

Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education

Joely Proudfit and Linda Sue Warner

Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education (WEAVE) is both a philosophy and an initiative. The philosophy aligns with self-determination and California State University San Marcos' California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center's mission to connect tribal peoples with the human resources in education to ensure access and retention pre-kindergarten through graduate programs—creating lifelong learners. The initiative is targeted through the WEAVE Project as outreach to tribal communities to empower parents and community members in tribal education initiatives through focused training in relevant, recent research and practice. The Project highlights the dissemination and use of specifically designed technical reports as well as best practices in Indian education.

The Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education (WEAVE) Project defines and elaborates on research and practice in the engagement of parents and communities in the education of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children. The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center works with 110 California tribes to train community members as educational advocates through outreach activities that incorporate American Indian students and faculty from California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). In 2009, The Center published the *Red Book: Southern California American Indian Educational Resources*, dedicated to connecting people, tribes, organizations and associations working with students. Developed with input from the CSUSM's Native American Advisory Council and the Rincon Indian Education Department, this resource guide helps students and families connect with regional education services. In 2012, the Center published the first *State of American Indian and Alaska Native Education in California*, compiling publicly available data on AI/AN students in K-12 schools, community colleges and the California State University and University of California systems. It includes demographic data designed to provide useful knowledge for creating policy, as well as forming a catalyst to engage tribes, tribal communities and parents as they work to create opportunities for their children. In 2014, the Center issued a second report examining programs and services offered to AI/AN students and communities. These reports gathered relevant data and presented it in a user-friendly format so that parents, community members and tribal leaders would have the necessary information to make knowledgeable decisions. This is particularly important in our current era of declining fiscal resources. Access to large data banks and advances in technology allow educators and parents to access more real-time data about student progress.

Cite as from J. Reyhner, J. Martin, L. Lockard & W.S. Gilbert. (Eds.). (2015). *Honoring Our Elders: Culturally Appropriate Approaches for Teaching Indigenous Students* (pp. 195-208). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

Parent/community involvement in Native communities: Philosophy, practice, research

Philosophy: Recent research in early childhood education reflects an emphasis on parents as the child's first teacher (Howe & Simmons, 2005) a long understood and practiced tenet of American Indian education where the roles of teacher were embedded in parenting, as well as in the responsibilities of extended family members (Tippeconnic, 2000). The concept of teaching children by professionally trained educators is a Eurocentric practice that arrived with the Mayflower and manifest itself in the establishment of boarding schools, initially operated by missionaries. For decades, teachers and school administrators discouraged, if not actually intimidated, parents from participating in their children's education (Anderson, 1981, p. 96). Never was this more evident than in the "wardship relationship" that the federal government established over Indian children. The reforms in education in recent decades have called for parents to be more accountable to their children's education, and the trend of parents, particularly affluent parents, learning more about assessment measurements began. Mahler and Smalldenburg's (1963) chapter on the "Effects of Testing Programs on the Attitudes of Students, Teachers, Parents, and the Community" noted that parents were "greatly interested in the testing programs conducted by schools" but also found that they were often confused about the tests and what the scores indicated (p.118). In 1979, a Gallup poll surveyed parents and found that nearly 20% did not know how to read test scores. By the 1980s, PTA groups were asking Educational Testing Services (ETS) to present findings at their annual meetings and urging parents to become more involved in monitoring student performance (Anderson, 1981, p. 97).

These efforts have not extended with any depth or breadth in Indian Country. While the majority of American Indian students are actually in public schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' schools only began working much with parents in the 1980s and not until the passage of Public Law 100-297 did Indian parents have any real decision-making opportunity for the schools where their students were taught. The extent to which public school systems are responsive to American Indian parent concerns range from none to total—public schools located on reservations will have American Indian individuals on school boards. While mainstream parental groups generally acknowledge a positive attitude to both the need for standardized testing and uses, there is no research on American Indian populations that specifically addresses issues of testing in schools.

A critical part of this project lies in the debate about the effects of cultural differences in educational practice. Carol Locust (1988) argued that fundamental differences existed between the belief system of American Indians and those of non-Indians and that this gap affected how public school educators treated American Indian students in their systems. Her work focused on discriminatory practices, but it does provide a grounding for our project. She characterized Public Law 95-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), as "a two-edged sword" by allowing "multitudes" of children to be labeled. Citing Miller, Miller and Miller's (1987) work where they found that American Indian cultures

valued and reinforced nonverbal communication, visual/spatial memory, visual/motor skills and sequential visual memory over verbal skills, Locust linked the disproportionate number of Indian children labeled as handicapped to cultural bias. The primary difference in this chapter to Locust's work is that we seek to provide a common language to parents so that they can become informed consumers of the data that reflects their children's opportunities.

It is vital for educators and parents to establish respectful and trusting relationships, yet many American Indian parents distrust the U.S. educational system (Parette & Petch-Hogan, 2000). The percent of American Indian parents who have post-secondary experience is significantly smaller than the general population and may contribute to an "unease" or "distrust" of standardized testing and data collection. This supported the work of Chen (2004) who surveyed American Indian parents of children ages 10-12 as part of an ongoing longitudinal study of American Indian families in the upper midwest. The findings indicated that these adults associate negative feelings with historical loss and found components of anxiety/depression and anger/avoidance.

While the research on American Indian parenting and test scores is sparse, the practice of American Indian parenting has some notable positive impact. In the unlikely system, we found that the FACE program operated initially by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has had significant impact on early childhood education and outreach to parents and communities.

Practice: The FACE (Family and Child Education) program initiated in 1990 by the BIA is designed as a family literacy program for early childhood involvement. The only negative aspect of FACE is its limited reach throughout Indian Country. The goals of FACE include supporting primary caregivers in their role as the child's first and most influential teacher, increasing family literacy, strengthening family-school-community connections, promoting the early identification and services to children with special needs, increasing parent participation in their child's learning support, celebrating the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of American Indian communities, and promoting life-long learning (www.faceresources.org).

Tribal governments and Indian education associations also provide resources to parents of American Indian students. For example, the American Indian Parental Assistance Program sponsored by the Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association provides links to both resources on parenting sorted by the child's age and also links to information on federal policy initiatives, such as No Child Left Behind, including the alternatives parents have when their school is designated as failing (see www.sctca.net). This resource and many others can be found on Northern Arizona University's parent involvement links page at <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Parent.html>. Its links to resources are national in scope yet outreach, resource development and sharing are often local and in cases where language retention is emphasized, the scope is even narrower. Local and regional practice is often based on current research from mainstream universities and adapted to immediate need. Researchers and practitioners will want to look at both national and regional resources on parent and community involvement.

Honoring Our Elders

Research: Related research on parent involvement or testing in mainstream communities yielded the following contextual studies. Numerous longitudinal studies link collaboration between teachers and parents in assisting students in reading and early childhood development (Tizard, Schofield & Hewison, 2011; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2003). Weissberg, Kasprow and Fendrich (1999) studied teacher perceptions of parent involvement in children's education and school performance. Their longitudinal study examined the ways in which parental involvement in a child's education changes over time and how this related to the child's social and academic growth. It focused on early childhood parenting and found involvement rates reported by teachers to be encouraging, but room for improvement was still evident. The researchers used hierarchical multiple regressions to disentangle the shared variance among parental involvement variables with a sample of 1,927. Overall, the most significant finding was that participation in educational activities at home significantly predicted the widest range of performance and predicted academic achievement more strongly than any other parent involvement variable.

Sheldon (2003) studied the relationship between the quality of school, family, and community partnership programs and student performance on state mandated achievement tests. Using 82 elementary schools, located in urban communities, revealed that the degree to which schools were working to overcome challenges to family and community involvement predicted higher percentages of students scoring at or above satisfactory on state achievement tests. The study combined data gathered by the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at the end of the 1998-1999 school year on the quality of the schools' partnership programs with achievement data. These findings suggest that the schools' efforts to involve families and the community in students' learning helped students achieve in school, especially students in early elementary grades.

Studies on the use of test scores were primarily aimed at instructors. Trimble, Gay and Matthews (2005) found that teachers initially felt over-whelmed and inadequate when faced with a classroom set of test scores, but by teaching them to view the data objectively, teachers were able to use embedded test score information to improve their teaching. Educators are familiar with two groups of standardized data—nationally normed tests and the state criterion-referenced tests; these are included in their teacher training programs. Yet parents can find the terminology confusing and the explanations complex. Trimble et al. found that educators spent nearly a year working with test scores before they became comfortable with using the data to modify instructional delivery. The one additional note on their work includes the inclusion of students and the processes teachers used to invite students to analyze their own thinking, their errors and, most importantly, their own way of learning.

Hursh (2005) analyzed the shift of public education in the last two decades away from local community control to reliance on state and national standards, particularly on standardized testing and accountability. His analysis of high-stakes testing and accountability, markets and decline of educational equity focused on Texas and New York and No Child Left Behind. These reforms, he

argued, were successfully introduced because reform proponents provided three rationales: tests are necessary within an increasingly globalized economy; tests reduce educational inequality; and tests increase assessment objectivity. His research on policy indicates that it more important than ever to dialogue over the purposes of schooling, what and how we should teach students, and what and how we assess their performances. This project will allow American Indian parents to be part of that dialogue.

American Indians

Contemporary research on American Indian parenting focuses on early teen parenting and the *Journal of American Indian Education* has not published an article of parental roles in the education of American Indians since 1996. Grayson Noley's 1993 *Tribal College* article alluded to the need to be more proactive, particularly as students matriculate into higher education institutions. Work by Warner (1994) on the legal framework that began to include parental involvement in Indian education shows that Indian parents' ability to exercise control over their children's education is fairly recent and required federal legislation to enable that authority. This recent imperative for Indian parents is compared with over 300 years of involvement of non-Indian parents in the direct services to their children in public schools in the United States. Our intention with the WEAVE Project is to intervene in the dynamic between parent (or parent organization) and the school system. By providing parents with a better understanding of the use of standardized testing and educational statistics, parents will become more active in the policies and practices that impact the education of tribal youth.

In our review of the literature on recent research on parents' attitudes about test scores or their understanding and use of educational data, we found very few studies. Recent studies on American Indian parents' and their use of test scores or educational data were non-existent. Carol Robinson-Zanartu and Juanita Majel-Dixon (1996) study of American Indian parenting surveyed a national sample, getting 234 responses from 55 tribes using the American Indian Relationships with Schools Survey. The researchers used a one-way analysis of variance to determine if there were significant variations that needed to be addressed. They also collected narrative responses as support. They found that type of school was the only variable that produced a statistical significance. On every item, perceptions regarding BIA schools differed significantly (lower) from tribally supported schools. Tribally controlled schools were perceived as holding higher expectations of Indian children than either BIA or public schools. The survey touched on special education evaluations and the parent's understanding of the data, but did not explore data and decision-making explicitly.

Robins, Scherman, Holeman and Wilson (2005) examined the roles of grandparents in the lives of American Indian children using structured interviews. By interviewing twenty American Indian grandparents and using qualitative methods, they found that grandparents reported enculturative responsibilities for traditional tribal values, cooperative interaction, tribal language, and appreciation of nature. Enculturation methods were typically storytelling, modeling, direct teaching and

Honoring Our Elders

playful interaction. They reported that grandparents primarily felt responsibility for American Indian religion and culture and that they had an “anxious awareness” that economic, political, cultural, psychological and military pressures had asserted a “stranglehold” on tribal cultures. The study did not address formal education specifically, relying on informal educational practices that are centuries old to Indian nations.

Dionne, David, Sheeber, and Madrigal (2009) analyzed the authors’ conceptualization of a cultural approach to parent involvement to implementing evidence-based practices with American Indian families in California. Their approach involved a motivational phase, which contextualized the historical evidence for current difficulties, and the intervention phase, which linked evidence-based skills with cultural tractions, beliefs and values. Their work involved 49 families with American Indian children, ages 3-11. Using unit weighting of factor indicators to create z-scores, the researchers completed MANOVAs. Significant pre-and post-improvement in parents and child behavior were observed in the intervention group. Again this work did not specifically address the use of educational data, but it provides a prime example of our thesis: how do you share the results of this study with parents. Protocols dictate that the results of this study would be shared with participants as part of the debriefing.

In fact, federal agencies, universities and tribes have specific protocols for working with American Indians. The University of Arizona’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols are comprehensive and reflect the input of Arizona tribes (http://www.nptaο.arizona.edu/research/NPTAOResearchProtocolsWebPage/NPTAOResearch_OtherResources.doc/NorthernPlains/NorthernPlainsResearchChecklist.pdf).

Culture in multi-tribal communities

Across the Nation, American Indian education has undergone a major transformation in the past decade, in part as the influence of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation under the leadership of Luther S. Williams and Gerald E. Gipp and directed by Ray Barnhardt and Oscar Kawagley. Barnhardt and Kawagley turned their attention to reconciling the intersecting worldviews that exist in Alaska Native communities and supported Alaska Native parents in redefining the goals and methods of formal education throughout the State (Barnhardt, 2013). The work with local parents and communities is well-documented and grew so that eventually state educational policy reflected an emphasis throughout Alaska on native ways of knowing .

For tribal communities, the link between culture, traditions, tribal history and governance are political issues of sovereignty. Maintaining the connection to culture in schools serving more than one tribe is complex and the most successful implementation can be found in tribal, public, and private schools that create environments that support the core values of the community. Tribal colleges and universities tie their vision, mission and goals to tribal cultural values specific to their communities. Tying tribal cultural values to the mission of public schools off reservation is a bit more complex. Parents and tribal education

Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education

counselors have a responsibility to be proactive in working with school districts to incorporate community expectations. Incorporating native ways of knowing in public school districts is not impossible. For example, educators would be familiar with constructivist’s pedagogy which proposes that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflection on that experience. To do this, learners must ask questions, explore, and assess what they know. Constructivist learning theory is based on the tenet that learners need to be actively involved in a process; it links problem-based learning, anchored instruction and cooperative learning and can be actualized using a wide variety of methods, usually relying on guided instruction rather than lecture. Learners are encouraged to discover, to discuss, to appreciate, and to verbalize new knowledge with others.

Table 1: A Comparison of Constructivist Strategies and Native Ways of Knowing

	Traditional Values			
	Reciprocity	Redistribution	Relationships	Responsibility
Constructivist Pedagogy	Learning should involve social negotiation and mediation	Current formative assessment informs future learning experiences.	Learning should take place in authentic real-world environments	Content and skills should be made relevant to the learner.
	Content and skills should be understood within the framework of prior knowledge.	Multiple perspectives and representations of content are sought.	Teachers serve as guides and facilitators.	Learners are encouraged to become self-regulatory, self-mediated, an self-aware.
Traditional Native Centered Education Practices¹	Children were encouraged to share equally with one another; selfishness was discouraged. 15	...advice (from elders) is just as good today as it was in his time. 42	Whatever the mother or father was doing was keenly observed, and the children were given scraps of materials to make some of these things themselves. 17	It was the custom to get up very early every morning and do the things that you had planned for the day...for everybody had to be ever ready to meet an emergency of any sort. 32
	Everybody worked together when travelling and gave assistance to the less fortunate ones...20	...parents allowed the children freedom of movement about the encampment, and they were encouraged to express themselves freely. 17	My father was a great horseman and from his guidance I learned how to handle a horse unafraid, for he had some me all the different ways to handle them. 37	All these informants emphasized the importance of telling the truth and being trustworthy at all times. 34

L.S. Warner (In Press); Page numbers in this chart refer to Tippeconnic (1942).

Honoring Our Elders

In 2014, Warner completed Table 1 above, which aligns constructivist pedagogy with Comanche centered education based on John W. Tippeconnic, II's master's thesis from Arizona Teaching College (now Northern Arizona University). Tippeconnic's thesis, completed in 1942, was based on interviews with traditional Comanche elders and focused on education practices. Each of these elders were over 70 years old at the time of the interviews which were completed in Comanche and were translated by the researcher. Tippeconnic's original data provided examples which Warner linked to constructivist's strategies to illustrate that native ways of knowing is not problematic in implementation.

Using native ways of knowing is also effective in curriculum ranging from P-K to colleges and universities. Examples adapting specific instruction using native ways of knowing to core standards can be found most frequently in tribal schools or tribal colleges; however, it is also evident in classrooms where teachers are open to creating learning environments for all students. As instruction improves, as core values are reinforced, achievement scores reflect gains. The argument for the need for parents to understand test scores extends to the point that it is important for a parent to understand their child's abilities because the parent will impact the choice of educational opportunity for the child throughout the first twelve years. The argument for the need for parents and community members to understand state and national reports is based on the belief that as informed stakeholders, parents and community members will be able to impact both policy and practice. The WEAVE Project was designed to respond to both needs.

The WEAVE Project

The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CICSC) began working on the WEAVE Project in 2010-11 by creating resources for tribal members that include the *Red Book*, a resource handbook dedicated to connecting people, tribes, organizations and associations whose primary focus was the education of tribal youth. A year later in 2012, the CICSC published the *State of American Indian and Alaska Native Education in California*, the first comprehensive review of the current data available on tribal education in California. The second report, published in 2014, focuses on partnerships and access for students. These resources are important to tribal educators and public school educators but they are also important to students and parents.

Many technical reports, particularly those issued nationally, such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), specifically, the National Indian Education Study (NIES), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are written for an academic audience, rather than concerned parents. We propose that the language used in these reports is specific, detailed and comprehensive but does not lend itself to lay conversations, even among other professionals, as the vocabulary and jargon is often specific to educational research. Our intent is not to dissuade parents and community members from attempting to make sense of this technical data when they hear phrases like "chi-square testing" or "goodness of fit for discrete multi-variate data" but rather to

Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education

train them in how test scores are used to determine if a school is at-risk and how to read the state and national data that supports education decision-making.

The WEAVE Project connects tribal members by providing training for education advocacy. Educators know the importance of parental involvement in education at each step. Decades of research indicate that lack of parental involvement is the single biggest problem in student achievement and retention, particularly with American Indian students. Family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status (www.michigan.edu). The importance of family participation—in advocacy, decision-making, oversight, fundraising, and volunteering—requires informed participants. For American Indian communities, this family participation is defined as community participation.

Sessions are designed around these objectives: Participants will be able to:

1. define terms used in education data (means, medians, disaggregate, norm, etc.) ;
2. translate data from reports on AI/AN students into terms that can be used to create local action plans;
3. create learning environments at home specific to the age level of their children;
4. summarize the information from technical reports and explain how it impacts their community's participation in higher education.

Participants in WEAVE workshops review regional and national reports on American Indian/Alaska Native education to become familiar with statistical data and to demonstrate the ability to ask critical questions for informed decision-making. Role-play is used in response to specific scenarios created for participants using technical reports provided to participants. Scenario development has been created around academic achievement, high stakes testing and common core standards.

The training sessions are designed to create knowledgeable education advocates in tribal communities. These advocates will work with other parents, students, and public schools to address issues of retention, placement, preparation for higher education and graduation through informed dialogue. The WEAVE Project contributes to the development of public strategies designed to ameliorate the issues identified with public education (at all levels) by working with tribal communities so that individuals, specifically parents and grandparents, can read and understand educational data and how these data are used to inform education policy for their children.

Working through California State University San Marcos, the WEAVE Project provides mutual benefit to both students in our program and the surrounding communities. The benefit of an informed constituency is the primary goal of public universities. Understanding the use of educational data will allow individuals in tribal communities to ask questions about the delivery of educational services to their children.

Honoring Our Elders

The importance of family participation—in *advocacy, decision-making, oversight, and volunteering*—requires informed participants. Examples where this insight will be useful to parents and community members can be seen in the following roles:

Advocacy: Parents believe that some tests are culturally biased. Review of standardized testing procedures and relevant content provide a basis for conversations on cultural bias. A better understanding of educational data provides parents with both the responsibility and the tools to question school leaders about the collection and use of data. By convening a symposium targeting parents during the start of each year, the WEAVE Project will prepare parents to engage in meaningful conversations on policy. Training is provided on current research and best practices, on institutional review requirements, and testing requirements.

Decision-making: Educators and parents agree that creating a home learning environment is an important contribution to a child's early learning habits. Parents contribute to this early learning by setting expectations as well. Parents will see the need for appropriate preparation of students to take standardized tests, particularly for college admission. Parents believe that standardized tests induce anxiety and that anxiety contributes to poor performance—understanding the use and need for testing, parents can work with students to create a more realistic mind-set about test-taking. Parents have day-to-day decision-making opportunities to impact the educational experiences of their children; as these opportunities are focused, parents will see significant changes in student attitude and achievement.

Oversight: Parents believe that too much reliance is based on test scores and not overall performance. A more complete understanding of the processes involved in data collection allows the parents the ability to hold school administrators accountable to the community. Educators often feel that parents do not have enough training to be true partners in education decision-making. The WEAVE Project is designed to mitigate some of these concerns by providing parents and community members with the skills to ask critical questions. Educators have a long history of disenfranchisement of Indian parents, yet more and more of these parents have professional training and are prepared to ask informed questions of policies, particularly those that do not support cultural education. The WEAVE Project seeks to empower parents to become more active in school activities.

Volunteering: Parents and community members who are active in school activities will understand how their contributions affect the overall performance rating of a school. Volunteering to work in schools reflects the core cultural values of lifelong learners. In the past, school-parent relationships consisted of a typical Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which sought additional resources for the classroom. Research has established that the most successful parent participation efforts are those which have a range of activities for parents to be involved. The WEAVE Project will train parents to be active participants at the local school level, as well as at the tribal community level on issues of education change.

Next steps

Project WEAVE was conceived to prepare parents and tribal community members with the tools to read the technical reports issued by the CICSC, as well as those issued by Department of Education (NCES, for example) or professional associations such as American Indian Higher Education's AIMS/AKIS reports. Additionally, we hoped to provide parents and community members with the skills to understand individual and aggregate school data. In an age where educators rely on data-based decision-making, we anticipated that parents would need to have a better understanding of this "data." Each of these national reports represents the cumulative data collection of an agency or organization designed for education policy makers and are often jargon-laden. The reports provide recent statistics on achievement, gap scores, and, may predict areas of need. In providing statistics for policy makers, these reports use very technical terms such as "reliability," "validity," "significant difference," as well as mathematical terms of "mean," "median," and "mode." These terms are specific to the science of education and are not easily understood by parents or community members—or educators. The terms represent the technical requirements of manipulating data so that comparisons may be made across classroom, school, district, and state. Test scores are read differently depending on the type of test given and a basic sense of which type of test students are taking is needed to make informed decisions about what the results may mean. As Indian people, know that knowledge is power and, moving into an era of "the knowledge economy" it is more important than ever that we prepare ourselves and our communities to work with educators so that our students are successful.

The WEAVE Project is not an attempt to teach parents and community members how to create statistical tables or perform regression analyses using test scores. The project was designed to help parents and community members ask relevant, thoughtful questions about the data they are presented with so that they have the ability to pose questions to policy-makers and educators that will assure them that the needs of their children are foremost in the "data-based decision-making" that drives current school policy and practice.

Our project does not address the philosophical or practice arguments for or against testing or data-based decision-making. Researchers and practitioners provide both pro and con testaments to their use. Walsh (1987) asserted that we cannot read too much into achievement test scores to evaluate school programs and cites studies by the Congressional Budget Office. Yet in the past decade, we have seen that test scores are increasingly relied on in evaluating the effectiveness of classrooms and schools. Criticisms of this practice can be found in books like *The Closing of the American Mind*, by Allan Bloom (1975), who asserted that American education has shifted into a broader realm of Social Darwinism. William Daly (1994) notes that "the core problem does not lie with tests or testing programs." The problem lies when people misuse scores or misinterpret, misclassify or misguide students. The general sense that because test scores are "scientific" means that we can be assured that they can classify, diagnose, and predict the behavior of students creating a "mono-symptomatic diagnosis" is not

Honoring Our Elders

only unethical, it is practically indefensible. We need to remember that a test score reflects only one aspect of a highly complex human organism in a learning situation and that this aspect is compounded exponentially when the data is combined to assess classrooms or schools.

Essays, research findings, and practical narrative examples about contemporary American Indian education practices are nuanced with language that assaults our emotions and too often leaves readers with at best an ennui and at worst a depression about the “state” of current practice. The tension that is produced from conclusions like “Truly the landscape of public education... is littered with the Aboriginal dead, the walking spiritually wounded, and those who are fundamentally changed by their journey” (Cherubini & Hodson, 2011, p. 191). While instances of poor diagnosis, guidance or prediction based on individual test scores, classroom test scores, or national reports reflect a lack of preparation or experience (or both) on the part of educators, The WEAVE Project is designed to provide parents and community members with the skills to ask relevant questions so that they can become meaningfully engaged in both policy and practice in Indian schools—it asserts individual and tribal sovereignty to create change.

References

- Anderson, S. B. (1981). Parents and standardized tests. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 58(2), 96-107.
- Cherubini, L., & Hodson, J. (2011). Heightening awareness and strengthening relationships: Implications of public policy for Aboriginal students, communities and teachers. In J. Reyhner, W.S. Gilbert & L. Lockard (Eds.), *Honoring our heritage: Culturally appropriate approaches for teaching Indigenous students* (pp. 173-195). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University, pp.173-195.
- Barnhardt, R. (2013). Indigenous education renewal in rural Alaska. In J. Reyhner, J. Martin, L. Lockard & W.S. Gilbert (Eds), *Honoring our children: Culturally appropriate approaches for teaching Indigenous students* (pp. 22-20). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.
- Bloom, A. (1987). *The closing of the American mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Chen, X. (June 2004). Conceptualizing and measuring historical trauma among American Indian people. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(3-4), 119-130.
- Daly, W. (Spring 1994). Test scores revisited: Fragment of a picture. *Education*, 114(3), 431-433.
- Dionne, R., Davis, B., Sheeber, L., & Madrigal, L. (2009). Initial evaluation of a cultural approach to implementation of evidence-based parenting interventions in American Indian Communities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(7), 911-921.
- FACE. www.faceresources.org/ Accessed April 20, 2014.
- Howe, F., & Simmons, B. J. (2005) Nurturing the parent-teacher alliance. *Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks*, 533, 7-41.
- Hursh, D. (2005). The growth of high-stakes testing in the USA: Accountability, markets and the decline of educational quality. *British Educational Research Journal*, 31(5), 605-622.

Warriors for Empowering Advocates through Valuing Education

- Izzo, C., Weissberg, R., Kaspro, W., & Fendrich, M. (1999). A longitudinal assessment of teacher perceptions of parent involvement in children's education and school performance. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27*(6), 817-839.
- Locust, C. (1988). Wounding the spirit: Discrimination and traditional American Indian belief systems. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(3), 315-330.
- Mahler, C., & Smallenburg, H. (1963). Effects of testing programs on the attitudes of students, teachers, parents, and the community. In W. G. Findley (Ed.), *The impact and improvement of school testing programs* (pp. 103-125). Part 2 of the 62nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, J., Miller, J., & Miller, D. (1987). *American Indian cultural perspectives on disability*. Tucson, AZ: Native American Research and Training Center, College of Medicine, University of Arizona.
- Noley, G. (1993). Finding new answers to old questions: By working together, universities and tribal colleges can meet the research needs of American Indian communities. *Tribal College, 4*(3), 24-27.
- Parette, H. P., & Petch-Hogan, B. (2000). Approaching families. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 33*, 4-10.
- Proudfit, J., & Gregor, T. (2014). *The state of American Indian and Alaska Native education in California*. San Marcos, CA: The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, California State University San Marcos.
- Proudfit, J., & San Juan, S. (2012). *The state of American Indian and Alaska Native education in California*. San Marcos, CA: The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, California State University San Marcos.
- Proudfit, J. (2009). *The red book*. San Marcos, CA: California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, California State University San Marcos.
- Public Law 94-142. *Education for all handicapped children act* (1975).
- Public Law 100-297. *Tribally controlled grant schools act* (1988).
- Public Law 107-110. *No child left behind act* (2001).
- Robbins, R., Scherman, A., Holeman, H., & Wilson, J. (2005). Roles of American Indian grandparents in times of cultural crisis. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 12*(2), 62-68.
- Robinson-Zanartu, C., & Majel-Dixon, J. (1996.). Parent voices: American Indian relationships with schools. *Journal of American Indian Education, 36*(1). Accessed April 13, 2014 <http://jaie.asu.edu/v36/V36S1pa1.htm>
- Sénéchal, M., & LeFever, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five year longitudinal study. *Child Development, 73*, 445-460.
- Sheldon, S. B. (2003). Linking school-family-community partnerships in urban Elementary schools to student achievement on state tests. *The Urban Review, 35*(2), 149-165.
- Tippeconnic II., J.W. (1942). *Comanche Indian customs with educational implications*. Unpublished master's thesis, Arizona State Teachers College.
- Tippeconnic, III. J.W. (2000). Reflecting on the past: Some important aspects of Indian education to consider as we look toward the future. *Journal of American Indian Education, 39*, 38-48.
- Tizard, J., Schofield, W.M., and Hewison, Jenny. (1982). Collaboration between teachers and parents in assisting children's reading. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 52*(1), 1-5.
- Trimble, S., Gay, A., & Matthews, J. (2005). Using test score data to focus instruction. *Middle School Journal, 36*(4), 26-32.
- Walsh, J. (1987). Test scores—Are they a distorted proxy for achievement? *Science, 237*(481), 1100.

Honoring Our Elders

- Warner, L.S. (In Press). Native ways of knowing: Linking indigenous theory and practice in higher education. In Virginia Stead (Ed.), *Handbook for higher education admission policy and practice*, US: Peter Lang.
- Warner, L. S. (1994). *The legal framework for parental involvement in the education of American Indian students*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA. April 2-9, 1994. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 369 641)