

Assessment of Student Learning about Native American Cultures in a Team Coordinated Interdisciplinary Freshmen Course

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Abstract: The purpose of this project was to examine whether students in three sections of a team coordinated interdisciplinary course received the same educational experience. An essay covering three aspects of Native American history was evaluated for content and critical thinking. Significant differences were seen between classes in describing cultural differences that lead to conflict between Native Americans and Euro American settlers. Additionally, regardless of instructor approach, many students tended to maintain common stereotypical views of Native American cultures.

I. Introduction.

In 1993, Portland State University revised its undergraduate requirements to reflect a more integrated and holistic approach to general education. Central to this new University Studies Program (UNST) is a yearlong interdisciplinary course or theme that students complete in their freshmen year. Themes are team-developed by three to five professors from diverse disciplines who together create common process and content-based learning objectives. Though the content varies between themes, each theme teaches to the four overarching goals of the UNST program: written and oral communication, the variety of human experience, ethics and social responsibility, and inquiry and critical thinking. Students that complete a full year of this freshmen course receive credit for having taken a science, social science and English course.

Faculty models for theme development and delivery range across a continuum (Davis, 1995) from a traditional approach to a more open format. The traditional model of team teaching is "a type of instructional organization, involving teaching personnel and the students assigned to them, in which two or more teachers are given responsibility, working together, for all or a significant part of the instruction of the same group of students" (Shaplin and Olds, 1964). In these courses, team members develop a common syllabus and use the same course activities and assignments. Each team member presents a portion of the curriculum in each class. Among the benefits of this format are that students experience different perspectives because all faculty are involved in curriculum development and presentation.

The authors of this paper are instructors in the Columbia River Basin (CRB) theme. Our theme development model is best described as a "collaborative model using team coordination" (McDaniel and Colarulli, 1997, p.21) because, though we teach to common content learning objectives, team members do not share a common syllabus or present in each other's courses more than one or two days per term. In order to provide cohesion between CRB classes, we meet bi-monthly to exchange ideas and share readings and classroom activities. As a result, we often use similar activities, but with different classroom approaches. Table 1 provides background information for each CRB instructor and Table 2 compares pedagogic approaches to teaching about Native American (NA) cultures. As seen in Table 2, all three faculty employ classroom

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discussion, but use different methods to engage students. This is also true for the major assignments.

The benefit to this model is that the CRB theme attracts faculty who can be discouraged by the restrictions of the traditional model (Shaplin and Olds, 1964), because it can “maintain more faculty autonomy, afford more individual pedagogical styles and require less interaction with faculty colleagues” (McDaniel and Colarulli, 1997). McDaniel and Colarulli also point out that this model can lead “to less curricular integration for students” (p. 21). However, in all UNST themes instructors are assigned the same cohort of students for a full year. Therefore students benefit by having a consistent faculty presence throughout the year who can draw connections between the many topics covered. Nevertheless, because we do each use somewhat different teaching strategies, a question that periodically arises is whether students’ learning experiences are consistent between our classes.

We were particularly curious about how the students construct meaning in light of Perry’s (1970) model of cognitive development. Though Perry provides a more expansive continuum of his cognitive model, his work is often classified into the three broad categories of dualism, multiplicity and relativism (Battaglini and Schenkat, 1987). While dualists see the world in terms of either/ors, right or wrong, good or bad, multiplists acknowledge the existence of multiple perspectives, but are reluctant or unable to give weight to one over the other. Students categorized as relativists “can internalize multiple points of view, reflect on them, and construct them into one’s own theory about oneself and one’s experience” (Haynes, 2002). Certainly in our approach we did not want to see student writing reflecting superficial knowledge and the illusion of learning.

Curiosity prompted us to design a post assessment that examined student understanding of Native American history in the Columbia River Basin across the theme. We chose Native American (NA) history for a number of reasons. First, NAs in the CRB continue to struggle for treaty, gaming and education rights, so understanding the foundation of these issues is imperative. Second, we each use NA history and culture to address the UNST goal of encouraging students to “appreciate the diversity of the human experience.” Third on an anecdotal basis, we also have seen a tendency for entering students to see pre-contact NA cultures as somewhat homogenous. This societal stereotype of a common NA culture is one that has persisted over time (Hischfelder, 1982). The paper explores the results of our assessment.

Table 1. Background Information for CRB Faculty.

Instructor	Years on CRB Team	Discipline	Gender
1	3	Ethnic Studies	Male
2	7	Literature and Rhetoric	Male
3	8	Environmental Science	Female

II. Methods.

A. Assessment Instrument.

The assessment was administered at the start of the Spring 2004 term, because by this time much of the NA curriculum had been completed in all three classes. The CRB learning objectives directed towards NAs are:

1. Describe Native American lifestyle and history prior to contact with Europeans in the region;
2. Analyze the complex interactions between Native Americans and non-Native peoples in the region after contact (circa 1775).

Table 2. Instructor’s Pedagogic Approaches.

Activities	Instructor 1	Instructor 2	Instructor 3
Readings	Richard White’s <u>The Organic Machine</u> ; Robert Clark’s <u>River of the West</u> ; plus readings from texts about other cultures	Robert Clark’s <u>River of the West</u>	Robert Clark’s <u>River of the West</u> ; Course Reader: including readings by Vine Delorea and Alexi Sherman
Major Assignments	Group Project: Investigation of student selected NA cultural unit pre-contact; 10-15 minute presentation to class in a multimedia format. Individual: Two-page reflective essay on student experience with the group project	Group Project: Investigation of student selected NA cultural unit pre-contact; 20 minute presentation to class	Group Project: Investigation of student selected NA cultural unit pre-contact; 20 minute presentation to class and annotated bibliography of sources Individual: 10 page term paper on current NA issue
Classroom Activities	Student-led discussion on the readings where students pose key questions. Smaller groups discuss the readings then share insights and critical analyses among the larger group. Instructor contextualizes and summarizes the discussion.	Class discussion of readings	15-20 minute presentation by instructor and/or TA of content material followed by small group and then class discussion of readings
Outside Activities	Students encouraged to attend NA cultural activities or special events on campus for extra credit.	Students were encouraged to attend NA cultural activities or special events on campus.	Students encouraged to attend NA cultural activities or special events on campus. Visited campus NA cultural center.

Students were asked to respond to the following open-ended questions:

Q1: Describe the cultural and environmental lifestyles of a Native American Tribe or Nation living in the Columbia River Basin prior to contact. You do not have to name a specific tribe, but you might want to indicate if it is a river, coastal or plains culture.

Q2: How did the differences between Native American and Euro-American (EA) cultures lead to conflict after contact? (Select two differences to discuss)

Q3: What outcomes do we see as a result of these conflicts?

Students were also asked to indicate, “What activity was most pertinent to your learning about Native American cultures in this class?” and “Are there other activities or information that

would be helpful to your learning in this area? Please explain.” In addition, we collected demographic information on age, major, gender and ethnic background. The assessment was given in a computer lab so that, if students chose to type their answers, computers would be available. The goal was for each student to have 50 minutes with which to answer the questions.

B. Scoring Assessment Questions

Two scoring rubrics were created for each question, one that examined content understanding (CON) and the other critical thinking (CT). We used Perry’s categories of cognitive development, in part, to guide the scoring for Critical Thinking. Content rubrics scored students ability to provide two specific pertinent examples. Each rubric was based on a 5-point scale and we had six rubric categories: Q1_CON, Q1_CT, Q2_CON, Q2_CT, Q3_CON, Q3_CT. An example rubric for Question 2 is seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Content and critical thinking scoring rubrics for Question Two.

Q2_CON: Content

1	2	3	4	5
Provides no clear differences between groups and/or does not provide appropriate background information	Vague or inappropriate or inaccurate to more specific →			Selects two or more appropriate differences for discussion; provides appropriate background information

Q2_CT: Critical Thinking

1	2	3	4	5
Provides no explanation of differences between groups	Vague or contains generalities → Dualistic → Multiplistic → Relativistic			Uses specific criteria to explain differences without generalities

We chose not to categorize 2 as dualistic or 3 as multiplistic, because students might show both in an answer. The 1-5 point scale acted as a guide. Figure 2 shows examples of student responses to Question Two and their scores to for Critical Thinking and Content.

Sometimes it was challenging to place a numerical value on an answer. The response that received a 4 in Table Two is not too different from the 5, but what we observed was that as the scores decrease, student answers progressed from acknowledging a difference in the value each group placed on natural resources as a reason for conflict to ascribing characteristics of forcefulness and of being overbearing as the motivation for EA’s actions.

C. Inter-rater Reliability.

To avoid bias in scoring, three people independently scored each student’s paper. Scorers included Instructors Two and Three and an independent consultant. We calibrated the rubrics by scoring a subset of 10 papers, discussing the rubric’s effectiveness and fine-tuning our scale.

When scoring the post assessments, if there was a difference between scorers of more than two points, we discussed the differences and came to an agreement that would bring the scores into alignment. After all three scorers independently scored the post assessments we averaged the three scores after determining there was no significant difference between scorers.

Figure 2. Student work Samples for Question.

Content and Critical Thinking = 5

The Native Americans of the CRB viewed the land as their home, their way of life, and something they could not live without. They saw it as a part of them. EAs, on the other hand, saw the land as a gold mine, so to speak. They saw the land for its natural resources and how those resources could bring wealth. This inherently led to conflict with the Native and EAs. In order for the EAs to profit from the land, they needed to relinquish it from the Native Americans. But the Native Americans did not always want to sell. Then at times the land was taken by force from them. To my knowledge, most, if not all, wars between the Native and EAs were over land. Unfortunately, the EAs won most of the time and plundered the land once sacred to the Native Americans.

Content and Critical Thinking = 4

The Native Americans shared the land and they lived off the land that was provided. This included some sacred land, and land in which they would get their food. These aspects were really important to these people. The EAs thought the land belonged to them. They were allowed to claim this land because no one had claimed it prior. This was an obvious misconception and caused many battles over this territory. The land was used by the settlers and they scared away a lot of the food that some of the natives would hunt. This not only caused a shortage of food for the natives but didn't allow them to roam free any longer. They had lost all of their land to people they had trusted and even today only have a small section to claim as their own.

Content and Critical Thinking = 3

Because the differences of lifestyles that began to collide and force to interact caused an extreme amount of hostility and dislike for each other. The EAs lived a more Eurocentric civilized life, meaning that they staked a claim to the property and lived on it all seasons. They also settled the land by farming and cultivating the property. The EAs also sought out the land as a form of profit or revenue by mining, timber producing and etc. So when EAs moved westward and onto the frontier they took claims to the land that belonged to certain villages and tribes. In doing so, it drove the Native Americans to remote regions and it caused a great deal of negativity toward the EAs. Eventually the Euro movement caused enough frustration and negativity that it brought them to war against the EAs.

Content and Critical Thinking = 2

The white man came in to the CRB and just started to take over. They had no respect for the Natives and what they were doing. Whites saw this area as their land and nothing else. The Natives saw it as their land and used it to the best of their ability not to harm it. When the Natives saw how disrespectful the whites were being they got mad. But the whites being the overbearing people that they were didn't see that and just kept abusing the land the people that were there before them.

Content and Critical Thinking = 1

When the EAs came over they believed that they were the first to settle this "new" land, but in fact the Native Americans were first there. This caused major territory problems, and the EAs had a lot better access to weapons and technology which led them trying to take over and forcing some Native Americans in to slavery.

D. Coding.

Together we created categories to code for common content and critical thinking themes. For example, a common theme in Question One that affected critical thinking scores was that pre-contact NAs had a simple peaceful existence. We also coded demographic information and student responses to questions about class activities.

E. Potential Biases and Confounding Factors.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Instructor Three's class was allotted only 30 minutes to complete the assessment. The following class period, students were given an extra 20 minutes to make any additional comments. Seven students chose to write more. Also, to motivate students to take the assessment seriously, Instructors One and Three attached a point value to the assessment, 3% and 3.5% respectively of the students' overall course grade. All students who completed the assessment received full credit. Instructor Two assigned no point value to the assessment. Instructor One's background in ethnic studies could positively skew data for his class. Additionally, Instructor Three's teaching assistant was a third year Native American Studies Major.

III. Results.

A. Demographics.

Across the CRB theme, 31 women and 43 men (n=74) completed the assessment. The gender make-up of each class can be seen in Table 3. Ages ranged from 18 to 38. The average age was 20, with the majority (52) being traditional first year students aged 18 and 19. Sixty-one students self identified as Caucasian, nine as Asian and one each as Native American, Latino and Hispanic. No student identified him or herself as African American. There were nine "English as a Second Language" (ESL) students, including international students and first generation immigrants. ESL students were evenly distributed between classes.

Table 3. Gender by CRB Course.

Instructor	Females	Males	Total (n)
1	9	17	26
2	11	15	26
3	11	11	22
Total	31	43	74

B. Between class comparisons.

Our original goal for undertaking this project was to determine whether students had the same learning experience in each class. We did not perform a pretest, so we do not know what students knew about this topic before the class, however, we can examine what information they took away.

We began by comparing the six individual content and critical thinking scores between classes using a one-way. We also performed a Kruskal-Wallis test on the grouped content scores

for all three questions, the critical thinking scores for all three questions, and the grouped scores for all six rubric scores. We found a significant difference between the three classes on Q2_CT ($p=0.042$). Otherwise there was no significant difference between classes. We grouped the data from all three classes to look for trends and influencing factors across the CRB theme. We found that overall, students scored higher on Q2 ($p=0.051$) than on Q1 and Q3. There were no differences between the grouped content questions and grouped critical thinking scores. Age had no significant influence on students' scores, but gender did. Women tended to score higher than men on content Q1_CON ($p=0.040$), Q2_CON ($p=0.035$) and Q2_CT ($p=0.054$, Mann-Whitney).

C. Question One Content and Critical Thinking Analysis.

The most common content topic for all three classes related to natural resource usage. All classes showed an understanding of the interconnectedness between tribal survival and their appropriate management of available resources. Interestingly, there were differences though in how each class used this topic to contextualize various aspects of NA life. Instructor One's class often connected this topic to concepts of tribal mobility and the communal nature of land usage. Plateau tribes living in areas of scarcer or seasonal resources tended to be more "purposefully" nomadic, while those living closer to the lower Columbia River where resources were more stable tended to have stationary homes. Instructor Two's class connected natural resource usage to fishing technology and Instructor Three's class to tribal and family structure. Student answers to this question were also often shaped by their independent research projects. A common theme between classes was the sacred nature of both land and salmon to NAs. Forty-three of the 79 responses contained references to salmon, including salmon's connection to tribal survival, ritual, religion, story telling, myth and structure. Respect for the environment was mentioned in 55 of the 74 responses.

In terms of critical thinking, twenty-two of the 74 responses alluded to the cultures of pre-contact NAs as being simple. The majority of these often contained a single sentence, such as, "Before contact with outside cultures, Native Americans led simple and productive lives" (Student 46), followed by a detailed and correct description of a complex cultural process such as natural resource management. These responses showed pronounced dualistic thinking. A few responses, though, like the one below showed an obvious misunderstanding of NA cultures.

Before the Euro Americans settled in North America the Native Americans had a wonderful life, living off the land and keeping in touch with nature and the wildlife. They were always good to the land, their culture and made sure to give thanks to the animal gods. Not to mention no real territorial problems have ever been recorded before the movement of the white man. They were all sentimental people who just had a great love for their tribes and their land. (Student 19)

The assumption of simplicity was the most common stereotype, but a few others were seen: NAs worshipped salmon or were primitive or uncivilized compared to EAs. For our paper, we chose the Jussim et al (1989) definition of stereotype that "stereotypes constitute people's beliefs about groups – beliefs that may be positive or negative, accurate or inaccurate" (p. 6).

D. Question Two Content and Critical Thinking Analysis.

Differences in how NAs and EAs viewed land ownership, natural resource management and religion were the three most common content topics in Question Two. There were little content differences between classes, except that Instructor Three's class was more likely to list multiple differences as compared to the other instructors. Most students scored well on the content portion of this question.

By contrast, though, there were significant differences for critical thinking between classes on Question Two. The stereotypical views of NAs as simplistic that arose in Question One, were less evident in Question Two. However, EAs did not fair so well. In our data analysis, derivatives of the words push (pushed, pushy, pushing), force (forced, forcefulness) and greed (greedy, greediness) were the most common attributes ascribed to EAs. Though students could list and describe the issues that lead to conflict, 41 students attributed EA's motivation, in part or whole, to greed and aggressiveness. Fifteen of Instructor Two's students scored less than a three on this question. This was due to short undeveloped responses or the presence of multiple generalizations.

E. Question Three Content and Critical Thinking Analysis.

Students in all three classes scored lower on Question Three than on the first two questions. Though students could provide outcomes such as loss of tribal lands and cultural lifestyles (the two most common answers between classes), they could not expand on the implications for the tribes today. Again, Instructor Three's class provided more outcomes than the other instructors, but all students' explanations were limited. Content differences between the classes were that, in addition to the outcomes listed above, Instructor One's students listed reduced numbers of NAs, Instructor Two's listed treaty issues and Instructor Three's listed resentment between NAs and EAs.

The primary critical thinking issue that arose from Question Three was a tendency by the students to see the problems of NAs as in the past: skirmishes with Calvary and settlers, signing treaties, going to reservations, death from communicable diseases, loss of tribal hunting and gathering grounds. These are problems that do have implications for today, but these implications were not reflected in the student's responses. Though students could list outcomes of cultural conflicts, their explanations did not show confidence in their understanding of these issues. For example, the two most common answers were "loss of culture" and "loss of land." These were indeed direct outcomes, but most students did expand on what this means to NAs in the context of their current lifestyle. There was, also, a tendency in many papers to see outcomes as past events.

F. Other Analyses.

Because salmon figured so prominently in the answer to Question One (pre-contact), we coded the answers to Question Three (post contact) for how the subject of salmon was incorporated into their answers. Only nine students mentioned salmon, most frequently in connection to resource management issues (5) and treaty conflicts (3).

There were no significant differences between classes, gender, age, or ESL status in terms of who would be more likely to have generalities about NA or EA in their papers.

G. Student Feedback.

A review of student comments on activities were most pertinent to their learning showed that Instructor One's and Two's students overwhelmingly chose projects, where they worked in groups to investigate a tribe and presented the information to the class. Instructor Three's students were almost evenly split (7/5) between writing assignments and class discussions as most pertinent. Interestingly, answers to the follow-up question about why the activity was pertinent were similar for students whether they chose group projects or writing. Students reasoning included: enjoying independent research, selecting their own topic of personal interest to research, "digging deeper" into aspects of NA cultures, discovering and learning a range of information, learning from each other while sharing the work and being actively involved in scholarship. The primary difference students gave for why group projects and writing were pertinent was that group projects allowed students to work collaboratively with their peers, while writing papers was an individual effort.

Across the classes, answers to what activities would improve their learning were similar. The most often suggested activities were guest speakers (19), followed by field trips (11), movies and documentaries (8), books and more readings (6), individual projects (3), mentor session (2), more time (2), discussion (2) and getting involved in NA activities (2).

IV. Discussion.

As we scored and coded the responses, themes began to emerge. Over the years, we had seen a tendency for entering students to share a common EA stereotype of NA cultural homogeneity prior to contact (Hischfelder, 1982) and during the 2004 term, we sought to explicitly reduce this stereotype through independent research projects. Students were responsible for sharing their research findings about different cultural groups with the class, thereby exposing all students to the diversity of Columbia Basin cultures. Through their responses to Question One, we felt that the students made gains in this area. However, we were surprised to see other stereotypes emerge, most notably the tendency to see NA cultures as simple and peaceful. Unfortunately, we do not know whether these were preconceptions students brought with them to class or if they were value judgments formed as a result of their independent research. The stereotype of NA cultural simplicity is a common theme throughout EA history that Hundorf (2001) describes as the postmodern individual's desire to seek a less complicated existence. Perhaps, in the midst of finals and end of term papers, NA life did seem simpler to some students. Compared to the two responses referring to NA's as uncivilized, the stereotype of simplicity and peacefulness were not seen as negative attributes by the students.

We do know, though, that in the students' more formal research assignments, we did not see these particular generalizations. This may be due to differences in how the formal assignments and the assessment were conducted. The formal assignments gave students more time to revise and reflect on what they wanted to communicate. In the timed exercise, students may have fallen back on stereotypes to expedite the explanation of what happened between the two groups. This may also be an example of what Wegner (1994) suggests as a rebound effect. Macrae et al (1994) demonstrated that when asked to suppress stereotypes students could do so. However, when this restriction was removed, stereotypes emerge, even to a greater extent than those who were not asked in prior writings to suppress their stereotypes.

The image of the NAs changed in Question Two from simple and peaceful to the victims of EA greed and pushiness. In terms of content, students scored highest on this question. This was not surprising, as we each focus a lot of time on the period of contact and students may have had prior exposure to this information in high school. But, while their responses accurately reflected differences in land ownership and natural resource management, students tended to categorize EA's motivations rather negatively. There was little discussion of the EA cultural and historical events that lead up to western settlement. This indicates that we need to revise how we teach the Critical Thinking aspect of this content area.

The three classes also scored significantly different on Question Two Critical Thinking. Instructor Two, who had a lower score, replaced a term paper on post contact NA culture with a paper on Women of the West. Additionally, Instructor Three, who scored higher, had several class discussions related to EA motivations for expansion. Instructor Three's class had few generalizations about EAs. Instructor Two, also, did not attach any point value to the assessment and this may have influenced the outcome on this question. It is interesting to note that many students' families have lived in Oregon for generations. Most speak of this with pride and do not see their own great grand parents as greedy or pushy. This is perhaps another example of dualistic thinking.

By the time students reached Question Three, overt stereotypes began to disappear. NAs were on reservations, the rivers were polluted and the salmon were gone. Student answers to Question Three were short with much less detail than their answers to Questions One and Two. This was the last question and students may have been tired, but most finished before the allotted 50 minutes. The quality of student responses probably reflects a weakness in the curriculum of all three classes. Interestingly, though all three of us use treaty rights and salmon fishing to contextualize current issues, only 11 students' papers touched on these topics. As stated previously, we coded for salmon in the first and last question. Salmon was mentioned 43 times in response to Question One but only nine in Question Three. In general, we attempted to bring these issues into the present, but our students didn't make that jump with us. Implicit in many students answers was the feeling that the outcomes of the conflict between these two groups was in the past, another common misconception (Huhndorf, 2001).

We were interested in the degree to which the students' "internalized multiple points of view and arrived at knowledge as relative to and constructed within a context" (Hayes, 2002). We had hoped the students would avoid excessive generalizations and dualistic thinking, and yet across all CRB classes there were tendencies for students to make generalizations about both EAs and NAs. Students scored lower on the critical thinking aspects of all three questions. Even though each faculty attempted to dispel stereotypical perspectives of NAs and EAs, many students either maintained these attitudes or incorporated them into their new understandings in a dualistic manner, i.e. yes, NAs had elaborate cultural structures regarding fishing, but their lives were simple. One cannot attribute this to the student's age, because there was no corresponding decrease in stereotyping with increasing age. This may indicate a more pervasive societal perspective of NAs.

But, the body of research shows that breaking stereotypes can be challenging (Schneider, 2004). One instructor experienced this first hand. He commented,

What disturbs me is that even after a year of taking my class, three students used stereotypes to characterized Native Americans as "simple" and "peaceful." Two of the students were on a group whose presentation on the Chinook included generalizations and errors that I had corrected in emails to them after their

presentation, however, one of the students tried to defend the error by pointing out that the information was on a “website” about the Chinook. This experience suggests that I need to confront errors and stereotypes directly.

So, how do we make progress in this area? As a team we need to better understand the preconceptions and stereotypes of NAs that students bring to class and then present evidence that contest and challenge their preconceptions and stereotypes. Constructivist research shows that when instructors do not uncover students’ preconceived ideas about a subject and discuss them openly, that even the best curriculum may not dispel these notions from the students’ minds (National Research Council, 2000). Students will simply place the new information in context of their prior beliefs. In our case, many students could explain the complexities of NA of life, but still saw their particular lifestyle as simple or idealistic.

We must show how such preconceptions and stereotypes lead to unfair and unequal treatment of NAs. Hewstone (1989) explores the role of disconfirming information in changing stereotypes, where a “new instance of stereotype-discrepant information modifies the existing stereotype” (p. 208). Based on an extensive literature review, he suggests that successfully using this technique be “(1) linked to typical outgroup exemplars; (2) presented to highly motivated perceivers; and (3) provided under conditions that do not induce intergroup anxiety” (p. 220). This technique has the potential for success, in that the students themselves suggested more visual, hands-on activities like speakers, movies and field trips, thus showing a willingness and interest to learn more. Additionally, in a student-centered classroom, students may feel more at ease about hearing “disconfirming information.”

NA speakers and visits to reservations and other NA spaces are effective ways of changing how students see and understand NA. In short, we continue to educate our students about NAs in ways that respect their complexity, diversity and humanity. But, we must also extend these educational practices to EA history, as students held an equal number of negative perspectives about EAs. It is difficult to read early American history and not come away with some anger towards the injustices inflicted on NAs. The assessment indicates a need to incorporate into the curriculum, as early as possible, a means of soliciting and discussing these ideas. In a practical sense, we found that class discussion over the assigned readings did not go far enough in breaking down stereotypes. We need to provide a structured framework to help students to contextualize the readings. These included giving students questions prior to reading, assigning summary statements, and exploring more deeply the significant difference between NA and EA values toward land and life style.

Also, as a result of this project, another interesting trend appeared. In our study, gender appeared to be intervening factor on several content rubric scores. Clinchy (1989) uses the term “connected knowing” to describe an observed phenomenon related to women’s ways of knowing. Women are more likely to listen and think about others perspectives and compare and contrast them to their own thoughts before voicing their own ideas. It could be that the student centered pedagogic approaches used in the CRB theme of class discussions and group work connect more with a woman’s way of knowing. Feedback on what students enjoyed about the classes did indicate that class discussions and working with other students was pedagogically important to them.

We found that independent research played a key role in all courses, whether instructors assigned it as an individual or group project. When responding to the question of why the assignment was pertinent to their learning, terms like “in-depth” and “delve deeper” appeared repeatedly in students’ answers. While other researchers (Ruwe and Leve, 2001) have found that

students disconnect in team-developed courses, we found that our students felt more connected to the course content and goals when offered the opportunity to explore a self-selected topic of interest about a particular NA group.

Our original goal in undertaking this project was to determine whether our students were receiving the same learning experience within our three CRB classes. Our collaborative model of using team coordination for course development and delivery differs from the traditional model of team teaching. We found that unlike one study's claim that team teaching rarely finds a middle ground (Bartlett, 2002), our experience revealed that our classes might be more alike than even we anticipated. We learned through this process that though students may learn different content, they still leave the course with similar understandings. Indeed, our classes may have found too much middle ground, based on the persistence of stereotyping in all three of our classes. We were, however, successful in dispelling the myth of a homogenous culture in the Columbia Basin prior to contact. Overall, the assessment was invaluable to the improvement of our course designs and we encourage all faculty in team taught or collaboratively developed courses to undertake similar assessments.

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