, and includes a land acknowledgement-- “the University of St. Thomas occupies the ancestral and current homelands of the Dakota people. By actively committing ourselves to truth telling, relationship building, wound healing, and justice seeking, we humbly offer our respect to the Dakota Elders and people, to Indigenous communities beyond the Dakota, and to the sacredness of “the land where the waters reflect the skies” (Land Acknowledgement), there are no Native American history courses. History courses on Brazil and Mexico are offered, but nothing on Native Americans.

**The University of Minnesota at Duluth** Students will learn the value of collaboration, reflection, empowerment, and social justice. Through coursework on teaching about and with American Indians, as well as the role of diversity in American education; candidates develop an understanding of working with all learners.” Their lineup of courses includes Economics, Geography, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology and History. Their blocks require ALL their students to take a class on Teaching Diverse Students AND a class on Teaching Indigenous Students. The electives include American Indian Women and Ojibwe History and Modern Culture. Brian McInnes, an enrolled Ojibwe tribal member and faculty member, argues that the program is successful when “honestly confronting, deconstructing, then rebuilding negative elements of history and educational policy and practice into progressive ways forward. If educational systems were in part responsible for generating negative beliefs about Native American peoples, or helping decimate Indigenous languages, then schools can also be a source for helping restore the integrity of American Indian identity and languages both” (McInnes, 2017, p. 150).

**St Cloud State** unusually has a Center—“the SCSU American Indian Center, established in 1993 with outreach activities and educational, social, and cultural programming. This is a gathering place to connect with other Natives and allies to relax, network, study, inquire, collaborate, participate in activities, and strengthen our community The AIC is a great place to UNLEASH INDIGENEITY and explore intersections of cultural



identities while striving for a healthy balance between school, work, family and community involvement.” They have a tribal resources webpage and a program, a minor in American Indian Studies. Two of the required educational sequences are focused on responsive teaching: Education 460 “Cultural Responsive Pedagogy” and “Education 441, Integrating Theory and Practice: Inclusive and Responsive Teaching for All”. Sixty-eight credits are required for the Social Studies Sequence, including Economics, Geography, Literacy, Psychology, Political Science, several history courses (7—including a Minnesota history course), and Ethnic Studies 310 American Indians in the Social Science Curriculum, as well as a class on US Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration.). One of their courses examines national and state standards as it relates to the work the pre-service teachers will do.

**Bemidji State University** has an American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) “This is a place for everyone to learn and gather in the rich culture and tradition of the Anishinaabe people in our area and around the world. The AIRC works hard to support American Indian Students at BSU and connect them with local resources, people, and opportunities to enrich their professional and personal lives.” Because Bemidji State University is located between the three largest American Indian reservations in the State of Minnesota (Leech Lake is 15 miles south, Red Lake is 30 miles north and White Earth is 50 miles west of Bemidji), we have access to a large number of fluent speakers, spiritual leaders, Indian educators and cultural offerings that are all within a reasonable distance to the university. The AIRC is also home to the first Indian Studies program in Minnesota and the first collegiate Ojibwe language program in the world. They have rich resources. The social studies programs require Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology, 2 American History, 2 World History, 1 Minnesota History, then students can choose between a number of history courses, including place-based and history-methods based courses. However, at Bemidji, their other coursework COULD include tribal justice coursework, Indigenous Sustainability Studies, food sovereignty federal Indian law, Indigenous Women Writers, Native Americans and the United States, Indigenous Lifeways, and Tribal Government and Leadership. Students can minor in the Ojibwe language or get certification in Ojibwe.

## Pattern Recognition

Most students who graduated from Minnesota’s social studies programs will not have been introduced to their own state history, which would, if historically accurate, include Native American history. Not only the damage done by colonialism but their strategies for overcoming generational trauma. Motivations for colonialism, whether they be greed for land, ignorance, prejudice, and cruelty, can only be seen through a glass darkly. The realities—stolen land, stolen artifacts, killings, the taking and display of the remains of natives, the forced sterilizations, the disappeared and sexually trafficked women, the academic achievement gaps, the homelessness, the substance abuse, are all wholly apparent in *any* historically accurate narrative of the Natives in Minnesota.

Natives themselves, through their own AGENCY, agency missing in most historical narratives I grew up with, are achieving the resurgence of agricultural practices, languages, healing, policies, and procedures to help change the realities for both reservation and urban Natives. This is the heritage of every Minnesota kid.

Social Studies STANDARDS, now under review will require more attention to Native American history. Also, the law requiring Ethnic Studies will require that social studies pre-service teachers start to wrestle with identity, resistance, and ways of knowing. These are steps in the right direction. However, several studies point to the difficulty of unlearning racism and preconceived notions of Native Americans in general and the ways of teaching Native American history specifically without extensive time to think, reflect, examine personal biases, and concoct strategies that don’t put Native American kids in the hotseat during classroom lessons.

Teacher Preparation needs a more exhaustive study than attempted here. Not only what courses, but the content, the teaching strategies, the assignments, the assessment procedures are worthy of study. Having said that, it is clear that understanding Native American history isn’t a priority in Minnesota’s teacher preparation programs. And while not examined, I did not see any coursework that delved into Minnesota’s rich history of

the various peoples --Somalis, Hispanics, Russians, Indians, Hmong, and LGBT people that make Minnesota such a rich tapestry of cultures. Maybe it will come with the Ethnic Studies requirement.

## **Concluding Remarks & Resources**

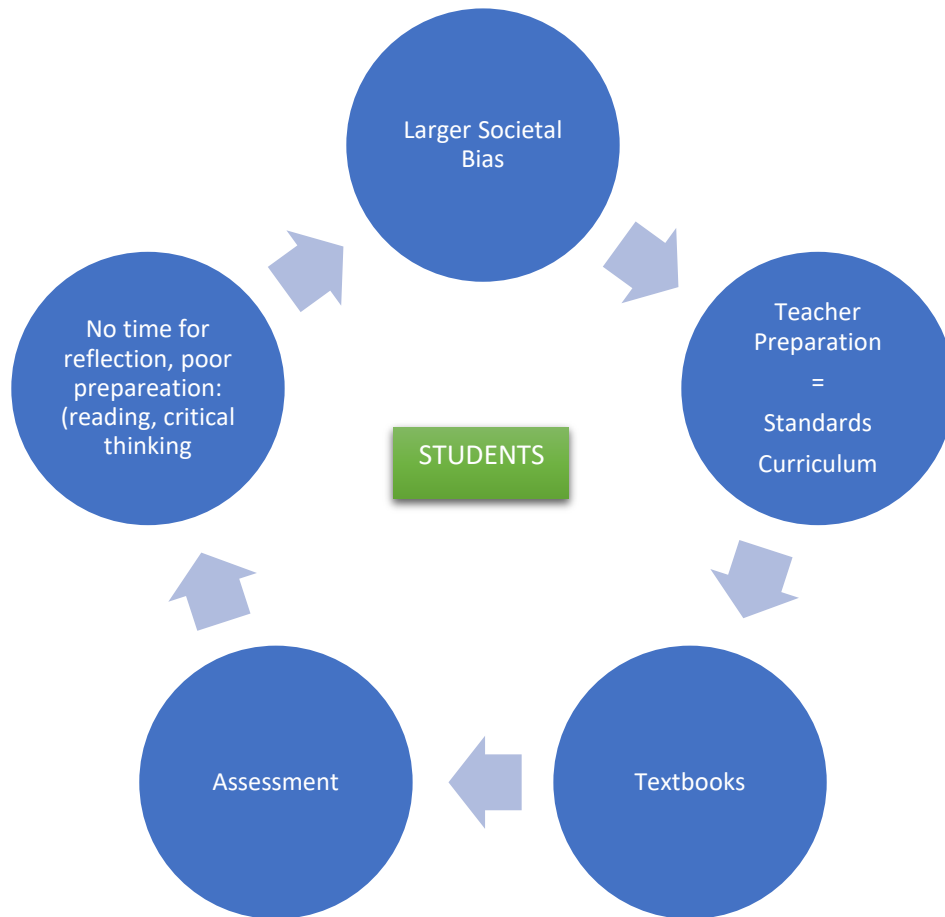
### **Insights from the literature on how to Teach Native History**

In Minnesota, most future teachers could readily at most institutions graduate with little or no instruction on Native American history or culture or pedagogical strategies for teaching it. The exceptions are University of Minnesota at Duluth, which has both in its educational blocks and in its required social studies coursework specifically Native American content. St Cloud State has an Ethnic Studies Class -- 310 American Indians in the Social Science Curriculum, as well as a class on US Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration). And there are two “responsive education” courses in their block courses. At MSU, there are course offerings that would help a preservice teacher in the American Indigenous Program. Bemidji State has rich offerings as well as Ojibwe language. Overall, though, the majority of the social studies teachers who graduated from Minnesota schools probably have had no coursework in Native American history. Does it matter? We think so. Besides the notion that history has some merit in and of itself, that it is incomplete and historically inaccurate without the Native narrative, we think learning Native history teaches students how complex America’s history is, with a disregard for other human beings that is unimaginable and unthinkable, except it happened and continues to happen. In “Borders and Borderlands,” Barr writes about her frustration with ‘the conceptual notion that as soon as Europeans put their first big toes on the American coast, all the Americas became a “borderland up for grabs to the first European taker—a notion that denies Indian sovereignty, control of the land, and basic home field advantage” (Barr, 2015, p. 11) Others write about settlers, colonizers, justifying their *tabula rasa* conception of the land being posited on the lack of what they understood to be best commodifying the resources. At the very least, kids should learn that Native Americans exist in the PRESENT. Google’s search Native Americans leads to historic images as though they only exist in history.(Sabzalian, 2019, p. 179).They have been exterminated in the history classes, if not in our communities. Learning Native history for Native

kids is acknowledging their story, learning strategies of resistance, and maybe helping them understand the burdens of intergenerational trauma that they may carry. Some examples in resistance strategies that were successful in Standing Rock were lawsuits, but also prayer walks, letter writing, and others in the face of “freezing temperatures, a foreboding militarized police presence, and state violence via attack dogs, mace, water cannons, tear gas, sound cannons and concussive grenades” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. xi). Native kids can look to the news during the last few years and see lots of strategies for successful resistance. For all kids, White, Black, Hispanic, Native, and all the new immigrants, particularly, they need to look at America in a real mirror, not a funfair mirror that reflects a distorted image.

Controversy swirls around what’s taught in our classrooms. Florida’s standards that outline how teachers must instruct students with lessons on how "slaves developed skills" that could be used for "personal benefit," is just one example (Breen, 2023). Teachers, according to a study by *Chalkbeat*, are exiting the profession in record numbers. Their reasons? Respect, support, better pay, and more flexibility are just a few of the things that might have kept them working in education. Teacher burnout, school funding, teacher training, equitable education, and cultural representation within curriculum are some of the issues driving them away. (Chalkbeat Staff, 2022). Cantankerous schoolboard meetings are going viral on YouTube. It’s clear that we as a nation don’t agree on the place of history in a kid’s toolbox for understanding the world. Much less Native history. Almost 90 percent of American Indian content includes only pre-1900 context and more than half didn’t name one Native American in the standards. (Diamond, 2019) In his review of literature about tribal critical theory, Kruger (2021) describes the social studies curriculum as only positioning Natives in the context of Whites, mostly in the past tense, always in the settler colonial orientation ... A good definition comes from Dockry and Whyte (2021): “Settler colonialism encompasses social processes by which at least one society seeks to establish homelands in territories that already serve as homelands for one or more other societies “(97). Social studies has removed the Indigenous influences via voice, context, and perspective. ... Native American perspectives, epistemologies, and ontologies have long been muted or ignored...European colonization, Manifest Destiny, Indian Removal, and the Frontier Wars have portrayed Natives as without *agency* “(Krueger,

2021, p.216). But we have seen that in Minnesota in the beginnings of the American Indian Movement, in the Water Protectors, in having a Native Lieutenant Governor, Indians have always been resisting a larger body of people determined to take their lands. Where to begin?



What is apparent from reading the studies is that there is a disconnect between the pieces—who makes the standards, who creates the social studies teacher preparation curriculum and who delivers the courses? What opportunities are extended for self-reflection for both teachers and students? What *content* is offered to teacher candidates and *how* is it pedagogically presented? What preparation do the faculty (Education and History) have? There is also a disconnect between all the studies that recommend the best ways of igniting important conversations in history classes contrasted with the realities of teaching to the test (View, 2012; Stanton et al., 2018; Doughty, 2017) because it's easy, because it's required, or because it's normal practice. There are concerns about the reading, critical thinking, and writing skills of the average middle and high school students

must bring to in-depth consideration of complex realities that are history, any history but particularly the history of peoples whose lands were taken, whose children were taken, whose ways of life were taken. And who have resisted throughout American history.

To reverse engineer the thinking about all this, while the focus of few of the studies were on **assessment**, every article referenced standardized testing and its role in shaping the teacher-led instruction, the assignments, and the lack of exercises that engaged student critical thinking about history. Loewen is not the only one who speaks to the demise of student interest in history because of textbooks, memorization, and rote learning methods. Testing makes money for companies and hurdles for schools and teachers, while providing little value to the students (Robinson, 2019, p 38). One study showed “First, teachers who work in low-income, high minority schools report lower levels of autonomy than those in high-income, low minority schools. Second, the existence of state-mandated social studies tests and sanctions against low-performing schools are related to lower levels of teachers’ instructional autonomy. Finally, teachers who work in high minority schools perceive lower levels of autonomy when they teach in states that punish underperforming schools based on test results relative to those in states that do not” (Hong et al., 2020, p. 74). **Textbooks** are cunningly marketed, make money for companies, take money from school systems, and aren’t especially accurate as to issues of gender, race, disability, and LGBT issues. There is this notion that kids can’t deal with hard history but they’re living it—the racism, the homophobia, the misogyny. They are living with fake news and Chat GPT and doomsday scrolling on their phones. They, as we visited in the introduction, are all too aware of climate change, the damage done by guns, the hate, the inept and greedy political and judicial systems. To force-feed them a sweeping narrative of a country that acts as a beacon of morality is to a/lie to them; b/denigrate their abilities to perceive realities; and c/fail to provide them with the tools of knowledge, empathy, and resistance.

Almost all the studies point to the need for pre-service teachers to have the opportunities to reflect about themselves. While this is certainly the case for teaching Native American history, it’s true in general. When teachers first encounter a kid in a wheelchair or with any visible difference than the lived experience of the teacher, the teacher should be prepared to, at the very least, understand their own reactions and the potential

impact of that reaction on the kiddo. Robinson's work argues that pre-service teachers must "first examine their own cultural bias and views of society" (Robinson, p. 38) especially since there's a disconnect between the mostly female mostly white teachers living a potentially quite different reality than the kids they teach.

Besides dispositional, introspective work that needs doing during teacher preparation, content must be WRESTLED with, not taught in a rote-learning exercise of memorization of events and timelines. Teacher candidates must begin to understand that "The post-settler-contact history of the First Peoples in the Americas has been characterized with devastation and loss at the hands of colonial governments and institutions. The outlaw of traditional cultural practices, loss of traditional lands, and mandated relocation of many Native groups, all proved particularly deleterious. Educational policies for Native American peoples were often a direct outcome of the extermination-focused or assimilationist mindset of colonial governments and institutions (Grande, 2004). Government or church operated residential schools for Native children were especially damaging to American Indian cultures and languages (Hinton, 2001; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). American Indian cultures must be considered distinct from the broader framework of multicultural education – not just in terms of legal status and definition – **but also because of the need to make reparation for the centuries of forced assimilation tribal peoples have been forced to endure**"(McInnes, 2017, pp. 146-147).

Studies point to the need for reflective times for pre-service teachers to consider their own biases. A survey of 3200 people revealed that while those with higher educational attainment and left-leaning people understand that natives face discrimination, too many believe Natives don't have to pay taxes or get state benefits by dint of being Indian (Foxworth et al., 2022). Research points to the need for content that articulates the disconnect between the narrative commonly accepted about settlers and natives and the realities of the dispossession and its impact. They need content that, as Montana's *Indian Education for All* lays out --expresses the diversity between tribes and asserts the diversity of individual Natives; Explains the diversity of spiritual practices and their relationship to living and governing within tribes; Outlines what reservations are and what sovereignty means; and Clarifies the relationship between federal and tribal law and helps students understand the impact of federal

policies on individuals, families, and tribes. (Stanton et al., 2018). Stanton writes about teachers engaging in “demanding work” that Indian Education or All necessitated for Montana teachers as they sought to find resources that offered an alternative to colonial narratives and find ways of humbly asking to collaborate with cultural mentors in the community, the use of “morning circles” and inquiry, and student ownership of the learning, and the culturally sustaining and revitalizing curricula that could result in more relationships. One article about circles of learning reported that one of the students’ takeaways was that other people were struggling too and that the circles of learning created new friendships. When we think back to the introductory remarks, how anxious and depressed young people are, having learning circles might not ONLY lead to a deeper understanding of Native history but friendships to buffer a lonesome world. We have just scratched the surface of the research that needs to be conducted to better understand the connection or disconnection between standards, teacher preparation, and especially the role of assessment in determining the kinds of instructional strategies employed to give students the best possible opportunities to understand their past, the lived realities of the people around them, in order to envision a better future.

## **Resources**

We have scoured the web for teaching resources to share with your Social Studies or History students. Both national and state resources are included for MN, WI, & SD, but almost every state’s department of education will list resources. One of the frustrations experienced by pre-service teachers is good modeling of how to teach Native American History but the other was finding good curricular materials.

On the national level (and these are all listed and in the Bibliography), there is the National Museum of the American Indian’s *Native Knowledge 360*:

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/lessons-resources/search-resources> This Smithsonian production is searchable by subject, nation, grade level, essential understandings, language, region, format or



topic or keyword searching is possible as well. Some of the entries that come up include a Teaching Poster “A life in Beads, the Stories a Plains Dress can tell”, a website on “Native words, Native warriors”, a dialog toolkit to facilitate conversations around a particular exhibit, but this conversation starter would be useful for any teacher wanting to use images to jumpstart conversations around any topic. [This LibGuide which I produced for other reasons has some GREAT places to look at virtual exhibits and includes the Heard Museum and the DPLA:

(<https://libguides.mnsu.edu/c.php?g=1107298&p=8073249>) Also worth studying is *The Invasion of America*. The description reads: Between 1776 and 1887, the United States seized over 1.5 billion acres from America's indigenous people by treaty and executive order. *The Invasion of America* shows how by mapping every treaty and executive order during that period. It also contains present-day federal Indian reservations.

<https://usg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb6ca76e008543a89349ff2517db47e6>

The National Council for the Social Studies points to this resource on *Using the Indian Removal Act to Teach Critical Thinking*. <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/81/6/using-indian-removal-act-teach-critical-thinking> with teaching notions and a listing of primary resources. The National Council for History Education points to a resource on teaching *American Indian Movement: Native Americans Fight Back* <https://thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=10&topic=04> Brigham Young University. *Native American Curriculum Initiative*. <https://advancingartsleadership.com/NACI> includes teaching materials for Navajo, Ute, Shoshone, and other tribes, book recommendations, blogs, articles.

### ***By State: MINNESOTA***

<https://www.mnhs.org/education/native-american> (Minnesota Historical Society) Primary Source Packets for sale.

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/indian/teach/> (Minnesota Department of Education) Some Minnesota, other national materials, learning resources. Well worth a look.

**By State: Wisconsin**

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/amind/pdf/american-indian-education-in-wi.pdf> (WI Department of Public Instruction) Page 37 has a listing of teaching materials available online.

<https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/> (Wisconsin First Nations) Books, Exemplars, Field Trips, Lesson Plans, Videos, and Websites. Exemplars are teachers sharing advice on why and how to teach and those with a specific tribal focus are noted.

**By State: South Dakota**

<https://sdtribalrelations.sd.gov/indian-education/oceti-sakowin-project.aspx> (SD Department of Tribal Relations) Not sure where this document lies in the new legislation.

<https://doe.sd.gov/ContentStandards/documents/18-OSEUs.pdf> (Oceti Sakowin: Essential Understandings & Standards)

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