

Native American/Alaskan Native aspects of ethical reasoning

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Keywords: Indigenous, Engagement, Behavior

University professors in Non-tribal affiliated colleges have difficulty grappling with key dialogues in teaching Native American/Alaskan Native (NAAN) and Indigenous students. The purpose of the presentation is to provide a NAAN perspective on why faculty must learn to transform their courses and teaching styles to encompass traditional Native ways of teaching and learning.

The presentation is based on the work of Alaska Native students and education (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005) and 35 years of data gathered from the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) program (Ross & Wartes, 2013).

Based on 35 years of data working with RAHI, utilizing Inupiaq ethics in teaching leads students to establishing moral intent and engagement of moral behavior. NAAN is based on empowering the learner through earth/nature-based, respecting language (verbal, visual/non-verbal), and having the instructor understand native values, traditions of life, and experiential learning.

The result of the data from RAHI shows students that learn in an environment based on culture, native values, and instructor engagement, there is a higher propensity of students continuing higher education.

This presentation is significant in that it provides an opportunity for faculty to learn how to change engrained attitudes regarding the NAAN student. By incorporating traditional NAAN ways of teaching in the classroom, students will have a practical understanding of both theoretical content as well as Western-style ethical reasoning.

References

- Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (2005). Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Native Ways of Knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 36(1), pp. 8-23
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