Preface To
American Indian Baseline Essays
1993

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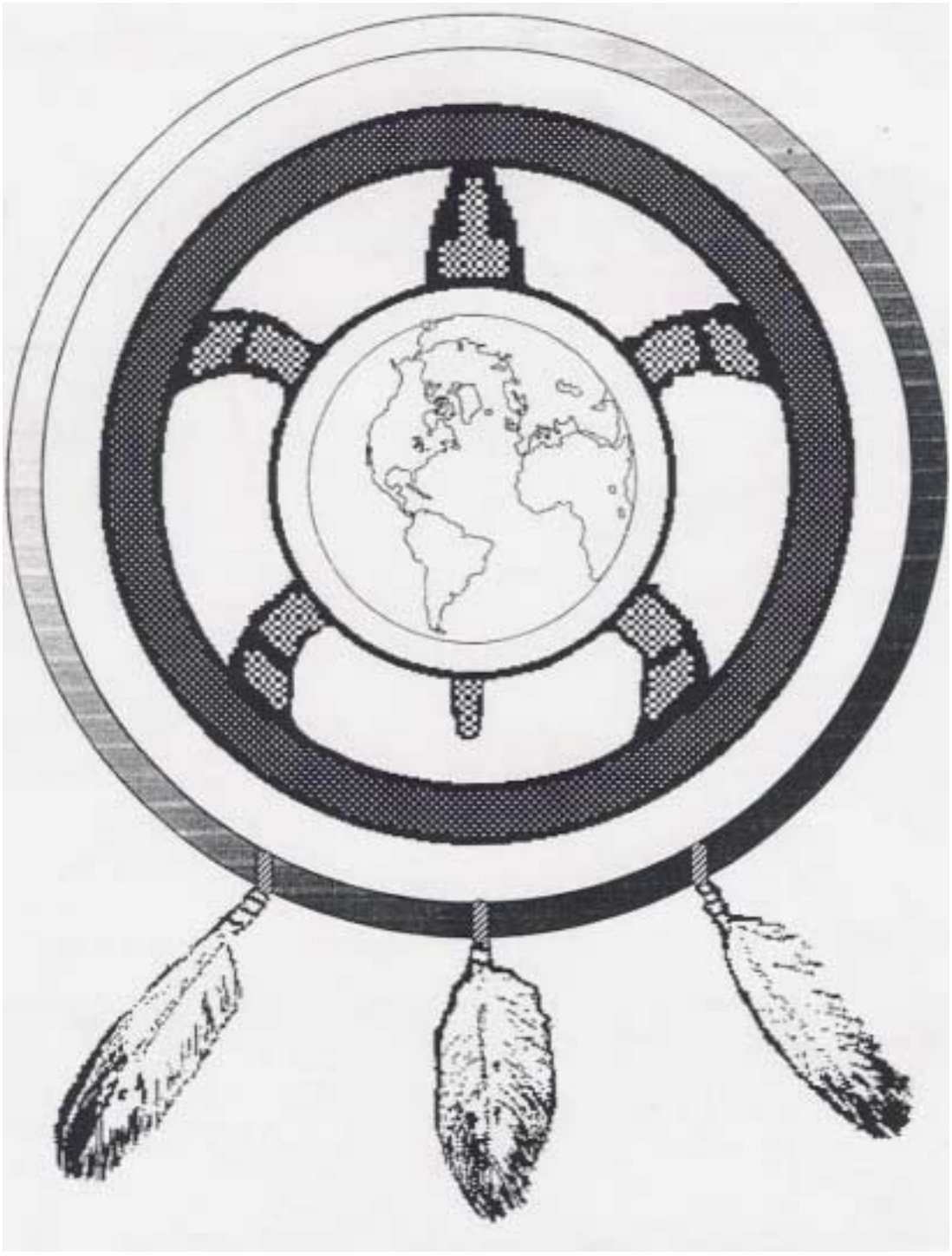
AMERICAN INDIAN



BASELINE ESSAYS

FOREWORD

by Carolyn M. Leonard

The Portland Public School District continues to break new ground in curriculum design with the publication of the **American Indian Baseline Essays**. These essays represent one part of an arduous multicultural/multiethnic curriculum development effort initiated in the early 1980s.

Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III introduced the concept of Baseline Essays to Portland Public Schools in 1982. He states: "The Baseline Essay is intended to be a short story of the experience of a particular geocultural group[1] within a particular academic area from earliest times to the present. The Baseline Essay itself is primarily, though not exclusively, a resource document for the teacher. It provides a sense of coherence, continuity, and comprehensiveness to the experience of a particular group within a given academic area. Taken altogether, the Baseline Essays are the story of a people."

Baseline Essays provide a holistic background and view of a geocultural group's history, culture, and contributions. Using such documents, teachers can infuse cultural content into their classroom instruction while avoiding presentations of isolated bits of information. The curriculum can reflect the multicultural reality of our society, avoiding the treatment of cultural information "as individual, incidental, and episodic rather than essential and integral to the regular curriculum" (Hilliard, 1986).

Dr. Hilliard states: "While lesson plans and curriculum guides may have direct links to day-to-day planning, the Baseline Essays should provide the professional teacher a general perspective and references that will help clarify the isolated information that appears in the curriculum guides or standardized texts."

Organization of the American Indian Baseline Essays Notebook

A definition of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education, a statement regarding the Implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education in Portland Public Schools, and an author's preface precedes the Essays. Each of the Baseline Essays is a complete work in and of itself with its own introduction, illustrations, page numbering system, appendices and index.

Use of the American Indian Baseline Essays

These Essays are one part of a staff inservice package intended to give teachers and other school staff members basic information about the history, culture, and contributions of American Indian peoples. Training workshops and model lesson plans are to be offered to teachers in order to introduce and discuss essay content, helping them implement a more comprehensive instructional picture of this geocultural group.

MULTICULTURAL/MULTIETHNIC EDUCATION

Definition

Multicultural/Multiethnic Education is education that prepares the student to live, learn, and work in a pluralistic world by fostering appreciation and respect for people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education in PPS

For teachers, counselors, administrators, and other Portland Public Schools staff, Multicultural/Multiethnic Education (Education that is Multicultural) is education that consists of three critical components:

1. **Specific content** that provides a balance of information about the history, culture, and contributions of six identified geocultural groups (i.e., African-American, Asian-American, European-American, Hispanic-American, American Indian, and Pacific Island-American)[2];

2. A **structured process** designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and

3. A **perspective** (a philosophy and educational attitude) that guides one in the selection and infusion of information and challenges one to deliver "education that is multicultural" or other school-related services in a manner that promotes access and equity.

Effective implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education (Education that is Multicultural) will establish for the learners that:

1. Individuals from each of the six geocultural groups have made and continue to make significant contributions.

2. No one geocultural group is innately inferior or superior to another. All geocultural groups have made significant contributions.

3. People are interdependent and need one another.

Infusion of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education into all curricular areas should:

1. Build an awareness of one's own cultural and ethnic heritage;

2. Develop an understanding, respect, and appreciation for the history, culture, and contributions of other groups; and

3. Eliminate personal and national ethnocentrism so that one understands that a specific culture is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another.

Teachers and administrators can use the following general suggestions to help bring about greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity:

1. Members of minority groups and women should be shown as meaningful participants in all phases of local, state, national, and international life. Classroom experiences as well as extracurricular activities should reinforce the pluralistic society in which we live.

2. Classroom assignments should provide for both individual and cooperative efforts.

3. Students should have opportunities to explore their own culture as well as the cultures of others.

Satisfactory implementation of “Education that is Multicultural” will lead to the graduation of students who are aware of cultural similarities and differences and are capable of:

1. Living in harmony with people of different ethnic groups and cultures;

2. Working productively with and for people from different ethnic groups and cultures; and

3. Solving local, national, and international problems by reviewing and analyzing information then working cooperatively toward solutions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The American Indian Curriculum Committee, the staff of the Multicultural/ Multiethnic Education Office, and the authors sincerely thank the scholars, teachers and other subject-matter specialists listed below for their written advice on the drafts of these Essays. Thanks as well go to the many teachers, administrators and the School Board members who took time to review the drafts. The authors also especially appreciate the work of the community and professional members of the American Indian Curriculum Committee who worked with us on all aspects of the drafts. They are already listed above, so their names will not be repeated in the reviewer listings below. To all, our gratitude for your work in reviewing and commenting on the drafts of the **American Indian Baseline Essays.** You materially assisted us in improving them.

The content, structure and organization of each essay is the responsibility of its author. However, the perspective in each essay is the result of a collaborative effort of author and the American Indian community representatives serving on the American Indian Curriculum Committee, assisted by the advice and input of the subject-matter specialists. The **American Indian Baseline Essays** do not necessarily represent the views of any of the reviewers or the institutions with which they may be associated (institutional listings below are only for purposes of identification). No endorsement of the Baseline Essays is hereby implied.

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Dr. Jack Weatherford, Anthropology Department, Macalester College, St. Paul
Dr. Willard Bill (Duwamish) and his American Indian History students at North Seattle Community College, Seattle
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Special Acknowledgments

The principal author wishes to especially acknowledge and thank the following people for their personal support, advice and kindness during the development of this project:

Floy C. Pepper (Creek), Rudolph Dreikurs Institute, Portland

Norrine Smokey-Smith (Washoe), Instructional Specialist, Portland Public Schools

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AUTHORS' PREFACE

When teachers in many elementary and secondary schools in the United States pick up the most common tool of their profession, the textbook, they usually find very little information about the contributions, cultures and history of American Indian peoples. Much of what information there is in textbooks oversimplifies or overgeneralizes about the many and diverse native cultures of the two continents of the Americas.

An "outsider" perspective also often limits and sometimes even distorts their presentation of information about these native cultures. This point of view has been shared and repeated by several generations of textbook authors in the United States and other nations in the Western Hemisphere. Despite some recent improvements in textbook treatments, nearly all textbooks remain inadequate in their portrayal of American Indian cultures no matter what the grade level or subject matter. Where else, then, can a teacher turn for better information to share with students?

The non-text literature about American Indians presents a number of different problems for classroom teachers. The major problem is the sheer mass of material – a recent computerized search of the holdings of the Library of Congress shows that there are about 11,000 volumes that have American Indians as their major topic. No one has time to read and assimilate this amount of documentation, so learning how to select key pieces of the literature becomes the challenge.

Many of these books are responsible, serious efforts at documenting American Indian cultures in some of their aspects. Some of them are no more authentic than most texts. Some present misinformation or biased views in subtle ways that require much background knowledge and cultural familiarity to detect. Some of the materials are hard to obtain; many important volumes are out of print, expensive, or shelved away

in private or restricted library collections. So, how does a teacher find the good stuff without spending years at the task?

Here is where a specialist's knowledge of some of the useful literature and some of the living cultures can be helpful, especially when presented in the form of an introduction and orientation. That is the purpose of these Essays, written by American Indian educators for use by their professional colleagues. We have selected what we and many of our professional peers and community members believe is significant content from the extensive information base on American Indian cultures. This information is organized by academic subject areas and presented in digested form as an introductory essay for each subject.

The American Indian Baseline Essays

Even though this volume is a distillation from many sources, reading a presentation with the combined scope of these essays is still a substantial task. It is hoped that teachers will begin with the essay(s) that address their subject(s), and move on to read all the essays as time permits, since there is a good deal of interdisciplinary crossover in the content. Although some of the essays are necessarily extensive, particularly the one dealing with the Social Sciences, effort has been made to keep them comfortably readable for their intended audience of professional educators.

Tables of contents, chronologies and indexes are provided to assist readers in quickly locating the content of the essays. Versions of the essays on computer floppy disks are also available to improve access to the information for those teachers who have Macintosh or IBM-compatible computers. It is the hope of the authors that the information in these Essays will richly reward teachers for their time spent in reading.

These **American Indian Baseline Essays** principally rely on sources from those major university presses and private publishers that have long specialized in respected

series of books on American Indians. Particularly notable among these series are the majority of the Indian-related works published by the University of Oklahoma Press, the University of Nebraska Press, and the University of Washington Press. A number of contemporary American Indian journals were consulted as sources of up-to-date information. Ordinarily, the authors tried to avoid relying on materials circulated only in purely technical or scholarly journals which thus might be hard to locate outside of specialized archives or large university library collections.

The purpose of this series of **American Indian Baseline Essays** is to make a start toward providing teachers with authenticated information, instructional resources and appropriate models of how to infuse academic content about American Indians into their classroom curriculum. Hopefully, they will use this material to fill in some of the textbook omissions and correct many common misconceptions about the history and achievements of American Indians. Toward that end, the **American Indian Baseline Essays** comes to teachers in two major components.

This volume of essays is the first component. It consists of seven subject-matter essays written by American Indian authors. Each essay includes several parts. The first is the core content of the essay itself, which orients teachers to the relevant American Indian history and contributions in the subject area. Each essay synthesizes several cultural themes and subject-matter topics with specific examples that show something of the diversity of American Indian history, cultural practices, and achievements relating to a particular academic discipline.

The next part is an appendix organized as a Chronology; this presents information at levels of tribal and individual detail that would otherwise overwhelm the essay. The Chronology is an independently useful source of detail for infusion into the classroom curriculum. It may also be used as a reference resource with students in the middle

and high school grades who are capable readers.

Some of the essays have additional appendices that offer teachers other kinds of detailed information. Each essay ends with a list of references for items in the Chronology, the reference and explanatory footnotes to the body of the essay and an index.

Lesson Plans and Supplementary Materials

The second component of the **American Indian Baseline Essays** is a volume of supplementary materials intended to assist teachers as they work to infuse subject-matter content pertaining to American Indians into their instruction and mainstream curriculum materials. These supplementary materials include bibliographies and listings of audiovisual materials that are available for classroom use in the Portland Public Schools (and many other school districts as well). There are also statements about the critical topics covered by each of the essays to help orient teachers to the essays' most important ideas and content.

The supplementary materials volume also includes a section of model lesson plans. These are grouped according to grade-level (pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) within specific subject areas. The lesson plans offer teachers examples of how they can extract and infuse portions of the content of each essay into their classroom curriculum. These model lesson plans were developed by Portland Public Schools teachers and American Indian community members in cooperation with many of the District's subject-matter specialists, developmental specialists, educational media specialists, and instructional specialists.

Like the essays, these lesson plans were reviewed and validated by the community representatives of the American Indian Curriculum Committee. The overall effort for the creation of the second component of the **American Indian Baseline Essays** was coordinated by Floy Pepper, a well-known Creek educator and author with

many years of experience in classroom work and curriculum development.

The Authors

Gary Fields, a Lakota/Cree musician, teacher and director of an American Indian performing company based in Utah, was the author of the Music Essay. Chris Landon, a Blackfeet/Pawnee and Italian educator with an interdisciplinary academic background and experience as a teacher and administrator in both public and tribal schools, wrote the Language Arts, Social Sciences, Art, Mathematics, Sciences, and Physical Education/Health Essays. Chris also edited the Music Essay.

Content Review and Validation

Indian and non-Indian cultural and academic specialists, along with the Portland District's large and active Indian community advisory body, the American Indian Curriculum Committee, reviewed the authors' efforts. With representatives selected by many of Portland's Indian organizations, this community group validated the cultural content and perspective of the essays. Together with the authors, this team worked for over three years to prepare and present introductory essays that offer an American Indian perspective on the history, cultures and contributions of American Indians as a geocultural group, going beyond the conventional U.S. school textbook treatments that rarely examine Indian cultures outside the United States.

In addition, many Portland Public Schools teachers, administrators and specialists, along with members of the District's Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Task Force and Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, participated in the review and development of these essays. In all, nearly 200 individuals had an opportunity to contribute to the creation of the first component of the **American Indian Baseline Essays**. Many others helped develop the second volume of supplemental materials. To them all goes a significant part of the credit for this teacher resource.

Conventions Used in the American Indian Baseline Essays

Among the conventions employed in these essays is the use of the term ‘American Indian’. This expression refers to the entire geocultural group native to the two continents of what are now conventionally called the Americas. The use of this term as the formal, generic identifier for the many cultures of the Americas was recommended by the community representatives of the American Indian Curriculum Committee to the Board of Education of the Portland Public Schools in the late 1980s.

The Committee members took into account several facts in reaching this recommendation. They noted that none of the English-language terms commonly used to generically identify the indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere are native terms and that all non-native terms are in some way misleading or inaccurate descriptors of the identity of the peoples native to the Americas. Even the term ‘Americas’ is a foreign import and not a native term for our homelands. Still, the Committee recognized that it is difficult for non-native peoples to master the intricacies of the hundreds of national, tribal and band names by which we distinguish ourselves. Simply using the term ‘Indians’ (Columbus’ misnomer for us, since he mistook our lands for the India of the Orient) without context would be confusing. The Committee also knew that many descendants of immigrants to the Americas consider themselves ‘native’ (i.e., born here) Americans, so they settled on the English term ‘American Indians’ as the one they would prefer the District to use.

Accordingly, ‘American Indian’ appears prominently in the pages of these essays. However, it is not used exclusively for several reasons. Firstly, whenever a proper national or tribal name is known and can be used appropriately within the context of a particular discussion, it is used in preference to the generic term. Spelling of the names of Indian Nations or tribes attempts to conform to usages common today among those peoples, where such conventions are known and where the orthography is within reach

of computer word processors. Where a Nation may have several constituent tribes or bands with distinctive spellings of the generic term for the entire people, the most widely employed traditional name is ordinarily used in these essays. (A notable example is among the seven Nations of the people the French called the 'Sioux', who denote their general grouping above the national level as Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota according to differences in dialect. Their most commonly used general term is Lakota, and so that name most often appears in these pages.)

Secondly, repetition of 'American Indian' every time a general statement is being made would become monotonous; so, on occasion, 'Indian', 'native' or 'Native American' will be used.

Finally, the Inuit Nations ('Eskimos') of the Arctic are an ethnically distinct group which migrated by boat from Asia only a few thousand years ago. Where they are being specifically referred to or distinguished from other peoples of the 'American Indian' geocultural group, they will be referred to as Inuit or (if geographically appropriate) Alaskan Native. They are not and do not consider themselves 'American Indian', but some of the generalizations made about 'American Indians' may apply to them, particularly in contexts relating to cultural adaptations to the American land.

When a word is given in an American Indian language, its first appearance in an essay is highlighted by setting the typeface of the word in the bold style known as Chicago. Ordinarily, the term will be immediately explained in the text. Later use of the word will not be specially marked. Exceptions to this convention are when the Indian word is in common use in English and is likely to be well-understood (such as 'moccasin' or 'tobacco'), or when the word is the name of an American Indian nation or culture.

There are several hundred surviving American Indian languages, only a few of which the authors have limited familiarity. We lacked access to dictionaries or lexicons

of nearly all the native languages, many of which have only recently been set in written form. Availability of existing dictionaries and lexicons is sometimes still limited to linguistic specialists. Our available print sources usually made no attempt to indicate pronunciations of most of the American Indian terms that are included in these Essays. As a result of all this, the diversity and subtleties of tribal pronunciations are generally beyond our expertise. We usually avoid trying to indicate pronunciation here beyond the use of fairly common accent marks.

We can offer one generalization that may help teachers in pronouncing some of the Indian words. Many American Indian languages break syllables between a vowel and the following consonant. The consonants and consonant blends themselves can sometimes be very difficult for a speaker whose home language is English to pronounce authentically; only training by a native speaker of the particular American Indian language involved can assure that a given word is being correctly pronounced.

The terms ‘tribe’, ‘band’, ‘Nation’ and ‘People’ (the latter words both capitalized and uncapitalized) are frequently used throughout these Essays as a way to identify a particular American Indian community, as in ‘the Joseph band of the Nez Percé’, or ‘the Mescalero Apache tribe’, ‘the Yakima Nation’, or ‘the Cherokee people’. There are technically distinct meanings for some of these terms in the fields of sociology, anthropology and political science. The authors have made some effort to use the terms correctly when in a context relating to these subjects; for example, when speaking of the type of social or political organization traditionally used by a given culture (family-, band-, tribal-, chiefdom- or national- types), we attempt to correctly identify the known social characteristics of a group with the appropriate technical term.

In other contexts, however, we follow several other conventions. In English, most American Indian social groupings are casually referred to as ‘tribes’. We most commonly follow this convention or use the uncapitalized alternative of ‘nation’ unless

there is reason to do otherwise. Technical reasons have been indicated above. Other reasons for departure from convention are that some American Indian communities have formally incorporated the capitalized term ‘Nation’ into their official community name; in Canada, Indian communities are historically and legally referred to as ‘bands’. Something similar occurs with the terms used for designating the portion of a tribe’s original homeland (or other lands exchanged for the homelands) reserved by treaty for the control and use of the tribe within a modern post-colonial nation like the U.S., Canada, or Brazil. In the U.S., such reserved homelands are called ‘reservations’ while in Brazil and Canada, the terms ‘reservado’ and ‘reserve’ are used respectively.

Another convention used here relates to the dating system employed in Chronology of each essay. The Gregorian calendar and its European antecedents (along with the ‘B.C.’ notation introduced in 1627 by Petavius, an astronomer) is only one of a number of systems used around the world for enumerating the years. It is an import to the Americas, where many cultures had earlier devised their own calendars, some more precise than the Gregorian. Nonetheless, it is the system with which most readers of these essays are familiar; thus, dates in the Chronologies and in the essays themselves are numbered from the ‘0’ year traditionally associated with the birth of Jesus Christ.

However, the authors do not employ in the Chronologies the commonplace Christian suffix notations of ‘A.D.’ and ‘B.C.’ for dates following and preceding the ‘0’ year respectively. Instead, the dates prior to year ‘0’ are prefixed by a minus (-) sign while ‘0’ and dates following are denoted by numbers without prefix.

Annual dates in the Chronologies are printed in either plainface or **boldface** type in the left margin. A date in **boldface** type indicates an historical event that was entirely or principally due to the initiative of American Indians. A date in plainface type indicates that the historical event referenced, while it concerned or involved American Indians in

some way, was principally due to the initiative of non-Indians. Where multiple events are listed after the year, the date will be given in **boldface** if at least the first of the listed events was principally due to American Indian initiatives.

Some Final Thoughts

The journalist Allan Girdler once offered the following remark in the introduction to one of his books:

> There may be errors in this book. I know that. What I don't know is where they are.

One can hardly be more honest about a book than that.

The Portland Public Schools expects to occasionally revise these Essays and welcomes comments and suggestions by readers who can help identify errors of fact, especially if they can supply substantive documentation to support their suggested revisions. Opinions relating to interpretations will also be respectfully considered, bearing in mind that the essays present the story of American Indian peoples from an American Indian perspective.

All of the many people who contributed to this volume of **American Indian Baseline Essays** welcome you to this introduction to some of the history, achievements and contributions of the hundreds of American Indian cultures. We have endeavored to cover a great deal of material in a way that we hope will assist you in sharing authentic information about American Indians with all your students.

We can not say that ours is the 'last word' on the subject, just as it is not the first. We make no pretense of perfection or omniscience here. We have simply worked hard to do a good job of preparing an orientation that we believe will be helpful to many teachers. Let this material be a starting place, if you haven't already started on your own path of learning about American Indian peoples. If you have, may it help you to go

further on your way. If you find one of our mistakes, let us know...this is an open book, and we are still learning ourselves.

These essays are dedicated to the Peoples whose stories are here and to all those whose stories we haven't had the chance to hear.

An Introduction to the Recurring Themes
in the American Indian Baseline Essays

by Chris R. Landon

American Indian cultures number in the hundreds and display an astounding diversity of beliefs and customs. It is seldom wise to depend too heavily on general statements about what 'Indians' are, or do, or think. Still, most of us recognize among our many cultures a number of similar or common beliefs and practices. These, taken together, may well constitute the distinctive character of American Indians when thought of as a geocultural group. Accordingly, they form the unifying themes that run throughout this series of essays in explicit and implicit ways. These themes are introduced in the following paragraphs. Thematic statements are in *italics*. Key thematic concepts are in **boldface**. The thematic statements are followed by supportive or explanatory information in most cases.

American Indians' tribal and personal identity is shaped almost universally by a pervasive set of traditions about our ***Relation to the Land.***

These traditions and identities are the basis of American Indians' beliefs, spiritual practices and ***Religion.***

American Indians' identities and beliefs are expressed through a distinctive sense of ***Esthetics****.*

American Indians' identities, beliefs and esthetics lead to an ***Inclusive Humane View*** *of our relations to other peoples, including the beings of the air, land, and water, as peoples equal to ourselves.*

Dr. N. Scott Momaday, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Kiowa author and professor of English, suggests in one of his essays that the above are the central themes of Indian life.[3] He begins with the premise that American Indians – or any people – think of

themselves in a certain way and are precisely equal to their idea of who they are. This idea of self, for American Indian people, centers on a characteristic awareness of four aspects of human existence. These are: the pervasive connection of life with the land; the sacredness of all of interconnected existence and the consequent necessity of mutual respect among all things; the distinctive, pervasive sense of order in American Indian perceptions and awareness that culminates in an artistic way of life; and finally, the ideal of a fully realized humanity in the self and among all people.

Rupert Costo and Jeanette Henry Costo, two founders of the American Indian Historical Society, remind us of the diversity among Indian cultures, yet note a fundamental unity among Indian people. This unity is based on common challenges faced by all Indian Nations, but is also a reflection of the above four recurring themes of American Indian life.

> Conditions affecting various tribes and reservations vary on the basis of geographic location, culture of the people, economics, and religious beliefs. This is true of any people, and the differences among Indian people are small indeed, when one considers their unity on basic, important issues confronting all the people.[4]

Given the sense of relationship, reverence, beauty and equality which American Indians' seek to perpetuate in our cultures, we view and judge our actions from a perspective of their ***Appropriateness*** *in maintaining balance and harmony among all things.*

In another of his essays, Scott Momaday suggests the idea of appropriateness as another important theme of American Indian life.[5] He asserts that you cannot understand how Indians think of themselves in relation to the world around them unless you understand their conception of what is appropriate; particularly what is morally appropriate within the context of that relationship. One good approach to developing such an understanding involves becoming familar with the particular tribal culture involved, especially its oral traditions and its living members, and combining this

knowledge with years of on-the-spot experience of the tribal homeland in all of its physical and spiritual attributes. Done with sincerity and an open mind, this approach can yield deep knowledge of the culture and its view of itself in context as a part of life. (While this sounds like and is a major task, many people of all races have accomplished it over the years.)

Since the world in which we live and maintain appropriate relationships is always changing, ***Adaptation*** *of our ways and beliefs is a central fact of our cultures.*

Culture arises from the accumulating efforts over time by groups of people seeking to find ways to live. Characteristic of those efforts is the creation and modification of beliefs and behaviors to meet the environmental and social conditions in which people find themselves. Since these conditions change with time and place, any group of people who seek to remain in balance with their physical and social environment must adapt their culture as a necessary response to change.

For American Indian peoples, adaptation means that our cultures have never been static. However, we tend to try to change only what needs changing in our cultures to promote well-being and survival in a balanced way. There is strong historical and contemporary evidence that we actively preserve as much of our beliefs and behaviors (these forrm our **traditions**) as possible as a part of our adaptation to changing circumstances. The distinctive traditions of a given American Indian people reflect centuries of adaptations and reveal the course of their unique, changing relationships with the land and each other.

Environmental conditions and resources, knowledge about ways in which humans can interact with the environment, and community beliefs about which of those ways form an acceptable pattern of adaptations all constrain the development of culture. Culture, as a living social synthesis of the world and our collective responses to it, is a holistic continuum that really cannot be properly understood by analytic dissection into

component parts. Culture is thus best seen as an integral, organic development of humanity, just as humanity is an integral, organic development of life on Earth.

*As our cultures and personal lives change, we rely upon a combination of traditions and **Vision** to guide us in making appropriate adaptations.*

A principal means of personal and cultural orientation to the mystery of life for American Indian peoples is vision. Use of this English word should not mislead readers into thinking that Indians are talking about a property of sight *per se*. What we refer to is a form of awareness that may be experienced in the form of a visual image.

However, vision may offer nothing visual at all, as the image may be one of sound, or touch, or any other sense, or even something that comes in a nameless way, mysterious but undeniably there. Vision may come complete with understandings in the form of words or symbols. Vision may appear to be dream or memory. Vision may be experienced as an instantaneous, primary, intuitive certainty regarding some aspect(s) of existence.

In whatever form it is experienced, vision has an obvious reality that makes it a compelling focus for the thoughts and imagination. It has been called “a whole and irrevocable act of the imagination.”[6]

Vision may be a personal awareness. It may be a common experience shared by a group in a variety of settings or activities, or it might become a ceremonial experience by being shared in performance, when a personal vision is recreated with the help of others to bring the power and reality of the vision from the spiritual world into the shared physical world.

Vision functions to allow humans to see life as a whole, rich with guiding symbols and with personal experience of connections to other parts of creation. This gives a sense of place and purpose to individual and community life. Vision helps orient human action to necessary and appropriate participation in the circle of life. It provides human

life with purpose, means and meaning. Vision can both answer questions and raise them as challenges by which we can grow and gain understanding within the mystery of life.

The product of our knowledge about the nature of ourselves and the world is a philosophy that emphasizes a ***Holistic World View.***

A 'world view' (literally translated from the German term *Weltanschauung*) is defined as "a comprehensive conception or image of the universe and of humanity's relation to it."[7] The world view and languages of the European-American geocultural group most commonly take an analytic approach to awareness of reality. An analytic approach is one where reality is physically or mentally divided and subdivided into 'parts' which can then be investigated and understood in (supposed) physical or intellectual isolation. An image of reality as a whole is then assembled by an inductive summation and generalization of what has been learned about the 'parts'.

American Indians' contemporary use of the colonial English, French or Spanish languages in much of our everyday speech will sometimes suggest to others that we too have an analytic world view, that we conceive a separateness among things and events.

However, American Indian cultures have traditionally held a holistic world view. This is a form of awareness that synthesizes perceptions about reality in full, living context. While we of course observe, recognize and interact with individual beings, the cognitive emphasis in a holistic world view is on the whole network of relationships among all beings and on the meanings of interactions within that network.

Instead of a simple summation of parts of the world conceived as objects, American Indian images of reality can be likened to a complex matrix table of correlations where the interaction effects are often of greater strength and significance than any other effects.

A holistic world view may also be compared to an infinitely large tapestry of highly coordinated, intricate patterns and color that can never be understood or fully experienced by pulling the threads apart or by focusing on one small corner only.

Similarly, understanding of American Indian cultures and philosophies is distorted they are picked apart. Such an attempt would result in failure to perceive the wholeness and continuities of life as it is experienced within the contexts of American Indian cultures.

As the environment changes with alterations of climate, place and the activities of human and non-human populations, as technology evolves, as philosophy responds to new insights or to changing conditions, American Indian cultures continually adapt their beliefs and behaviors in search of balance and harmony and the mysterious power of life. So far as we succeed in maintaining this traditional world view, we remain integrated with the world as an inseparable expression of life, and not merely as a component 'part.'

I could metaphorically say that while words within our lyrics may change, our song remains the same. Whatever the words, American Indians believe that the need of the world to hear our song is as great as our need to sing it. Singer and listener alike, we are one with life.

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[1]The Portland School District has identified six geo-cultural groups: African-American, Asian-American, European-American, Hispanic-American, Pacific Island-American, and American Indian.

[2]The system of geo-cultural groupings is the simplest method of locating and retrieving information. It is designed to include people all over the world. Cultural groups are (in so far as possible) identified by their location on or near the continents. American Indians include the native inhabitants of both continents of the Western Hemisphere and include, in this context only, the ethnically distinct Inuit ("Eskimo") peoples of the Arctic. Hispanic-Americans are designated for the purpose of these Essays as a geocultural group, recognizing however their unique cultural and historical status as a "new race" formed from the uniting of native American Indian and immigrant European and African ethnic stocks in the Americas.

[3]Momaday, N. Scott, "I am Alive..."in Billiard (ed.) **The World of the American Indian**. Washington, D.C.: The National Geographic Society, 1974, 1989, p. 11-26.

[4]Costo, Rupert and Henry, Jeanette, **Indian Treaties: Two Centuries of Dishonor.** San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, 1977, p. 126-127.

[5]Momaday, N. Scott, "Native American Attitudes to the Environment" in Walter Capps (ed.) **Seeing With a Native Eye.** NY: Harper Forum Books, 1976, p. 79-85.

[6] Momaday, N. Scott, in Billiard *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[7]Flexner, Stuart (ed.), **Random House Dictionary of the English Language**, Second Edition, unabridged, p. 2160; defining "Weltanschauung".