

Some Elements of American Indian Pedagogy from an Anishinaabe
Perspective
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This paper discusses the use of Anishinaabe pedagogical techniques for teaching American Indian Studies at the college level. Nineteen elements of Anishinaabe pedagogy are first outlined and then explained. The explanation includes examples from Anishinaabe culture and how each particular element is applied in teaching American Indian Studies. The nineteen elements include: 1. Maintaining a sense of family; 2. Maintaining a sense of community; 3. Maintaining a sense of place, especially in seeing the land as a teacher; 4. Oral tradition; 5. Storytelling; 6. Relationships; 7. Balance; 8. Uniting past, present, and future, that is, acknowledging the past to imagine a better future to work toward in the present; 9. Remaining open to mystery; 10. Observation; 11. Visioning/creativity/imagination; 12. Preserving a positive self-identity; 13. Developing forgiveness; 14. Pragmatism; 15. Training to task mastery as opposed to grading level of task achievement; 16. Accretive thinking; 17. Recognition of the complex nature of truth; 18. Respect for people outside one's culture; and 19. Humor. The piece ends with some general observations about the nature of American Indian pedagogy. It is argued the purpose of American Indian pedagogy is to enable individuals to best fulfill one's mission in life. However, it is also important for individuals to direct their talents toward benefiting one's family, community, and place. By the same token, communities need to encourage the development of individuals who know their mission in life so that the community as a whole can become strong. In this way, both healthy individuals and communities can be maintained.

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