

Professional Learning Plan

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## **Introduction**

The Trego School consists of 16 students grades k-8. There are two teachers responsible for teaching k-3 and 4-8 respectively, as well as special education. The k-3 class consists of two kindergarteners, one first grader, two second graders, two third graders, one fourth grader, two fifth graders, four sixth graders, a seventh grader, and an eighth grader. Six students have an incarcerated parent or a parent who has been incarcerated in the past.

## **Needs Assessment**

A Critical Needs Assessment was conducted, including community members, staff, parents, administrators, and the school board. The strategic action plan specified three goals to work on including a consistent school wide discipline plan, Indian Education For All (IEFA) was integrated into all grade level subjects and courses, and a plan for consistent procedures aimed at hiring and retaining high-quality teachers and staff.

The school used the NWEAP MAPS assessments for reading and math. They used McGraw-Hill curriculum for reading and math in the younger grades and a variety of curricula for reading and math in the upper grades. Teachers met monthly to discuss student growth following the MTSS protocol.

## **Analysis of Data**

There were three students who qualified for special education services: a high-functioning eighth grader with autism, a fifth grader with severe dyslexia, and a sixth grader who was assessed as having a specific learning disability the previous spring. A third grader, the

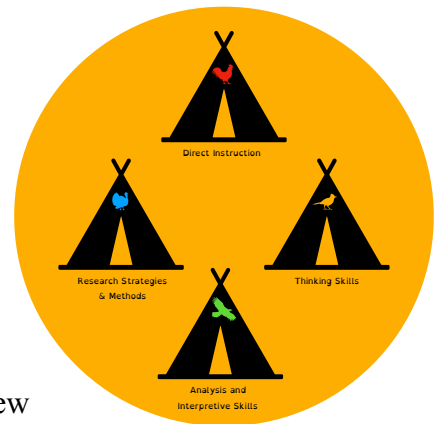
fourth grader, and one of the sixth graders were being evaluated for special education services because they were struggling to meet grade level expectations and receiving interventions without making adequate progress. Ten students were working at grade level and one of the sixth graders qualified as gifted and talented.

## Goals and Objectives

My proposal for professional learning will focus primarily on incorporating IEFA into all grade-level subjects and courses, thereby addressing the need for adequate professional development. "Being able to understand a point of view from the perspective of another, contemplate an argument from the side of an adversary, or examine an event in history from the perspectives of more than one person, are all skills connected to knowledge construction." (OPI Framework, 2020, p8 )

Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI), the Montana Professional Learning Collaborative, and the Montana Teacher Learning Hub websites provide a variety of sample lessons for teachers to use, incorporating IEFA into classrooms, but a great deal more is needed for teachers to grasp the Montana Many Birds framework fully.

In the article *What Makes Professional Development Effective? Results from a National Sample of Teachers* quality professional development incorporates content pedagogy over general pedagogy, is ongoing so teachers can implement lessons and innovations in their classrooms and have time to reflect and discuss challenges, and should include time to plan after



looking over students work, align with the standards, and improve teacher knowledge through instructional coherence (Garet et al., 2001, pls 923-928)

This is a hefty task when incorporating Indian Education For All into daily lesson plans. Teachers will need multiple opportunities to practice and reflect upon their successes and failures. As a supervisor, the number one concern would probably be finding backup supervision so teachers have appropriate plan time to work through lesson plans and student work as well as time to meet with colleagues to discuss challenges and problems.

Goals	Objectives
Vocabulary and Concepts to recognize bias and misrepresentations.	Teachers will familiarize themselves with the IEFA framework and learn how to identify bias and misrepresentations in text and trade books in their own classrooms. (Appendix A)
Analysis and Interpretive Skills	Using the <u>Montana History Textbook</u> teachers will develop a lesson plan to meet the fourth grade standard: “Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. (RI.4.7)” (MTOPI, 2011).
Authentic Teacher Practice	Teachers will have time to create lesson plans, implement them in their classrooms, videotape their instruction, and reflect upon their lessons individually and collaboratively at follow-up professional development meetings.

## Description of Sessions

“Historically, the point-of-view of published American history has been that of Euro-American males and has been far from objective, while American Indian experiences and perspectives for the most part have been omitted or distorted.” (Ferguson, 2015, pg1) The first

session would focus on providing teachers with lessons on how to recognize bias and misinformation found in the instructional materials already in our classrooms. Montana schools are allotted funding for IEFA activities and professional development. I would use some of these funds to bring cultural educators from a local tribe to present the first session so that teachers were certain to have questions answered and receive the best information possible on a sensitive topic. When I worked on the reservation, every single Native teacher had a relative who spent time in a US government boarding school, and that had an impact on our relationships each day.

It is essential that teachers are able to educate students on distortions in textbooks, validate indigenous experiences and reduce prejudice against American Indians who have been misrepresented. Vocabulary words and concepts that would be covered include: omission, avoidance of controversial issues, selectivity, tokenism, ethnocentric bias, value judgement, blatant inaccuracies, biased language, stereotyping, objectification, dehumanization, generic Indian identity, and historicizing. Teachers and staff would be asked to bring one to five books from their classroom that have Indian content to analyze at the [first professional development](#), which would introduce teachers to these concepts, and then be given an Evaluation Checklist form (see Appendix A) to work through one resource.

The second presentation would focus on analysis and interpretive skills, using the Montana History Textbook. All schools were sent classroom copies of the textbook in 2022, so each teacher should be able to use the textbook to create a lesson. Teachers would be allowed to work with partners or independently. By grade 4 in Montana, students should be able to: “Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, [time lines](#), animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the

information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. (RI.4.7)” (MTOPI, 2011). After teachers have created lesson plans based on the text, they would have the opportunity to present their lesson or a summary of their lesson to the rest of staff. This is an opportunity for leaders to stand out and staff who are interested in joining an IEFA implementation team later on to be recognized.

“A teacher will have a more difficult time becoming enthusiastic about a project if it means increasing the amount of personal time and energy expended beyond a full day” (Glickman, 2018, pg 277). I would set goals for classrooms to teach three lessons on interpreting information within a month. I would ask teachers to videotape all three lessons and watch their videos, stressing this is formative evaluation used specifically for them to reflect upon how they could improve their own instruction (Glickman, 2018, pg 296). Teachers would be required to complete a short reflection sheet to hand in after each lesson (See Appendix B).

I would make sure all students in the school were given permission slips for their parents to sign allowing video footage in the classroom for instructional purposes, and make sure any students who didn’t have a slip were either put in the back of the room behind the camera or moved to another class during that lesson with a way for them to make up the work.

## **Ongoing Evaluation**

The last two sessions would provide time for teachers to create lesson plans based on books in their own classrooms. Once teachers had delivered a lesson to their classrooms, we would reconvene to discuss what went well and what challenges teachers had. Teachers would have the option to share video footage if they desired. Teachers would then have time to create three more lessons and videotape them again. I would encourage teachers to ensure they use

direct, explicit instruction when designing their lessons. If teachers needed help understanding what that meant or lacked experience with these effective teaching practices, I would provide individualized support.

As a Toastmaster, I am always aware of the importance of running a meeting well, sticking to an agenda, and making sure time limits are met. I also understand the value of having specific roles and tasks that rotate so everyone contributes equally. If I asked my teachers to work in teams, I would assign roles that required both participation in group and independent work. I have also had great success as a volunteer coordinator in the past because I am able to match tasks to people's strengths and, most of all, thank them for their contributions, detailing how they led to the success of the overall project. I would encourage group leaders to follow these practices as well.

## **Plan for Implementation**

I would start out with a [survey](#) of perks for teachers that could be handed out in lieu of money, like a pass to wear jeans on any day or leave 5 minutes early so I could get teacher buy in especially as time goes by. I would provide professional development for teachers to begin incorporating IEFA lessons into our curriculum with the Analysis and Interpretation thread because that is the part of the framework all students need to have mastered by grade 4. In Montana students should be able to: “Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. (RI.4.7)” (MTOPI, 2011).

I would also use figure 18.1 from our textbook (Glickman, 2018, pls 334-335) in order to get feedback from staff at the end of each session to make sure the professional development was helpful. As we discussed in class, getting input from teachers can be challenging because they are all going to want different things and it is important to stick to the framework and school's vision but I also think leaders need to embrace feedback whenever possible. It is in the students best interest that their teacher's time is not being wasted as Dr. Fiegener mentioned, we want to be mindful of how we are addressing teacher needs and valuing that time as precious, making sure the focus remains on teaching and learning. Teachers may have better ideas on how to incorporate IEFA into their lesson plans. It would also be important to be sensitive to any indigenous teachers on the staff.

## **Reflection on Learning**

Incorporating and integrating IEFA into daily lessons is a massive undertaking by any school but once complete will benefit students and our culture across Montana in a multitude of ways from building empathy and understanding to increasing knowledge of our nation's vast history. Natives are contributing to modern culture across the state and being aware of the diversity among our population is beneficial to all who live here.

“Due to lack of mastery of content about the twelve Montana tribes, some will initially struggle to teach lessons both of their own design and lessons developed by others. Others will have lingering questions regarding how this content fits at their grade level or in their content area. Still more may be concerned about meeting the requirements of the Montana Content Standards in other areas and those of federal education programs.” (Framework,) The seven



essential understandings should also be incorporated into the professional development. Essential Understanding 5 discusses how “much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods: Colonization/ Colonial Period (1492 - 1800s), Treaty-Making and Removal Period (1778 – 1871), Reservation Period - Allotment and Assimilation (1887 – 1934), Tribal Reorganization Period (1934 – 1953), Termination and Relocation Period (1953 – 1968), Self-Determination Period (1975 - Present).” I would want to focus on each of these periods in history helping teacher master history from a Montana native’s perspective.

It is also important for teachers to be aware of the contributions narrative where “Cultural omission, or never creating opportunities to mention, discuss, or cover American Indians at all in curriculum, is erasure of a culture and that culture’s contributions to knowledge, art, language, history, and worldview. Erasure of a culture perpetuates institutionalized racism.”

Pages 14-23 of the Framework include a checklist of tasks that a committee could be in charge of meeting, making sure resources are gathered, specialists are brought in, and time is allotted to meeting the goals of the framework. Meeting these goals could take several years to implement, but each school is allowed IEFA funding that could be appropriated towards providing adequate appropriate training.

They could start by making sure "Indigenous people and tribal members (are) visually represented in your school (*e.g.* photos of historical and contemporary tribal leaders, OPI Making Montana Proud poster series, maps of historical and current tribal territories, tribal seals and flags, other authentic tribal representation) (OPI Framework, 2020, pg 14),” that start kits provided by OPI to every school library are visible and accessible, (OPI Framework, 2020, pg 17) and developing an inventory of books throughout the school that included Indian content of

any type using the Resource Evaluation Checklist For Educators (Ferguson, 2015) to be sorted, pulling works of outstanding authenticity for lesson plans and weeding out books and materials to be retired that were blatantly racist, inaccurate and had little to no academic merit, as a school in Arlee did (OPI Framework, 2020, pgs 61-62).

I'm so glad I found all the information available as well as a framework and road map on how to implement IEFA moving forward. I have worked at numerous schools, including six years on a reservation but never really felt like I had the time or knowledge to understand exactly what IEFA really meant. Now I have a game plan moving forward to make sure my students receive the culturally appropriate education they deserve.

## Appendix A

### RESOURCE EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR EDUCATORS

**Title of Resource:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Type of Resource:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fiction:** \_\_\_\_ **Non-Fiction:** \_\_\_\_  
**Publisher or Web site:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Publication Date:** \_\_\_\_  
**Creator (author, illustrator, director):** \_\_\_\_\_

#### General Questions:

1. Which tribe or tribes are identified in this resource?
  
2. If the creator of this resource is *not* a tribal member, were tribal members, cultural committees, or knowledgeable experts consulted about the American Indian content in this resource?
  
3. Has this resource been reviewed by a tribal cultural committee, tribal historian, or other well-qualified reviewer?
  
4. Is there anything about this resource that leads you to question the validity, accuracy, or authenticity of the information it presents about American Indians?

#### What to watch out for:

Does the resource...

- \_\_\_ mix and match cultural attributes or characteristics from different tribes?
- \_\_\_ feature generic “Indians” or a vague “Native American” identity?
- \_\_\_ imply all indigenous peoples from North America have the same language, culture, history, spiritual traditions, or way of life?
- \_\_\_ promote stereotypes or caricatures of American Indian people, tribes, or cultures?
- \_\_\_ imply American Indian people or cultures are inferior or bad?
- \_\_\_ use biased language to create prejudiced impressions of indigenous people or cultures?
- \_\_\_ perpetuate blatant inaccuracies about American Indian people, histories, or cultures?
- \_\_\_ omit, avoid, or minimize indigenous histories, people, or experiences?
- \_\_\_ imply that all American Indians and/or indigenous cultures are identical or extinct?

- \_\_\_ present only a non-Indian point-of-view of history or events?
- \_\_\_ mention only American Indians who were useful to Europeans or Euro-Americans?
- \_\_\_ avoid controversial or complex issues or gloss over harm inflicted by the policies, non-Indian citizens, military, or government of the United States?
- \_\_\_ deny or seek to undermine tribal sovereignty, cultural self-worth, or linguistic value?
- \_\_\_ contain any material that would shame or embarrass an American Indian student?
- \_\_\_ contain any material that would cause any student to think American Indians or indigenous cultures are inferior, bad, or unimportant?

**What to include:**

Does the resource...

- \_\_\_ correctly locate and identify tribes?
- \_\_\_ acknowledge the cultural, physical, and linguistic diversity between tribes?
- \_\_\_ present information about American Indians respectfully and accurately?
- \_\_\_ acknowledge tribal sovereignty and promote a better understanding of the unique relationship between tribes and the federal government?
- \_\_\_ recognize and honor the intrinsic value of indigenous cultures as well as the importance of continued cultural and linguistic survival?
- \_\_\_ acknowledge indigenous contributions to American society, history, politics, and culture?
- \_\_\_ include American Indian perspectives and experiences in a respectful manner?
- \_\_\_ address controversial or complex subjects by giving equal voice to all sides, including American Indian people?
- \_\_\_ depict the cultural, religious, political, and economic diversity among present-day American Indians?
- \_\_\_ recognize and honor contemporary and/or historical American Indians who are heroes or heroines within their own tribes?
- \_\_\_ portray American Indian people as intelligent, capable, trustworthy, and caring human beings?
- \_\_\_ nurture cultural and personal pride in American Indian students?
- \_\_\_ provide positive American Indian role models for all students?
- \_\_\_ encourage all students to respect American Indian people, histories, and cultures?
- \_\_\_ inspire all students to learn more about American people, histories, and cultures?

## Appendix B

What I'm learning...

DATE/TIME	
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Reflect

What was my best moment today? How do you feel? 1-10

Effect

Did we meet our academic, behavioral, and community goals today?

Enlighten

In what ways did my students surprise me most today?

Empower

What was my most challenging moment, why?  
What would make it better?

Encourage

How will I do to encourage myself, my students, and my colleagues?

## References

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