The KSU Special Coordinator for Indigenous Partnerships discusses recent partnership academy replication efforts with the Osage Nation, and how the model can be reinterpreted for Indian Country.

Stitching a New Pattern in Educational Leadership: Reinterpreting a University Partnership Academy Model for Native Nations

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Introduction

With this themed issue of *Educational Considerations* focused on using university-district partnership academies to prepare leaders for educational settings, it is important to consider the value of this model in socially diverse environments and especially the potential for native nations to use this approach for training emerging educational leaders. Specifically, when Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) discussed the need for this partnership model to better merge theory and practice in educational leadership training programs, they opened up a flexible space for education institutions to weave culturally responsive learning experiences into their professional capacity-building model. In doing so, this allows for the incorporation of important place-based learning experiences that rely on energy and relationships found within Indigenous communities (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). With this in mind, as Indigenous communities explore ways to build their capacities in pursuit of enhanced educational sovereignty and self-determination (Smith, 1999), I posit that this university-district partnership model can be used in Indigenous communities to better prepare educational leaders for the entangled settler-colonial environments in which they practice.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the entangled position of being an Indigenous educator, and how Miller, Devin, and Shoop's (2007) partnership academy model can adapt to this position and fill a complex capacity-building need in Indian Country. Since Kansas State University and the Osage Nation have recently developed a new partnership academy to begin in the Fall of 2016, I will use this specific example to help illustrate the perspective of native nations in our education systems, and explore how this model is being adapted for the Osage community. In the broader conversation, this article is intended to help further the argument that there is a need to broadly rethink educational leadership training programs, especially in the diverse Indigenous communities found across Indian Country.

A Background on Kansas State University's Partnership Academies

Kansas State University's College of Education has a long history of partnering with school districts for professional leadership development programming.[1] Around the turn of the century, these partnerships began to take on the form of two-year, site-based academies in which students, working within a cohort of peers, earn a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership upon completion of the program. These efforts were aimed not only at providing robust professional development opportunities for the partnering districts, but they also were aimed at trying to bridge the gap between theory and real-world practice in leadership training, as discussed by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007). To accomplish this, they created a university-district partnership model that deprioritizes campus-based, discrete course offerings, and instead focuses on engaging students in a fully-integrated and spiraling curriculum which provides ongoing local mentorship and field experiences in conjunction with coursework emphasizing modern research and theory in the field of educational leadership.

As discussed throughout this themed issue, this partnership model has many valuable qualities in contrast to traditional educational leadership training programs, and many school districts have chosen to partner with KSU as they try to build their institutional leadership capacities.[2] The model has also been successfully replicated by North Dakota State University, which adapted it to fit the needs in their community.[3] This article continues this conversation regarding replicability, focusing on how the model is being adapted for the up-and-coming Osage Nation Educational Leadership Academy.

Educational Leadership from a Native Nation's Perspective: A Colonial Entanglement

Indian Education is a highly bureaucratic arena that requires educators to navigate overlapping political sovereignties, complex sociocultural boundaries, and jurisdictional gray areas. This puts educational leaders in these communities in a complicated position and they must possess a highly unique skill set in order to reach their students, as well as have the ability to stitch together programs that combine elements from a multiplicity of sociocultural and political institutions.

This section begins with a short background of Indian education from the general perspective of native nations and then moves on to describe the specific position of these governments and their respective education departments (tribal education departments - TEDs).[4] I then use the Osage Nation's educational systems to illustrate how this complex position looks in practical terms, a position which Osage anthropologist Jean Dennison might term a "settler-colonial entanglement."

Foundational Understandings of the Indian Education Landscape

Often, the topic of Indian education in mainstream circles is narrowly perceived to be a group of federally run "Indian Schools" managed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which are essentially the modern remnants of the infamous "kill the Indian, save the man" programs (Churchill, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2012). In reality, Indian education is much more than that, especially considering only 6% of Indian students in the U.S. are enrolled in BIE schools, while 92% of Indian students are attending general public schools both on and off Indian land (TEDNA, 2011). For those who are unfamiliar with the porous and checkered nature of reservation boundaries, land ownership, and the history of allotments, it may come as a surprise to find out that there are an estimated 739 public schools on Indian land. These schools, along with many more schools found off Indian land in urban, suburban, and other rural areas, are often managed by state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs), and not necessarily the local tribes (TEDNA 2011). This is the reality of the Indian education landscape, which is further complicated by the fact that native nations possess an inherent sovereign right over the education of their youth – an authority that extends to its members regardless of what school they are attending or where it is located (TEDNA 2006). Ultimately, most American Indian students are being taught in general public schools, and this creates a clear entanglement of educational rights, responsibilities, and efforts from a variety of sociocultural and political positions – especially for Tribal Education Departments.

The Position of Native Nations and their Education Leaders

Tribal Education Departments (TEDs), sometimes referred to as Tribal Education Agencies (TEAs), are defined as "the departments in tribes responsible for supporting the education of tribal members, created by sovereign governments of federally recognized Indian tribes" (Mackety, Bachler, Barley, & Cicchinelli, 2009). Currently, of the 567 federally recognized native nations across the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2016), over 200 of them have some form of TED, which are most often found in the executive branch of their government and tasked with carrying out their nation's educational goals (TEDNA 2011). In these communities, TEDs often serve as primary vehicles through which native nations execute their education agendas, especially when these sovereign nations are not operating the K-12 schools and/or colleges that enroll their members.

Since each native nation establishes TEDs according to their respective legal procedures and education agendas, the structural makeup and funding streams of each TED can vary widely along with the roles they play in their respective education landscapes. As a result, they do not mirror the institutional uniformity found across typical LEAs and SEAs. Overall, aside from reports issued by the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly in conjunction with the Native American Rights Fund, there is minimal literature specifically on TEDs, with the exception of one study by Mackety et al. (2009), which took a closer look at TEDs in the Central Region States and found that they were involved in a variety of services and programs, such as:

- early childhood programs
- standards and curricula development
- assessments

- graduation support
- attendance support
- dropout prevention
- scholarships
- parent involvement
- teacher training
- accrediting BIA-funded schools
- vocational training
- higher education
- operating schools, colleges, museums, libraries, or cultural centers
- administering and evaluating federal contract and grant programs
- maintaining and analyzing educational statistics on tribal members
- serving as liaisons between tribes, governments, schools, and families
- enforcing tribal education laws
- offering culture and language instruction
- substance abuse prevention
- parenting skills workshops
- family intervention counseling (Mackety et al., 2009).

It is important to understand that this is a general list of what you may find in TEDs across the Central Region States, and that some may be tasked with only a few of these services or programs, while others may have the capacity to take on more. Essentially, one should not expect to find all of these programs in most TEDs.

Again, approximately 92% of American Indian students attend general public schools (TEDNA, 2011), so even though "operating schools" is listed as a potential service, many TEDs do not operate K-12 schools. While many native nations manage early childhood programs, the majority of students eventually attend local public schools. When these American Indian students attend state-run K-12 and postsecondary institutions, their tribal governments often shift to a supporting role in their education and have less influence over their day-to-day learning environments. This position is what puts TEDs clearly in an intersectional zone of overlapping sovereignties: as they exercise their sovereign right to educate their members, their geographic and jurisdictional realities inherently link them to a variety of outside institutions. As a result, Indigenous education leaders must be prepared to navigate and negotiate the bureaucracies and educational systems not only of their own institutions, but also of multiple LEAs and SEAs, along with the variety of offices and programs found in the executive branch of the federal government that are linked to modern and historic legislation and treaties.

In addition to traversing these bureaucratic and political boundaries, Indigenous educators must also be able work in distinct cultural spaces. On one hand, they are mired in U.S. legal and bureaucratic processes that are radically more complex than those encountered by non-Indigenous educators, while on another, they work within Indigenous educational paradigms that are founded on ways of knowing that were once completely detached from Euro-American philosophies. Although the latter are often framed as such,

these cultural spaces are not stuck in the past – they are ever-evolving and alive in the present. Additionally, these Indigenous spaces possess their own internal diversity; each tribe has distinct qualities that unite its members as a people, but these qualities can find their own adaptations and interpretations across each community, which creates an internal space for dialogue, discussion, and disagreements. These are spaces that are at times ironically foreign to even some cultural insiders, and though the sociocultural norms are distinctly different from what is found in the settler-colonial majority, they are not entirely detached from these mainstream ways of knowing. These distinct cultural spaces take on both formal and informal varieties, from traditional ceremonies to social media, and knowing how to navigate these spaces is a very important skill that educational leaders in Indian Country should possess. If educational leaders in these communities have no experience in these spaces, then they run the risk of unintentionally continuing the "kill the Indian, save the man" policies of the past (Churchill, 2004). This topic is discussed in more detail later on, but for now, it must be acknowledged that there is a need for educational leaders to have experience in, or at least knowledge of, traditional Indigenous ways, so they can be more prepared to weave Indigenous skills and values into the educational programming in their communities and continue to carry those ways into the future.

Ultimately, educational leaders trained in many university programs are often being prepared for service in a building, district, or other mainstream institution that operates in their respective state. These state-focused programs do not prepare Indigenous education leaders for the more complex cultural and institutional environments found in American Indian systems. As a result, Indigenous education leaders are most often operating from a radically different position than their peers, but are still inherently linked to the same state-run systems, among many others. This reality can have a marginalizing effect on these leaders in training; so recognizing the stark differences in the experiences of and demands on Indigenous educators underlines the need to consider alternative leadership preparation that can prepare educational leaders for a variety of educational settings. I turn here to the Osage Nation to provide a concrete example of: 1) the nuanced realities of Indigenous education from the perspective of native nations; and 2) the types of educational environments Indigenous leaders need to be prepared to manage as they weave together new programs that reflect their position.

Osage Nation Education: An Example

To help illustrate what this entangled position can look like, below I have included a short list of some of the current educational programming in the Osage Nation. To be clear, the Osage Nation has an Education Department, but all of their educational efforts are not housed solely in that department; there is also an Osage Nation Language Department, Cultural Center, and Museum along with other traditional ceremonies and institutions outside of the government that play strong roles in education but lack the

"education" moniker that we associate with the field.[5] A more thorough list of programs can be found in the Osage Nation Resource Directory (Osage Nation, 2016), but a snapshot of several Osage education programs helps illustrate the unique position of native nations in education:[6]

The Wah.Zha.Zhi (Osage) Early Learning Academy (WELA) and Head Start: A collection of early learning centers found across the Osage community for children ages six weeks to five years that incorporates Osage skills, knowledge, and language into daily learning experiences and curricula. This program is open to Osages, other natives, and nonnatives. The federal Head Start program and WELA were originally housed as a joint program, directed by federal guidlines, but have recently seperated into two different programs.

The Osage Nation School Support Program: A program that works in partnership with the local public schools, in which the Osage Nation hires Tribal Education Advocates who act as liaisons to support Osage students in the local public schools. This program is found in 13 rural districts across the greater Osage community.

Osage Nation Concurrent Enrollment Program: A program constructed in partnership with Tulsa Community College and area high schools that offers high school students and community members an opportunity to enroll in college courses for credit. Courses are delivered in Osage Nation facilities, and local high schools rearrange their course schedules on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to allow some of their students to attend. Enrollment is open to both Osage and non-Osage students.

Johnson O'Malley Program (JOM): A federal program which provides supplementary financial assistance to help meet the unique needs of Osage and non-Osage American Indian students attending local public schools in the Osage community. This program serves pre-K-12 students in 12 local school districts.

Osage Nation Tutoring Program and the Nationwide Academic Tutoring Program: These are two tutoring programs administered by the Osage Nation Education Department designed to help Osage students who are struggling in K-12 schools. The Nationwide tutoring program is a service for Osage students across the country, while the other is specifically for students in the jurisdictional boundaries of the Osage Nation. Recently, the program that specifically serves local students has been merged with the Osage Nation School Support Program listed above. For these tutoring services, the Osage Nation contracts teachers in the local K-12 systems to work with Osage students.

Osage Nation Career Training and Higher Education Scholarship Programs: These two programs are designed to help provide financial assistance to Osage students in postsecondary educational environments who are pursuing degrees and certifications.

Osage Nation Cultural Center: This center hosts not only Osage cultural and social events, it is also an educational venue that offers a variety of community courses on how to make traditional Osage clothing. All courses are open to the public. Additionally, the Cultural Center manages an Osage library, maintains an heirloom seed garden, and hosts guest lectures from cultural and academic leaders.

The Osage Language Department: This department is led by some of the few remaining Osages who can understand and speak the language better than most; they are tasked with preserving the Osage language from extinction through a variety of programs. These Osage language speakers host community courses at various levels of difficulty, and reach Osage citizens through course offerings at a variety of locations across the community, including online. For students in K-12 schools, leaders in this department participated in a statewide movement in Oklahoma to certify Indigenous languages as a "world language." They now partner with several local school districts and provide those schools with full-time language teachers who teach Osage Language 1 and 2 at the high school level.

Wah.Zha.Zhi Immersion Project: This program is currently an early childhood immersion school intended to help save the Osage language from extinction. The goal is to eventually build this project into a birth-through-12th-grade school system that is rich in Osage skills, knowledges, and language.

As one can see, these Osage educational programs are a unique collection of efforts that range from pre-K to higher education. Together, these initiatives require skills and knowledge in Osage cultures, early childhood development, K-12 education programming, higher education, adult education, and more. These are simply the bureaucratic and jurisdictional realities that define education from the perspective of the Osage Nation, and these programs clearly illustrate unique versions of educational programming.

Ultimately, training education leaders specifically for this culturally rich and programmatically diverse environment would require a unique approach, one that would need to include Osage input and consistently look at leadership outside of K-12 building-level and district-level contexts. Therefore, these leaders should have the skills not only to carry Osage ways into the future, but also be able to recognize and understand the settler-colonial entanglements in the community.

The Position of Osage Education: A Colonial Entanglement

There are several frameworks and academic discussions applicable to Indigenous educators. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) discuss the roles of boundary crossing and being boundary brokers, while Jones and Jenkins (2008) discuss the nuances of educational partnerships across the indigene-colonizer hyphen. In the context of political sovereignty, Bruyneel (2007) also discusses the need to position U.S.-Indigenous relations in a third space of sovereignty, which could be applicable when describing the position of Indigenous educators. However, since this discussion has focused on the context of Osage education, I feel it is

necessary to align this conversation with an Osage framework; Dennison's ribbon work metaphor (2012; 2013) helps structure and visualize the concept of settler-colonial and Indigenous entanglements. This metaphor, which was created in the context of political anthropology and originally used to conceptualize the creation of a new Osage constitution in 2004-06, has direct relevance to this conversation about educational leadership training.

Osage ribbon work is found throughout our local communities, especially in traditional environments, and each pattern possesses a unique collection of colors and geometric shapes that sets it apart from others. These patterns are seen everywhere during Osage ceremonies – on clothes, blankets, bags, towels, etc., – and they serve as an image that is strongly connected to Osage identity. Community members can take classes hosted by the Cultural Center on how to create their own ribbon work patterns, and if they lack the skills to make their own, Osages will often pay a high price to have patterns custom-made for their traditional clothing. Beyond clothing, these patterns are also found in modern graphic design, on websites, official government documents and letterheads, and even murals, paintings, and sculptures throughout the community; thus they signify more than a clothing design, marking a specific Indigenous national identity across genres and material, in both real and virtual spaces. Even though other Indigenous communities also use ribbon work, Osage-specific shapes and patterns possess a unique quality, and serve as symbols of a collective Osage identity. As an important part of the Osage community, the ubiquity of Osage ribbon designs makes Dennison's metaphor even more relevant. She writes:

> For their part the Osage and all American Indian nations have long understood the colonial process as at once devastating and full of potential. Osage ribbon work, born out of eighteenth-century trade with the French, is perhaps the ideal metaphor of colonial entanglement. Using the raw material and tools obtained from the French, Osage artists began by tearing the rayon taffeta into strips and then cutting, folding, and sowing [sic] it back together to form something both beautiful and uniquely Osage. In picking up the pieces, both those shattered by and created through the colonial process, and weaving them into their own original patterns, Osage artists formed the tangled pieces of colonialism into their own statements of Osage sovereignty. Osage ribbon work reminds us that it is possible to create new and powerful forms out of an ongoing colonial process. (Dennison, 2012, p. 7)

This metaphor not only describes the entangled reality of the Osage political landscape, it also serves as a strong pedagogical tool in understanding the sociocultural and political layers of Osage education. Osages must take the educational systems forced upon them through generations of settler-colonial hegemony and then incorporate local culture by "cutting, folding, and sowing" programs together that form "their own statements of Osage sovereignty."

Dennison (2013) later elaborates on this metaphor by framing Osage efforts in the context of *Stitching Osage Governance into the Future*, something that Osage education leaders must do if they hope to reach their members. She emphasizes that "the Osage Nation must look to all of its resources, including those threads left from and created out of the ongoing colonial processes, to try to shape something that will not just serve the current needs of the Osage people, but enable a stronger future" (p. 125). This is the sociocultural and political reality of Osage education and educational leaders must be able to navigate this landscape in order to reach their citizens and move Osage ways into the future.

As indicated in the programs listed above, many Osage education efforts occupy intersectional boundary zones that require leaders to create new patterns, weaving together Osage cultural institutions, early childhood and K-12 learning environments, higher education opportunities, adult learning environments, and more. For example, in order to reach their students in K-12 schools, Osage educators must negotiate partnerships with local districts, and then hire language teachers and Tribal Education Advocates to work in those systems. They also have to ask some of the few remaining speakers to produce educational systems from the ground up, even if those speakers have minimal experience or training in doing so. In that same process, language leaders lobbied at the state level for their courses to be accepted for "world language" credit in schools, and the power to certify their own language teachers. In higher education efforts, the Osage Nation currently does not have the capacity to operate a college or university that could be infused with local skills and knowledge to help fill local needs, which means they need to repurpose existing higher education programs for their citizens. To do so, they provide scholarship funds to send their members to outside institutions in hopes that they will receive professional training that can benefit the individuals and the community.

Using Dennison's metaphor as a framework, these are just a few examples of how the Osage Nation creates new ribbon work patterns in education and pieces together their own unique statements of sovereignty. There are many more developments and programs that could make this list, but clearly, these programs occupy unique and entangled spaces in the field of education and Osage leaders are continually trying to stitch new patterns. As Dennison (2012) puts it, "Osage ribbon work reminds us that it is possible to create new and powerful forms out of an ongoing colonial process" (p. 7), which is exactly what Osage leaders are doing. Using what they have available – the federal, state, and local education systems that have been placed upon them – they continue to explore how to use education to move Osage culture and language into the future and improve the success and happiness levels of their people, while also expanding the professional capacities of the Osage Nation.

Ultimately, this unique environment demands a unique approach to professional capacity building. Educational leaders in this environment need to be exposed to much more than typical P-12 contexts, which is what drives many educational leadership training models. These emerging

leaders need a healthy dose of Indigenous contextualization, some frequent exposure to leadership philosophies in their own local contexts, and they simply need to be given the opportunity to engage in unique conversations that are typically absent in the traditional P-12 lens: conversations about Osage-specific philosophies and worldviews, along with larger Indigenous-focused educational initiatives and models occurring throughout Indian Country. Additionally, they need to be given focused learning experiences that enhance their critical consciousness and encourage them to develop the ability to recognize the realities of the space in which they reside – an entangled environment characterized by settler-colonial hegemony and Indigenous revitalization. This is the reason this partnership academy model provides an appropriate alternative to traditional educational leadership training.

Merging Theory and Practice through Partnership Creates an Opening for Indigenous Perspectives, and Fills a Need

Writing on the topic of Indigenous leadership, Pewewardy (2015a) writes:

> I advocate the need for a critical awakening of Indigenous peoples with an emphasis on the fact that this awakening can occur only through a systematic study of our own rich tribal heritage. I believe the first step in becoming self-determined is examining the "sovereign self" (p. 71).

As Pewewardy emphasizes, there is a strong need for Indigenous leaders to reengage in our own cultures. To go a step further, I believe this principle needs to be woven and stitched into professional educator training and Indigenous capacity-building efforts, and that the partnership academy model as described by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) allows for this to happen. To be clear, this is not the first conversation aimed at improving Indigenous educator preparation, as many others have expressed similar concerns or built similar partnerships (White, Bedonie, de Groat, Lockard, & Honani, 2007; Jacobs et al., 2001; Belgarde, Mitchell, & Arquero, 2003; Reyhner & Jacobs, 2002). However, this article outlines the first efforts to adapt the Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) master's academy partnership model for Indian Country, which is meant to build on the foundations laid by others.

To further elaborate on Pewewardy's statement above, in Indigenous communities there are often clear separations between professional leaders of institutions (elected officials, certified teachers, building or district administrators, etc.) and cultural leaders (elders, language speakers, ceremonial leaders, etc.). Thus, when looking for educational leaders, it can be difficult to find individuals who are experienced in both. This is an issue that Indigenous leaders must cope with as they try to hire people who can utilize education systems to preserve cultural knowledge and weave new patterns together that will carry their sovereign nations into the future.

Unfortunately, because of the long and ongoing history of settler-colonialism in the U.S., it is fairly easy to find card-carrying American Indians who know little about their own histories or traditional ways; educators are no exception. One can grow up in a family detached from traditional knowledge, attend a university to obtain a degree, and even return to the community to work, all the while carrying a government-issued enrollment card. Membership and identity in an Indigenous community are complex topics (Barker, 2011; TallBear, 2013; Horse, 2007; Sturm, 2002; Dennison, 2012) especially considering the assimilationist efforts of the past (Churchill, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2012). While solving these thorny problems is beyond the scope of this article, one thing is clear: it would be difficult for a leader to create educational programs that attempt to move traditional skills, knowledges, or worldviews into the future, if they are not themselves familiar with them. At the same time, it also would be difficult for a cultural leader who lacks training in education systems and institutional leadership to navigate educational bureaucracies. These complex realities reveal the need for Indigenous education leaders who can both recognize these complexities and navigate them in a culturally appropriate manner – we need the next generation of leaders who are being educated in today's degree programs to be knowledgeable not only about their own Indigenous ways, but also knowledgeable about institutional leadership in education. This partnership academy model provides potential answers to this pressing need.

Educators who are detached from the traditional spaces within their Indigenous communities run the risk of unintentionally continuing the settler-colonial "kill the Indian, save the man" policies set in motion long ago (Churchill, 2004), even when they are operating with the best of intentions. This ignorant and sometimes undetected parasitic nuance can potentially have a traumatic effect on the longevity of Indigenous skills and worldviews when it resides in educational leadership circles, which essentially enhances the risk of reducing Indigenous children's sense of identity to a pan-Indian caricature hitched to the whims of pop culture, mascots, and media (Pewewardy, 2000, 2002; Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008). As a result, there is also a need for modern leaders to further develop their critical consciousness (Pewewardy, 2015b) and consistently engage in decolonizing and Indigenous thinking if they hope to foster a higher degree of self-determination as discussed by Smith (1999).

Essentially, if we do not explore ways to incorporate key Indigenous philosophies, skills, and perspectives into formal educator training processes, programs aimed at moving Indigenous people towards a higher degree of self-determination will be much more difficult to execute. Therefore, institutions of higher education need to weave these components into training programs, which this partnership model facilitates.

As discussed by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007), and in other articles throughout this themed issue, merging theory and practice in educational leadership training is a foundational piece of this partnership academy model. With this in mind, if one looks at this leadership training model from a capacity-building perspective for native nations, there is an opening that allows for much needed Indigenous knowledge and contextualization to be incorporated into

the program. This opening allows for the creation of a unique program that could potentially better prepare emerging Indigenous leaders for work in their local communities and in their entangled settler-colonial and Indigenous realities.

The Opening: Five Reinterpretations that Weave in Local Context and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

There are five key components in this partnership academy model that create this opening. Specifically, these are the areas I identify as spaces where local cultures and philosophy can be inserted into educational leadership training to help alleviate some of the key professional development needs described above. The aim, which is a primary goal in the Osage Nation partnership academy, is that these pieces will act in harmony with the mainstream educational leadership training curricula. If Osage knowledges and KSU's Educational Leadership program are woven together carefully, the resulting curriculum will provide a more robust and culturally appropriate professional development program specifically aimed at helping the Osage Nation achieve their goals.

I view these interweavings as "reinterpretations" because the core structure of the partnership model essentially does not change. Most notably, the use of the term "district" is simply changed to "Indigenous," "local," or "tribal," but otherwise, the following five reinterpretations do not require intense modification to the model or approach to partnering with districts.

The Local Liaison: Just as each school district has a local liaison, the local liaison when partnering with a native nation serves a very similar role. Ultimately, they serve as an academy leader on the planning committee and have strong influence on many academy decisions. They are involved in curricular construction and delivery and they also help recruit academy students, local mentors, and guest presenters. Additionally, local liaisons help identify appropriate field experiences for the students. As will be discussed below, these are all ripe opportunities for local cultural influence.

Ultimately, this individual has the ability to frequently insert local Indigenous knowledge and introduce local educational contexts throughout the model. This position should not be seen as an isolated opportunity for incorporating local learning experiences; instead, when the partnership between the educational institution and the local liaison works effectively, local knowledges can be incorporated into multiple aspects of the curriculum.

Ideally, this liaison would have leadership experience in both cultural and institutional arenas. However, in order to serve as a university adjunct, this individual should primarily be an experienced and credentialed educational leader in local institutions (school district leadership, TED Director, etc.). While they do not have to be an established cultural leader in the community, they should have some experiential knowledge of the culture of the partner nation. As mentioned earlier, this combination of mainstream educational expertise and Indigenous knowledge can be very difficult to find; however, it would be highly beneficial to the academy if this person were familiar with both roles. At minimum, this individual should have strong experience in educational

leadership in local institutions balanced with a foundational understanding of the local Indigenous landscape to the point that they could identify knowledgeable cultural mentors, guest presenters, and also identify and help facilitate relevant field experiences. Ultimately, this person has the ability to weave in cultural knowledge and local contexts throughout the entire academy model.

The Planning Team, Coconstructing Curriculum, and Collaborative Material Selection: There must be an established planning team between the university and the partnering nation; this practice allows for local Indigenous leaders and Indigenous scholars to have input on curricular suggestions.

For instance, assignments on the topic of "Historical and Philosophical Analysis of Education" would typically involve readings about the general development of American schools over time, and the philosophical pieces that drive each era. This is completely acceptable and these components can still be part of an Indigenous educational leadership curriculum. However, the academy planning committee could also collaboratively choose readings on the history of Indian boarding schools and the partner nation's particular educational history, along with Indigenous and decolonizing philosophies. These are focused learning opportunities that likely are not a top priority in most master's level educational leadership training programs.

Additionally, this creates a space for unique assignments to be emphasized. For example, the planning team could ask that students analyze the educational qualities of traditional ceremonies or interview elders on a variety of relevant topics. These types of assignments can go a long way in moving core cultural tenets into the future, and they also help provide emerging educational leaders with a more robust Indigenous skill set for the job.

As for the general makeup of the planning committee and the need to incorporate Indigenous and decolonizing philosophies into the curriculum, it should be noted that it may be difficult to immediately find people well-versed in educational leadership theory and Indigenous and decolonizing philosophy – even if they are card-carrying Natives who are also veteran education leaders. In this case, if the planning committee notices that they lack expertise in this arena, they can search for experts in other departments at the university, or for local academics in the community who may be willing to serve or consult in that role. This is an important component that can empower emerging Indigenous leaders in ways well beyond simply gaining a better understanding of their own local cultures, and it should be strongly considered when constructing the planning committee. This is also important because Indigenous educators-in-training need to build stronger links to the well-established and rapidly-growing field of Indigenous and decolonizing work in academia – a field that is not typically emphasized in educator training programs, but is voluminous and obviously relevant. There are many academic journals and publications within this international field, along with large networks of people and professional organizations, such as the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the Native American

and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), which are extremely valuable to Indigenous educators. Therefore, finding someone who can introduce this field of work to these graduate students is very important because these emerging educational leaders should be equipped with the language and philosophies of Indigenous and decolonizing work in academia, in order to more appropriately serve their communities.

The Use of Local Mentors and Guest Presenters: Since there is a built-in mentorship piece in this partnership model, there is a chance for leaders-in-training to have ongoing dialogue with veteran leaders in the community. This is significant, because the planning team can not only recruit local leaders who are experienced in institutional contexts, such as school district and government leaders, but they can also recruit Indigenous leaders who are well-versed in the local cultures and traditional ways, such as elders and ceremonial leaders. This allows for these emerging leaders to have ongoing dialogue with both cultural and institutional leaders, which will better prepare them for leadership across multiple settings.

Additionally, with this model there are also openings for local guest speakers to present to the students, and these are clear opportunities for these same institutional and cultural leaders to be incorporated into some of the classroom dialogue and conversations. This is surely something that would be rare in traditional educator training environments, but could add some valuable learning experiences for emerging education leaders, as well as create an opening for new mentor-mentee relationships to develop among community leaders.

Field Experiences: As part of the effort to better merge theory and practice, a required set of field experiences are developed by the planning committee to help expand the real-world learning experiences of the leaders in training. This is yet another opportunity to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and local contexts into the academy. For example, the planning committee can ask that students attend cultural events (when appropriate), which essentially serve as formal education settings where traditional ways are passed down, and observe the leadership in those settings. They could also require students to sit in on council meetings and education committees found in the legislative branches of their respective sovereign governments, or shadow leaders in the executive offices. Again, these culturally specific learning opportunities are typically not emphasized or even offered in traditional educator training programs, yet these field experiences would present emerging education leaders across Indian Country with experiences that directly prepare them for the challenges of living and working in Indigenous educational contexts.

Local Recruitment: As mentioned by other contributors throughout this themed issue, the ability of local leaders to personally recruit emerging leaders from within their institution is a unique and subtle benefit for partnering districts and native nations. With cultural vitality in mind, local leaders can actively seek out community members who not only show the signs of being emerging leaders in education,

but are also already active in traditional and cultural settings. Local leaders can personally contact these individuals and recruit them to join the academy. Additionally, a preference for culturally active community members can be incorporated into the application process, and applicants can be asked to answer questions about their experiences and philosophies related to cultural vitality as they apply for the program. This strategy eventually allows for active cultural members to bring this knowledge into the academy as students, and they can then be encouraged to add that dialogue to classroom conversations and presentations, so that other students from nontraditional families can be exposed to supplemental traditional knowledge, and eventually feel more comfortable in those conversations.

Together, these five reinterpretations of the existing partnership academy model help fill a need in educational capacity building for Indigenous settings. They help progress Indigenous leadership training to a more place-based (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) and culturally appropriate setting by exposing these emerging leaders to Indigenous ways of knowing that are typically absent in traditional training programs. Ultimately, this approach creates an opportunity to better prepare these students for educational leadership in their settings.

Conclusion: Stitching a New Pattern

With the entangled reality of Indigenous education, how to move forward while under continued settler-colonial influence is not always clear. Dennison's ribbon work metaphor is a powerful tool for describing the process, but the color permutations and potential shapes and patterns that could be created are still seemingly infinite. However, there is one quality that ribbon work always possesses – balance – and that is something I hope to accomplish with this reinterpretation of the partnership academy model.

Ultimately, I have highlighted only a portion of the program, the five reinterpretations listed above. Through these examples, I have tried to argue that this model provides an opening for strong Indigenous cultural components that need to be incorporated into professional capacity-building efforts in Indigenous communities. However, there is still the reality that the program also relies on mainstream educational leadership curricula and materials which can seem unattached to Indigenous philosophies or traditional cultural knowledge, but these skills are also obviously pertinent. As Dennison implies through her metaphor, not all settler-colonial structures are inherently oppressive – there are pieces that can be reworked or reinterpreted to create new statements of sovereignty that are still uniquely Osage. While Indigenous concerns about settler educational histories and processes will still need to be addressed, this is all part of our entangled 21st-century reality. Indigenous leaders must engage not only with their own cultures and learn to embody those ways in their leadership values, they must also learn how to identify the settler-colonial structures that can be modified to fit the needs of the Osage community so they can more effectively move Osage ways into the future. To accomplish this, Indigenous leaders in education must also be able to navigate

and negotiate the institutional bureaucracies that govern education, even if North American educational practices have historically proven to be an oppressive hegemonic system that has ofttimes been placed on top of Indigenous communities to control and contain them.

Vine Deloria (2001) once wrote about how Indigenous professionals can sometimes "leave their Indian heritage behind and adopt the vocabulary and concepts of non-Indian educators and bureaucrats, following along like so many sheep" (p. 153). This is a concern, and it needs to be considered as institutions embark on training programs such as the one I describe here; but it is here that Dennison's ribbon work metaphor once again helps provide a framework for consideration.

As mentioned earlier, Osage ribbon work can take on a variety forms due to the seemingly infinite permutations of colors and shapes that could be incorporated into the design. However, no matter what colors and designs are ultimately used by the artist, Osage ribbon work is most often symmetrical, communicating a sense of balance across the pattern as the shapes mirror one another across the midpoint, which serves as a barrier for the colors of each shape to alternate or change. There are so many details that set each pattern apart, yet the sense of balance and symmetry remain. This is what is needed in educational training for Indigenous settings – creative programs that properly balance and reinforce Indigeneity, while at the same time preparing leaders for service in a professional and bureaucratic settler-colonial reality.

This is what I hope to accomplish as I attempt to collaboratively adapt this partnership academy model for Indigenous communities – starting with the Osage Nation, and explore ways to better prepare Indigenous educators for their entangled realities. Ultimately, I hope to assist in a collective effort to stitch a new pattern within the field of Osage education by building and executing a partnership academy. Within this effort, I hope to help expose these emerging leaders to a balanced set of learning experiences that helps prepare them for both institutional and cultural leadership, an important combination of skills needed across Indian Country. In their daily efforts, Osage and other Indigenous leaders are already stitching new patterns as they execute their existing educational programming, but if this new pattern allows them to think of new color profiles, new geometric combinations, and new ways to cut, fold, and stitch, then that will be a positive sign of enhanced capacity for educational leadership within the community. Most importantly, that outcome could help move the Osage Nation closer to an improved era of cultural revitalization, healing, and self-determination as we move into the future.

▉

Endnotes

[1] For more information on the details of how Kansas State University leadership academy partnerships evolved from postdegree professional development programs (1987-1998) to the current master's degree academies (2000-present) discussed throughout this themed issue, see earlier in this issue David Thompson's "Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective."

[2] For a complete list of partnering districts, see previously in this issue Mary Devin's "Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model."

[3] For more on North Dakota State University's efforts, see previously in this issue Tom Hall and Ann Clapper's "North Dakota's Experience with the Academy Model: A Successful Replication."

[4] As an academic writing about Indigenous peoples, especially when referring to governing institutions, I use terms such as "tribe" or "tribal" knowing they can are fraught with baggage, as demonstrated by Indigenous intellectuals like Albert Hale (former president of the Navajo Nation) who stated a preference for "nations" (Hale, 2006, p. 88-89). I continue to employ these terms because they are still frequently used in common parlance and bureaucratic titles in the field (i.e., "federally recognized tribes," "Tribal Education Department National Assembly," "tribal education departments/agencies"). When possible, I prioritize terms such as "Indigenous," "Osage," and "native nations," while simultaneously recognizant of the continued need for terms like "tribal" on a limited basis in order to align this work with current language and institutions in the field.

[5] To this point I have focused on "TEDs," but a strict definition of what a TED is may lead to confusion in this case. My intent is to illustrate the general position of native nations with the Osage Nation as an example, rather than strictly defining specific Osage Nation Education Department actions. Additionally, the purpose is not to exhaustively outline the entirety of Osage education, but provide examples of what education can look like from the position of these sovereign governments.

[6] Some of the programs listed have been slightly modified since the publication of the Osage Nation Resource Directory. Therefore, the programs listed here are more current, and therefore will not perfectly match what is found in the published resource directory.

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