



# Native Education Collaborative

Connecting partners | Cultivating resources



## Native Culture and Language: Culture

### Overall Themes

- History and culture in curricula for all students
- Place-based tribal history and culture
- Place-based tribal language and language immersion
- Culture-based and culturally responsive teaching

### Culture

Native identity encompasses three overlapping perspectives

#### Cultural identity

- Stems from history/traditions of Native people
- Includes spiritual ceremonies, clothing, traditional music and story, and housing
- Connects place-based identity to historical ties to lands, water, flora, and fauna from traditional lands

#### Biological identity

- Encompasses genetic and phenotypic identity—assumes one biological indigenous parent
- Avoid bias based on physical appearance

#### Legal/political identity

- Stems from relationship tribal nations have within their nation and with outside governments
- Contains four orientations
  - ▶ U.S. federal government—574 recognized tribes; list maintained by National Congress of American Indians
  - ▶ State governments—state-recognized and historic tribes, may or may not be the same as federal tribes
  - ▶ Tribal governments—governments representing sovereign nations and interact with other governmental forms
  - ▶ Non-recognized tribes—tribes without governmental recognition

# Inclusion in Education

- Aim is to sustain and revitalize local cultures which benefit Native and non-Native students
- Indigenous Interdisciplinary Thematic Unit (IITU) connects Western education with indigenous concepts—best when aligned with at least 3 subjects at grade level and vertically among grades
- IITUs should connect community, families, and other organizations to reinforce learning
- Historical context should be provided regardless of where the tribal location currently exists
- Traditional classrooms did not have physical boundaries—all experiences were learning experiences, making the community a classroom
- Connections to indigenous language and culture benefit students—ensuring an effective approach is critical

## 4 Steps to Nativize Classrooms

- Develop classroom community
- Challenge the standardized assessment teaching orientation—Native knowledge may not be on the test, but it is critical to supporting a well-rounded education for Native students
- Recontextualize concepts to reflect Native practices
- Create assessment by pulling from Native local practices and community knowledge

