LEARNING LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND ORAL TRADITIONS

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Abstract

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This master's project aims to combine the learning of a new language with the preservation of Indigenous oral traditions. The Bora Tribe living in the Brillo Nuevo Village located in the Peruvian Amazon Jungle has asked me to develop a workshop that would teach them about North American Indigenous cultures and help their youth with conversational English. The Bora tribe uses oral traditions to pass on culture. In keeping with that tradition, the workshop will focus on the impact of colonization of North American Indigenous communities as well as the preservation of oral stories and history.
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Introduction

In July of 2007, Dr. Edward Helmer, my adopted father, asked me to join him on his yearly visit to a small village in the Peruvian Amazon Jungle. The village is called Brillo Nuevo (New Shine) and it houses members of the Bora tribe. In the late seventies Dr. Helmer started practicing medicine in Brillo Nuevo and would go yearly to take care of patients that needed medical attention. In the late eighties Dr. Helmer was forced to stop visiting the small village in the Amazon Jungle due to terrorist and drug activity within that region by the guerrilla group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). He was unable to return to the Amazon until 2004, when he went to visit a close friend who is a painter in Pevas, a port village on the Amazon River. He was recognized by one of the villagers arrived in the village many of the elders recognized him and asked him to come back to the village and help them.

Dr. Helmer returned to the village the following year with three medical students from the University of Southern California, (USC). The village had constructed a small house for the doctor and the students to stay in as well as practice medicine in. Brillo Nuevo has a small clinic that was constructed by the Peruvian government but it has limited supplies and only one nurse to run it. The nurse is not always available, so Dr. Helmer’s clinic was visited regularly in the two months per year the he spent in the village. In 2007 Dr. Helmer had suffered some personal health problems and he was unwilling to take USC students as he had done the years before. He still wanted to be true
to his commitment to the village and asked me to go as his assistant, translator, and mediator.

Dr. Helmer and I prepared tirelessly for our journey by asking for clothing donations from people, by making sure we had enough medication, and by making sure our contacts would all be lined up for our journey to the village. We first flew to Lima, Peru from Los Angeles, where my mother is from, then we flew to the capital of the jungle region Iquitos, where we bought supplies such as food, purified water, and other items that were needed for our one-month stay in the village. After two days in Iquitos, we made our way to the town of Pevas on a tourist boat to see our friend Francisco Grippa’s Art gallery. It took us half a day and a night to get there. We stayed in Pevas for a few days and continued to prepare for our journey to the village. Then we took a small speedboat to the village, which takes about half a day, since it is deeper in the forest on a sub-river of the Amazon.

We were greeted by the entire village as soon as we docked our boat they were all waiting for us on the shore, and everyone helped us bring our things in. We started our work the next day and it turned out that many of the women started asking about personal women’s concerns, which they had never asked the doctor about before. Dr. Helmer was impressed that the women were so eager to talk to me and ask me questions. In the Bora culture, the women do not discuss matters about their body, so it was a surprise that they felt comfortable. I was able to connect with the women in the village and we spoke about loss of culture as well as language. Ever since that trip in 2007 I have wanted to return to the village. In July of 2014 I was able to go back to visit the village with Dr. Helmer. A
big town meeting was held and I was able to propose a bigger oral preservation project to the village. They agreed to do my project as long as I taught the youth about Indigenous communities in North America as well as helped the youth practice their English pronunciation. Creating a workshop for the youth has become the emphasis of this master’s project.
Introduction:

The workshop will teach about Native American history and oral tradition, and it will also help the youth work with their conversational English. In order to keep with the Indigenous content of the course and the population that the workshop is serving, an Indigenous framework was used to create the curriculum. Traditional oral stories will make up the second part of the workshop. Research on teaching and preserving oral traditions was important, as well as finding stories that could be presented to the youth. Since the students are learning language in the second part of the workshop, it was important to research teaching methods in language education.

Indigenous Framework

An Indigenous framework was used throughout this project and to develop the framework for the workshop. In an Indigenous approach to research it is important to build a relationship with the community that one is trying to work with. The community has to be involved in every step of the process and it has to be understood that the “researcher” is also a participant and not an expert (Chilisa, 2012). In the case of this project, I had built a relationship with the villagers through my previous work there as well as my connection to Dr. Helmer. When I was there in the summer of 2014, a meeting was held and I was able to explain that I would like to do a larger project with
the community specifically the women. The women discussed the potential project that I could do and agreed that collecting oral stories would be beneficial to the village. They also requested that I do a workshop for the youth. As the outsider I did not assume what the community wanted; I asked the community what they wanted or needed me to do. In Indigenous research the community is in charge of the project and it has to benefit that community (Wilson, 2008).

Often as students, we follow the main-stream research paradigms, which rely heavily on comparing one’s work to another person’s research. “There must be a winner and a loser. If a student does not feel that it is culturally appropriate to embrace this binary, or is able to question from perspectives other than those seen as ‘intellectually appropriate’ within the institution, then they are seen as anti-intellectual” (Wilson 2008, p. 57).

In an Indigenous paradigm the comparison to other intellectual work is not the focus; in fact, the focus lies on the knowledge and approval of the community that one is working with. There is a paradigm that Indigenous work follows. “A paradigm is a set of underlying beliefs that guide our actions. So a research paradigm is the beliefs that guide our actions as researchers. These beliefs include the way that we view reality (ontology), how we think about or know this reality (epistemology), our ethics and morals (axiology), and how we go about gaining more knowledge about reality (methodology)” (Wilson 2008, p. 13).

Socialist writer Paulo Freire (2005) uses a similar approach to an Indigenous approach. He talks about the power dynamic of the dominant or oppressive culture in
comparison to the minority or oppressed culture. He writes how teachers can break the
cycle of oppression by changing the way they teach. In the oppressive teaching system,
which he calls the banking system, it is assumed that the teacher is the one who has
knowledge to give to the students while the student knows nothing. Freire argues that the
students hold knowledge for the teacher to learn and that teaching should not assume
anyone as an expert. Through dialog and openness teaching becomes a tool for change. In
my work I do not wish to re-colonize a tribe that historically was already colonized and
exploited, so I have incorporated Freire’s problem-posing education method into my
workshop. He stated, “Here, no one teachers another, nor is anyone self-taught. People
teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking
education are “owned” by the teacher” (Freire, 2012 p. 80).

**Language and Education:**

I will teach the Bora youth who participate in the workshop, about some aspects
of Native American history, but I will also focus on showing the youth the efforts that are
being done to revive or preserve language and culture in North America. Since I do not
want to impose more western ideals on the Bora youth, I hope to instill pride for their
own incredibly beautiful culture. I will teach history and language but, in order to instill
pride, I will talk about the necessity of continuing to use and teach Bora to the children
and youth within the community. In my research I found articles about diverse language
preservation projects which discuss things to consider when teaching or preserving
language.
Some school systems have now adopted Indigenous language into the school curriculum. These schools have started teaching in the Indigenous languages that they once were part of destroying. Children were taken to boarding schools and were forced to become Anglo-American. They were not allowed to practice their culture or speak their languages. Today some of these schools have become places where children can re-learn their Indigenous languages. There are some difficulties with schools teaching language. “For one thing, the school system, regardless of what language is used, is still charged with teaching the subjects demanded by the dominant culture and educating children to become productive members of that culture” (Hinton & Ashler, 1999 p. 57). It is important then to involve the entire community in the teaching of language and culture in order to truly revive or strengthen the culture. “In community-based language learning, it is easier to incorporate traditional activities and traditional values (and traditional language!) into the learning situation” (Hinton & Ashler, 1999 p. 58).

The workshop will invite elders to come and help the instructor teach by giving their input to the material presented. “We must be able to feel confident that our worldview is clearly understood by our own children, and that they will know that their culture has value in modern times as it did in the past. We must be able to teach our children appropriate skills and understanding and control how our children are taught” (Ball year, 2004 p.454). One of the main ways of teaching that will be used for the workshop is a generative curriculum model, which puts an emphasis on having the community involved in the teaching process. It also humbles the teachers by making them realize that they themselves are students (Ball, 2004). In a curriculum development for elementary age
children on the Menominees Reservation in Wisconsin, they first held meetings with the community to find out what they wanted to see in the curriculum. The curriculum was created with the community ensuring that it reflected what was important to the tribe. Themes were developed and traditional stories were incorporated that would add to these themes. “The themes planned by the teachers are based on Native American values, which should result in a working partnership between school and community” (Stokes 1997, p. 580).

Language is often adapted to a classroom style that changes the way in which the language is spoken. “A vast new vocabulary must be developed to accommodate standard educational topics” (Hinton & Ashlers 1999, p. 57). As stated above, having language in all elements of the community is important, so that the traditional flow of the language and oral culture is not lost or replaced with the structure of western education. “As one Maori educator said, the elders complain, ‘Sure, we have a new generation of speakers—but all they talk about is English concepts’” (Hinton & Ashler 1999, p. 57). It is also important to understand that not only oral stories are important in culture but also traditional chants or genealogies. In a language program developed in New Zealand all of these things were considered and discussed with the community in order to make sure that everything was included in the program (Harrison & Papa, 2005). It is important to recognize, “Within the ancient songs are the histories, the language and terminology used by Waikato-Tainui, references to rules, and place names” (Harrison & Papa 2005, p. 66). Children learned diverse topics related to culture and language every term. I hope that by talking about these diverse ways in which Indigenous groups are changing systematic
oppression in schools the Bora will be inspired to also continue teaching their youth their rich cultural ways. “Students in the second term undertake study of relationships between Waikato-Tainui and other Maori tribes, subtribes, and confederations. Genealogies are of huge importance as links between tribes” (Harrison & Papa 2005, p. 66).

The homogenizing of language is a global phenomenon that is impacting Indigenous cultures around the globe:

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the world’s linguistic and cultural diversity is under assault by the forces of globalization-cultural, economic and political forces that work to standardize and homogenise, even as they stratify and marginalize. In the transnational flow of wealth, technology and information, the currency of ‘world’ languages is enormously inflated, while that of local languages is flattened and devalued (McCarthy 2003, p. 147).

This is not the value that I hope to pass on in my workshop, so it is my job to make sure that the workshop continuously emphasizes the importance of the Bora language and also the benefits of having children that are bilingual. “…students who enter school with a primary language other than the national or dominant language perform significantly better on academic tasks when they receive consistent and cumulative academic support in the native/heritage language” (McCarthy 2003, p. 149).

In several tribal communities is it native language teachers (NLT’s) who are trying to prevent the homogenizing of language. In Pueblo communities these NLT’s are putting their efforts toward resisting the dominant culture taking over their Indigenous language and with that, their culture. These communities have faced two forms of colonization, the first being the Spaniards who brought Spanish and then the United States bringing English. The Pueblo people are extremely impacted by this dual colonization (Suina,
This example of dual colonization once again gives validation to my position of not wanting to re-colonize the Bora people by bringing the main-stream American culture and devaluing the Bora culture.

In Alaska a language preservation project was done with Athabascan speakers. The project was done in a grass-roots manner involving several communities. The communities came together to talk about diverse topics and to break through barriers imposed by colonialism. These important aspects were captured in the meetings. The first was that the communities had to undo the past. This meant that they had to have dialogs about the impact of colonialism on their Indigenous communities and current criticism from non-native peoples about their communities. The dialogs led to important conversations about what the community wants, which instilled a sense of pride. The second aspect was that self-determination is important and that activism is a key element to keep that self-determination. Athabascan speakers who were already working on language preservation talked about the curriculums that they had developed to preserve and teach language. These dialogs also reinstated the importance of community language learning, by realizing how language impacts the community in every way and should be taught in every aspect of life. The dialogs by Athabascan speaker demonstrated that; “Community language learning takes place in a variety of settings, from community and family gathering, including dances and potlatches, storytelling, and camp settings, to formal classes for college credit offered through the Interior Althabascan Tribal College and the University of Alaska” (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore 1999, p. 49).
The last aspect had to do with a proud Alaskan heritage, collaboration, and leadership. Pride for culture and language is incredibly important and must be valued. In order to instill pride there has to be strong leadership to make the community come together. Collaboration with other Native peoples is important as well as collaboration with non-native agencies. The phases that came out of the Athabascan language preservation project could possibly resonate with the Bora.

Since many of the Indigenous communities around the world have always had a rich oral tradition, the use of literature can be problematic. In the development of a bilingual curriculum for the Northern Arapaho the question of literature was discussed. It was stated that; “Rather it is a function of the specific forms that literate texts and knowledge take in large-scale, capitalist societies. In contrast, literacy in small-scale, face-to-face societies in local contexts offer the potential for Arapaho users to become ‘empowered disputants’ rather than mere passive receptors of text” (Cowell 2002, p. 40).

The material presented to the youth will come from literature, and the stories that I will share from diverse tribes are stories that have been recorded in text, but the dialog about the material is the most important element of the workshop.

**Teaching Language:**

It is important when teaching language to first look at what style of language teaching it will be. The workshop will present language in a way that it still remains within an Indigenous framework. The children will hear stories that have been written and recorded from diverse North American tribes. The stories will be presented in
English, and there will be activities for the students to engage in in smaller groups in order for them to have conversations in English. The small groups will come back together to review what was learned and understood. Since there will only be one or perhaps two native English speakers, the workshop will be in a communicative instructional setting. This approach focuses more on general understanding of the content, not on the proficiency of the language.

Since there is a limited amount of time for this workshop, the language will be simplified and the use of hand motions, drawings, and games will be included to give an understanding of the meaning of the stories presented. The workshop uses student-to-teacher interaction as well as student-to-student interaction in order to enhance the learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

In order to teach language, there have to be different activities to engage the students and the opportunity to give feedback on pronunciation. Although the workshop is not focused on teaching grammar, it does give the youths a chance to practice both listening and speaking English. It is important to understand how different people listen and learn language. The author Brandl states; “The cognitive demand of the listening content and what we have to do with the aural input—that is, the task we perform while or in response to listening—further affects how much and which information we comprehend and retain” (Brandl 2008, pp. 227-228). The workshop will allow students to work together to perform oral stories and share in the creation of stories. The stories that are presented by the workshop leader will also be translated into Spanish so that the larger community may enjoy them and engage in dialog about them.
Native American History:

The workshop will start by teaching about pre-contact Native culture and will include oral stories from different tribes. Also included will be sections of the book “A Peoples History of the United States” by… gives a historical account from the perspective of the oppressed/minority groups (Zinn 2005). The history recorded in this book often came from oral histories passed down from generation to generation, recordings, and also literature found. “The theory that is traditionally most common among Native Americans is that they originated here” (Spickard,2007 p. 35).

The dominant theory in anthropology is that Native peoples came to the Americas around 12,000 years ago by crossing a land bridge from primarily Asia. “There is something strangely Eurocentric about the land bridge theory. It posits that Native Americans must be descendent from people who came here very, very long ago and by primitive means—hence they are part of the natural landscape” (Spickard 2007, p. 35). The myth that Anglo-Americans have created over time to justify cultural genocide and continual domination of Native people will be discussed by presenting stories by Native people or the historical viewpoint of Native Americans and other minorities that have been marginalized.

The boarding school experience will be covered in great detail because of the extreme impact it still has on communities today. The children that were taken away from their homes and placed into boarding schools came back to their communities lost and confused about their identity. Often these kids would later become parents who did not
know how to properly care for their children because they were not parented and because
they had lost their connection to their cultures and their traditional ways of child rearing
(Wallace Adams, 1995).

The workshop will present language and culture preservation projects, but it will
also present contemporary issues that are going on in Native communities. There has to
be an understanding between the historical trauma that has impacted Native communities
in North America but also the healing that is going on today. There are many problems in
Indian Country but there is also hope and resiliency. It is important to understand
concepts such as sovereignty and how that sovereignty works within the United States, as
well as how traditional ways of healing and helping are being used and integrated into
social services (Weaver, 2014). The Bora have been impacted by colonialism, slavery,
discrimination, stereotyping, and marginalization first by the Spanish Colonial Project,
then by the Peruvian Government, and now by transnational corporations. The youth is
trying to balance its desire to live more in the mainstream culture while still identifying
as Bora. The hope is to have dialog about similarities and differences between the Bora
experience and the experiences of the tribes in North America.

**Teaching Native American Stories:**

The preparations for the workshop will continue throughout 2015 and 2016.
Audio recorded oral stories will be researched and interviews with tribal members so that
the Bora youth can listen to these accounts. The workshop leader will also read stories
from books that have been geared toward youths. These stories will range from creation
stories, to fire stories, to weather stories, to stories with tricksters, and stories with stars/sun/moon. The youth will be presented with the stories in English and will have time to discuss and interact with the stories. After going through different Native American stories, the youth will be asked to present stories of their own. They will be able to choose how they do this and what kind of story they want to create. “The Raven in Alaska was no ordinary bird. He had remarkable powers and could change into whatever form he wishes. He could change from bird to a man, and could not only fly and walk, but could swim underwater as fast as any fish” (Edmonds & Clark 2003, p. 15).

There are stories that the Bora tell about animals that take human form. One such story is about the pink dolphins that are found in the rivers of the Amazon. In the story, these beautiful dolphins can turn into gorgeous women who fall in love with human men and carry their children. The Bora do not hunt these gentle creatures because of these stories. In an Inuit story a sea bird turns into a handsome man to seduce a beautiful young woman named Sedna. He is successful in his conquest by singing her an enticing song (Bruchac 1991, p. 67). It is the hope that these stories will help give pride and understanding of how important traditional stories are and how they must be preserved within the cultures that they are from.
Method

Introduction

In my own culture I have seen the impact of homogenization of language minorities, and I am trying to work against this process.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the world’s linguistic and cultural diversity is under assault by the forces of globalization—cultural, economic, and political forces that work to standardize and homogenize, even as they stratify and marginalize. In the transnational flow of wealth, technology and information, the currency of ‘world’ language is enormously inflated, while that of local languages is flattened and devalued (McCarty 2003, p. 147).

I struggle with bringing another colonial language into an already colonized Indigenous village. The Bora language is a beautiful multi-tonal language, which mirrors the sounds of the three tonal drums used by the Bora for ceremony. The Spaniards colonized Peru, which resulted in Spanish becoming the main language of Peru. Indigenous peoples’, culture, and languages are still discriminated against in the cities of Peru. The Bora children are taught in Spanish at school and are also introduced to English, which has become a dominant global language.

The influence of the United States is felt throughout Latin America due to strong political influence, media, trade, and economic interest. The United States continues to be a colonial power based on the fact that it continues to dominate culture within its own borders and abroad. YellowBird (2004), states that the United States continues to dominate external territories and ignoring Indigenous communities that inhabit that land.
He stated, “However, one does not have to go abroad to analyze the practice of American colonialism since the exploitation and control of Indigenous Peoples in the United States continues unabated” (YellowBird, 2004, p. 33). Anglo-American culture has reached *Brillo Nuevo* in school, clothes, and some media. I want to share with the youth some of the history, resilience, and cultural strength of Native American tribes. My emphasis is on historical context, preservation of culture and language.

**Workshop Part 1:**

The first part of the workshop will be taught in Spanish, since it is important for all the participants to have an understanding of the context for the second part of the workshop. The first part focuses on learning about the history of colonialism in North America and the historical and contemporary impact that it had/has on tribal communities. The workshop will follow an Indigenous paradigm and will focus on dialog. Only through true dialog can Indigenization happen; “Indigenization is a process that involves a critique and resistance to Euro-Western methodological imperialism and hegemony as well as a call for the adapting of conventional methodologies by including perspectives and methods that draw from indigenous knowledges, languages, metaphors, worldview, experience, and philosophies of former colonized, historically oppressed, and marginalized social groups” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 101).

Indigenous people and communities often do not trust outsiders who want to come in and lead a project. Research studies and projects are often done without the input of the communities that they are being done in. “This research has neither been asked for,
nor has it any relevance for the communities being studied” (Wilson, 2008, p. 15). In Indigenous research the focus is on building relationship and seeing what the community wants. In my case, the community wanted me to develop a workshop for their youth. At the community meeting held in my honor, I proposed my larger project which involves the women of Brillo Nuevo. After the community asked questions about my intention, my framework, and my ideas about the project, I was asked to do a workshop with the youth as well as the larger project with the women.

**Project Approach**

The process of talking to the Brillo Nuevo community was a long one. I had to introduce myself in relation to my family, my culture, and my previous work in the village. Since the Bora people have been studied in the past without ever seeing any result from these studies, I was asked what my intention and purpose was in working with them. Just because I have done work with the community before did not mean I have the right to come in and do whatever I want. We discussed what they wanted me to do and how they would want to work with me. I also explained that my purpose is to support the community in any way they see fit and useful.

The villagers talked with me for a long time and a vote was cast at the end to decide whether or not they wanted me to do workshops in their community. The vote was unanimously yes. I was able to talk to villagers with more ease due to my previous relationship with them as well as my own heritage as a Peruvian woman, but also because of Dr. Helmer, since he is a trusted person for the villagers. After the meeting I had to
visit with diverse members of the village to pay my respects; the chief and his family were first on that list.

Since I was given the task of teaching the youth in a workshop, I thought it important to structure it in such a way that it feels relevant to their community, culture, and world view. I will use elements form the Generative curriculum model to teach the history portion of the workshop. This model comes from an Indigenous perspective and was very successful with First Nations people. Within this curriculum the emphasis is on getting the community involved in the education of their youth. The youth are taught information by the teacher, but community members and the youth themselves are encouraged to give their feelings, views, and believes about the information and what it means to their own community. The teacher is not the all-knowing person but instead is a learner. The teacher is a facilitator and has to be able to change his/her teaching style or information depending on where the dialog of the class goes.

One of the teachers’ states; “I would present the materials found in textbooks that represent North American majority culture. These ideas and approaches would be assessed by the students and Elders for their appropriateness and fit with Cree and Dene perspective” (Ball, 2004, p. 468). The curriculum forces the teacher to diverge from the textbooks and the mainstream cultures’ curriculums, and allow for transformation and decolonization of the information presented.

When I arrive in the village there will be another community meeting and it is there that I will ask the Elders (people who are around 40 and older and that have respect in the community) to join in on the workshop and help bring their wisdom and input to
that space. As an outsider I will never fully know the reality that the students go through. I have to be humble and allow the village to teach me. In the Generative curriculum, the Elders are a central part of teaching me—the teacher—and the students. “In addition to course content, the Elders usually model ways of storytelling, listening, encouraging, sharing, and facilitating the elaboration of ideas and action plans that are themselves expressions of Indigenous cultures” (Ball, 2004, p. 469).

Within the curriculum, the teacher never censors or evaluates the students’ input or views. All views and realities are important; listening to and reassuring students is a key element. The teacher needs to be able to help the students make connections in the moments when perhaps information seems to contradict each other. One teacher stated; “Quite often the students would feel like what the Elders said had contradicted something I had been teaching. So, then it was up to me to put it all together on my feet. You really had to be listening in the Elders’ teaching session and be thinking as you went, anticipating what this is going to turn into by the next morning” (Ball, 2004, p. 472).

History is usually biased toward the winner, dominator, or colonizer. In staying true to the Indigenous research method, I will teach materials that show the perspective of groups that were and still are oppressed by the Anglo-American societal standards. Books such as Almost All Aliens or A Peoples History of the United States show the perspective of the marginalized people and give a more decolonized approach to history (Zinn, 2005). Information from such books will be used to get the dialog of the workshop going. Peru still uses what the scholar Freire (2012) calls the “banking education,” which presumes that students are empty vessels to be filled with information by an authority figure. In
contrast, the problem-posing education encourages dialog, which then helps unveil oppressive realities. Socialist writer Friere states; “Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention of reality” (Freire, 2012, p. 81).

**Workshop Part 2:**

The second part of the workshop will be taught both in Spanish and English. It will focus on English stories by Native American tribes, but in order to be more inclusive towards Elders coming into the workshop to help me facilitate, it will also have Spanish elements. There are different settings to teach or learn language. There is the natural setting, which means a person is immersed in the language because it is the main language spoken at school, work, and in the community.

There is no real structure to learning the language, meaning there is no step-by-step process. The student learns by listening and just communicating; there is no consistent correction of language. Instructional setting is where the teacher is the only native speaker so the focus is more on the language itself and not the content of what is being taught. This is a more task-based setting where the emphasis is on practicing the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, Chapter 5).

The technique that will be used in the workshop is called Communicative Instructional Setting (CTL). In this teaching setting, students only have a limited amount
of time to participate in learning language which means they will have a limited amount of correction or feedback. The material is simplified and made comprehensible through pictures, gestures, and short contextual information. This instructional setting puts little pressure to perform at high levels of accuracy but rather focuses on actually trying to participate and engage in language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, Chapter 5).

In the case of the workshop, the students will listen to Native American stories and will then engage in the story by answering and posing questions. The story will be repeated in Spanish so that everyone can engage in the material. The workshop is based more on learning about culture through language than grammar. The youth already have English instruction that focuses on grammar at school, so the workshop allows the students to listen to pronunciation and practice their verbal English.

As the native speaker and workshop instructor, I will help correct the students’ pronunciation and help with vocabulary. It is important to give both “negative” and “positive” feedback to students. “Negative” feedback is error correction; if a student uses words incorrectly then the teacher corrects that faulty language behavior. “Positive” feedback is given in a situation when the student says something in the correct manner, and the instructor acknowledges it. This helps motivate students to want to speak out in class or the workshop. The student input is the most important part of the workshop even when learning language. Communication is at the center of both parts of the workshop. “Differently put, communicative language teaching (CLT) requires the teaching of skills in an integrated versus an isolated manner, as is the case with traditional methods of teaching” (Brandl, 2008, p. 178).
Results

It has taken me seven years to finally go back to *Brillo Nuevo*. The welcome I received was wonderful, and it gave me the confidence I needed to talk to the villagers about doing a project together. Many of the villagers remembered me as a sweet, shy child and were impressed at how much I had grown into my own skin. After we had the community meeting, many of the women asked me why I couldn’t just stay in the village and work with them now. I had to explain that I had to go back to my home to prepare and go to school. My larger project is specifically about having a dialog with the women about their hopes, dreams, and their concerns. I asked them if I could record stories that they would like to share and keep for future generations. I told them that I could make a book that would stay in the village with all their stories. They liked the proposal, and that is what my larger project will be. As stated before, they also wanted me to teach their children English conversation and culture. I hope that both the larger project and the smaller project will help them see the importance of their own unique and beautiful culture.

For the youth workshop it is my hope that the youth will be inspired to engage in dialog, learn about new cultures, and want to share about their own experience. The hope is that they will learn to see the United States as a place of many cultures, not just the dominant Anglo-American culture. The hope is that the youth will see parallels between their own colonial past, current political problems, and that of Native peoples in North America. Each tribe is unique and it is important to share how diverse the tribes of North
America are, but it is also important to show how much commonality there is in terms of the struggles that Indigenous people face. The Bora face problems with land ownership, outside corporations trying to take their resources, and loss of culture because of a dominant culture.

It is my hope that I will learn to be a facilitator who is respectful of the people that I am working with, that I give value to my students’ words and the Elders’ words, and I hope to learn from the Bora people about their worldview and their community. Many of the Elders and women that I worked with in 2007 expressed concern about loss of culture. Dr. Helmer had brought a cassette tape of a recording that he had taken during a Bora celebration in the late seventies. One of the Elders came to visit us every day and when the tape was played he cried. He told us that he had not heard that singing for twenty years. The Elders who had known Dr. Helmer from long ago were happy to share about how it used to be in the village. They explained that ceremonies were no longer celebrates as much as they should be. They feared for the future generation because many young people were leaving the village to go to the city.

On my return in 2014, I was happy to see the children speaking Bora. I talked to some young boys who have been working on their art. These boys have taken the stories that they grew up with and made them into incredible pieces of art. The concerns for cultural preservation are still present but there is also this feeling of pride that is growing within the youth. My hope is to keep encouraging that existing pride by allowing the students to run the workshop.
The stories that the women will share will also be part of the village cultural good forever. I do not plan to publish or take these stories away from the village. If the women want me to publish them in their name, I will do my best to find a publisher, but the main idea is to transcribe the stories and experiences for the Bora women and make a book. Some of the youth will have the opportunity to help me with the translation of the stories from Spanish to Bora. My hope is that this will help them develop that skill as well as encourage them to be involved within the preservation of their culture. There is much discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Peru, and many who go to the cities find it hard to get jobs or be taken seriously. The workshop should help facilitate a way of decolonizing these horrible stereotypes and go against the oppressive ideology.

The workshop is presenting information that is not of the mainstream Anglo-American viewpoint, but it is oriented towards teaching about communities and cultures that have been and continue to be oppressed. Teaching this information and allowing there to be a dialog about the history of the oppressed people instead of the oppressor is part of taking away the power of the oppressors and giving it back to the oppressed. It also validates the importance of the Bora’s history, which, like many of the tribes of North America, is not really taught in the dominant society.

The hope is that there will be dialog in the workshop. It is of course possible that the youth are not stimulated by the information or that they simply choose not to speak. It is my hope that they will fully realize that they are free to speak their minds and are encouraged to do so. There is also the possibility that the Elders will not want to come into the workshop and help me create a space where their culture is brought into whatever
we are learning. The village might ask me to just work on English and not bring in
culture at all. So I must prepare myself for that scenario as well.
Discussion

The Bora tribe, like most tribes in the world, was impacted by colonization and imperial greed. “Colonialism is the invasion, subjugation, and occupation by one people over another” (YellowBird, 2004, p. 33). The United States (US) continues to colonize both abroad and within in its own borders. The media monopoly that it has, the major corporations, and the dominant role it plays in the global political arena all aid in the continued influence that the US has on the world. The influence reaches to the furthest regions of the world and changes the way that culture is lived, especially tribal cultures. How good is this influence of the United States, since the Anglo-American culture has in the past and continues to destroy the Indigenous cultures within its own borders is a question that should be considered when teaching language. I respect the wishes of the Bora women, for me to teach their youth conversational English, but I can only follow those wishes by using an Indigenous approach to teaching and by teaching information that is not of the dominant Anglo-American perspective. I do not wish to be part of the imperial imposition of main stream American culture and language.

The major problem with main stream ways of teaching is that they use the “banking” approach to teaching. “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 2012, p. 72). This way of teaching serves as a tool of oppression by the oppressors or colonizers.
Peru was colonized by the Spaniards but is now heavily influenced by the United States. The Bora culture is already influenced by the standard Peruvian education system which teaches in Spanish. The Bora people speak their own beautiful multi-tonal language, which is based on their sacred drum. The youth learn English and about Anglo-American culture in school or through some media. I want to teach them about Indigenous tribes and how they are preserving their cultures despite of living in the “belly of the beast” (Thunderhawk, Madonna, as quoted from my notes taken during the class “Warrior Women” at the University of South Dakota in 2006), which has tried to destroy these tribes over and over again.

This project was thought up in a time when I was not sure what profession I wanted to embark on. I was studying History and International Studies. I loved learning about diverse cultures and specifically movements against oppressive systems. Being a person of mixed heritage, I have often felt lost in my own identity, and I also felt that I was an “other” in the larger societies that I lived in. When I first went to Peru at age 15, I felt very much at home even though I was not born there. When I went to the Amazon, I felt empowered by the fact that I was able to live with giant spiders, no running water, bugs, heat, and no electricity. What truly made me feel strong and empowered was working with Dr. Helmer’s patients. They trusted my translation skills and soon the women started opening up to me. I received a gift from the Bora; it was the gift of holding space and feeling safe to be me with people. That gift took me on many adventures and gave me the courage to keep studying.
I have waited a long time to go back to the village and work with the Bora women. My larger project is a project of love and respect for the Bora people and culture. Every story told to me in the time that I spent in the village became a treasure and all these years I thought about the stories and the concerns that were given to me in 2007. My larger project is there to re-visit those stories and concerns with the women. It serves to record some of these stories and even the concerns, so that future generations will have them and continue to learn from their wisdom.

The work that I am doing with the women is connected to the workshop that I will do with the youth because both will impact the community. In social work we are taught to work with people in a holistic way, which means looking at their community, environment, history, and family, not just the individual in isolation. My project serves to help the community preserve its culture, which then enriches the lives of the people within the community and culture. “We must be able to feel confident that our world view is clearly understood by our own children, and that they will know that their culture has value in modern times as it did in the past” (Ball, 2012, p. 454).

This workshop is connected to a larger project, which I hope to be able to finish in the next two years and then perhaps duplicate in another Indigenous community in Peru. The village already knows that my larger project, which includes the workshop, will only be a one-time event. Despite the fact that it is a one-time event, I have created a sustainability plan because there are multiple elements to the project, which will happen over the span of three years. The first year I will continue to prepare my curriculum for the youth workshop as well as prepare materials for my larger oral preservation project with the
women. I also have to do a major fundraising campaign via a crowd funding campaign online. In the second year of my sustainability plan, I hope to go to the village to implement the actual project and workshop. The project implementation is planned for the summer of 2016. After I have completed the project in the village, I will take a year to transcribe all the stories and write the Spanish version of them. There will be designated individuals from the village that will help me with the Bora transcription.

The last year of the sustainability plan is when I present the village with a finished product. Once everything is transcribed, the stories will be bound into a book with pictures from the village made by the children and by my friend, who is a talented photographer. The book will be presented to the Bora village in the summer of 2017; it will include the audio with it. If the Bora women want to share some of their stories with the world, then I will try to get these stories published. All the benefits would go to the tribe, and the women will designate what they want the money to go towards. If they want to publish, then I would search for a publishing house and set up a fund for the tribe. If they do not want to publish, then I would give the tribe the book and never publish any of the material gathered.

Since crowd funding will be used to solicit donations, a video about my project will be posted on a crowd funding website and promoted on facebook. If there is enough funding, I will be able to bring a photographer, a teacher, and Dr. Helmer as my project team. I will be creating two follow-up videos for all the people who donated to the project. The first follow-up video will be made during the project implementation and the second video will be made when the finished book is presented to the village. It is
important that there is a follow-up video to the fundraising video because it gives the
individuals donating money a chance to see what their money was used for. It also holds
me accountable to the project, to the people donating, and most importantly to the Bora
people. If this project runs smoothly, I would try to do a similar project with a tribe from
the mountains of Peru.
### Table 1: Sustainability Plan

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<th>First Year: June 2015-June-July 2016</th>
<th>Second Year: August 2016-July 2017</th>
<th>Third Year: August 2017-July 2018</th>
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| 1) Continue developing the curriculum for the youth.  
2) Research methods for recording oral stories and also prepare female health information for the women’s talking circles.  
3) Fundraise enough money to take a photographer, a teacher, and Dr. Helmer on the trip. Also budget supplies and gear.  
4) In July 2016 go to Brillo Nuevo to do the project and youth workshop. | 1) Make sure that the translators who are helping with the Bora transcription of the stories have all the materials they need. Computer, recordings, and training on how to transcribe.  
2) Work on the Spanish transcriptions.  
3) Make sure that the pictures are developed.  
4) Getting the book bound.  
5) Going back to the Brillo Nuevo in July 2017 to present them with the book. One copy will stay at the school and then there will be a couple more copies with designated people in the community. | 1) If the women decided that some or all of the stories should be published, then I would start working on putting them together.  
2) I would contact different publishing houses or journals.  
3) Once a publishing house or journal is found, I would set up a way to pay to tribe directly.  
4) I would see if I could possibly do a similar project in the mountains of Peru. |
Implication to Social Work and limitations:

This project relates to social work in its research method and practice. The project was created with the community, for the community. An Indigenous research paradigm was used at every stage of the development of the project. This means that the community chose what they wanted me to do and how they wanted me to do it. A social worker should always strive to work with the community using methods dictated by the community. Since I am working with an Indigenous tribe that has been exploited and studied, I will not publish any of the material gathered in the village unless instructed differently by the village.

In order for the project to be culturally sensitive and respectful, Indigenous language preservation curriculums have been researched. As a social worker I am not imposing my own values on the tribe, instead, I am validating the importance of the Bora culture and the Bora world view. There are always limitations and barriers to projects. In the case of this project, I am not Bora, so I have to be aware of my status and my presence within the village life. I have been identified by the village as an ally, which has allowed me to be able to do a project with the villagers. My status as an ally has given me privilege within the village and I must constantly make sure that I humble myself.

Another way in which I have privilege or am seen as an authority by the villagers is due to the fact that I am educated and of mixed heritage. In Peru, Indigenous people are still highly discriminated and people who have European ancestry are valued more within the hierarchy. This way of thinking is a remnant of the colonial legacy left by the
Spaniards. In my work, I hope to decolonize the notion that European descent is more valuable. I hope to show the Bora that their culture and worldview are important and extremely valuable.
References


