

AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS

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MASCOTS ARE HARMFUL

- American Psychological Association (2005) – Recommended Retiring Mascots with extensive literature review.
- Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman & Stone (2008) – Even positive imagery has negative psychological impact due to stereotypes.
- Kim-prieto, Goldstein, Okazaki & Kirschner (2010) – Mascots increase the chance that students will stereotype other ethnic groups
- Center for American Progress (Stegman & Phillips, 2014) – emphasizes the current state of mental health and suicide rates across Indian Country.
- Pewewardy (2000a, 2000b) – Dysconscious racism which erodes American Indian culture and identity in youth.
- White House – School Environment Listening Sessions Final Report (US Dept. of Ed and WHIAIANE, 2015)
- National Indian Education Association and National Congress of the American Indian – Passed resolutions (and many others, including the Kansas Association of Native American Educators – KANAE)
- Check out: <http://www.changethemascot.org/supporters-of-change/>

ARE YOU A RACIST? ARE YOU CREATING A HOSTILE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

- Many people come to this topic from a highly innocent ignorant place. American Indian cultural studies is not exactly a well covered topic in most every curriculum. **This is a systemic issue in our educational system which crosses over to mainstream media.**
- Many inherited this awkward and confusing situation, and the habits and traditions of an educational system.
- My personal opinion: Teachers typically don't become teachers because they feel like being racist towards certain ethnic groups.

LOOKING PAST THE NAME

The name matters...but...

People get caught up on the name and it's origins - it's a distraction if you want to get to the core of the issue.

- Redskins, Chiefs, Indians, Red Men, Braves, Chieftains, Savages, etc.
- Named after a coach, prominent teacher, and/or community member.

"When the name was created it was meant to..."

**that being said, Redskins, Redmen, Savages tends to be a little more obvious since you likely wouldn't call someone that or walk into an American Indian community and start using the term

Critical Thinking Question: Would your students get in trouble in class if they called someone a Redskin, Redman, or Savage?

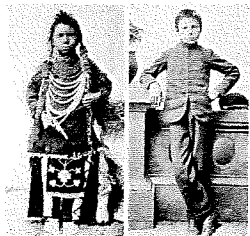
LOOKING PAST THE "HONOR"

- "It is an honor"
- "It is meant to represent proud, brave people"

This is complicated. Please set that aside, because it is another distraction if you intend to try to understand the core of the issue. Many well respected organizations and institutions representing American Indians have denounced mascots.

TOO PC?

- Are we being too PC?
- No...this is a distraction from real research and real issues that can be traced back to "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" policies of the past and suicide and mental health issues in the present.



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~~YOU ARE A RACIST!~~
~~YOU CREATE A HOSTILE~~
~~ENVIRONMENT!~~

LET'S PUT THIS IN PROFESSIONAL
 EDUCATIONAL TERMS

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #1:
 THE PRIMARY K-12 CURRICULUM - WHAT DO STUDENTS
 LEARN ABOUT AMERICAN INDIANS?

Ladson-Billings (2003, p. 3): *We see them as welcoming European settlers, joining them in a Thanksgiving celebration, guiding them as they explore the west, being massacred as settlers push westward, and finally being removed and subdued by Andrew Jackson. After the 'Trail of Tears' American Indians disappear from the pages of our textbooks and the curriculum. For our students American Indians are museum exhibits. No discussion of the ongoing plight of Indians in America is available to most student in our schools. The contemporary Indian rarely emerges in the the classroom. At most, our national discussion of American Indians focuses on gambling casinos and alcoholism.*

APA Resolution – *“Undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities – especially those who have had little or not contact with Indigenous peoples” (p. 1)*

Fryberg et al. (2008) Study: *“Exposure to American Indian mascot images has a negative impact on American Indian high school and college students' feelings of personal and community worth, and achievement-related possible selves.” (p. 215-216)*

Shear, Knowles, Soden & Castro (2015) – *87% of existing US history standards (across all 50 states) related to Indigenous peoples exist in pre-1900 context and only four states dealt with boarding school histories.*

GOOGLE EXERCISE
SEARCH: "AFRICAN AMERICAN"



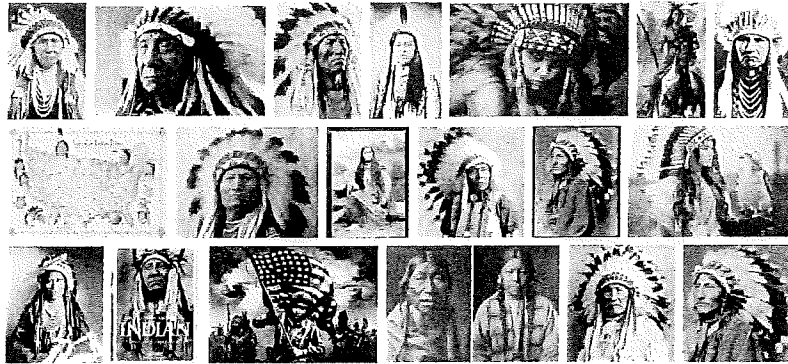
GOOGLE EXERCISE
SEARCH: "ASIAN AMERICAN"



GOOGLE EXERCISE
SEARCH: LATINO



GOOGLE EXERCISE
SEARCH: "NATIVE AMERICAN"



**A LIMITED AND INCOMPLETE PICTURE:
WE ARE EXOTIC OTHERS, STUCK IN
THE PAST
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T
KNOW (OR HAVE BEEN TAUGHT)!**

- The mascot is part of this same conversation – a conversation which is larger than one community and one school.
- “They don’t look like Indians to me” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UxsYYrqOAg>)
- Most people know very little about Native American’s, especially in modern contexts.
- Most of what mainstream society understands, and learns, is that **American Indians are an exotic Other who are stuck in the past** – noble warriors who are one with nature.
- People have a hard time envisioning what American Indians are like in modern contexts.
- Often schools tend to focus on their own constituent students, etc...but this ignores how this is part of a larger nationwide problem
- American Indians are in an interesting place on the Socio-cultural landscape because of this...
 - “I just love your culture”
 - Boy Scouts – Order of the Arrow
 - Sit “Indian Style”

**ASK YOURSELF – HOW MUCH DO YOU
KNOW? HOW MUCH DID YOU LEARN? HOW
OR WHERE DID YOU LEARN IT?**

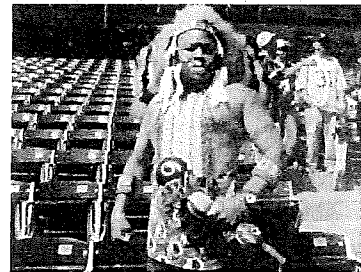
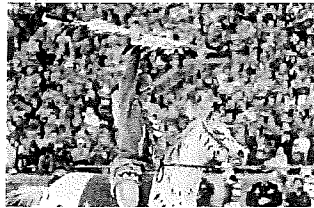
- How many federally recognized native nations are in the United States?
- How many native nations are currently in Kansas?
- Who’s ancestral lands are you on right now? Where are they now?
- Can you explain tribal sovereignty to someone?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdimK1onR4o>

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #2 –
MASCOTS AS A HIDDEN CURRICULUM
(IN PLAIN SIGHT)**

Consider the Mascot, and everything that goes with it, as a curricular conversation that centers around the question: **“What are student's learning”**

“scholars have exposed the hidden curriculum of domination... which labels and places students on educational tracks which lead to limited success in adult life”
(Poeske, Stober, Harstad, Dyson & Cheddar, 2005, p. 46)

What does the mascot curriculum teach you about Indians?



**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #2 –
MASCOTS AS A HIDDEN CURRICULUM
(IN PLAIN SIGHT)**

What does the mascot curriculum teach you about Indian identity and Indigenous peoples heritage? Who's claim to tradition and identity is it?

“We are not planning to change the name of our school district, or high school mascots,” district communications director Erin Little said in a [statement to media Wednesday](#). “In fact, we are proud of our native American heritage.”
(<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article134504689.html#storylink=cpy>)

I'm from Manhattan and damn proud to have been a Papoose & a Indian, it's not broke, Don't fix it, LEAVE IT THE WAY IT IS

7/31

8/2/2017

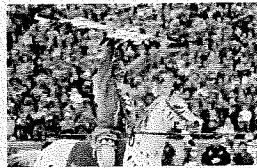
As a graduate of Manhattan High, I am forever proud to be a "Indian". This symbol is one to be proud of and not mistaken as a derogatory one. Those of us who grew up here and make Manhattan our home, know better!

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WHO'S TRADITION IS IT?



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #2 – MASCOTS AS A HIDDEN CURRICULUM (IN PLAIN SIGHT)

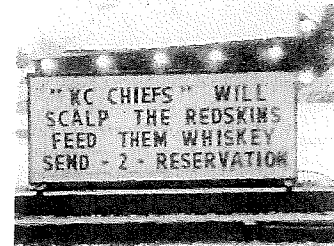
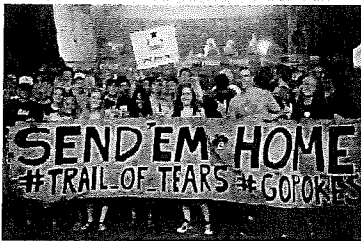
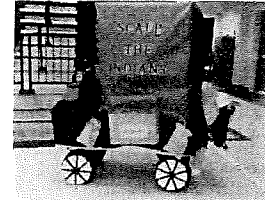
“those who are not middle class, White, male and Eurocentric are frequently considered to be ‘others’ (Poeske, et al., 2005, p. 47)

Consider their exposure to the Mascot curriculum vs. exposure to modern Indians and/or topics (beyond the Exotic Other stuck in the past grand narrative – part of the American master narrative of “progress”)

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #3: THE MASCOT CURRICULUM IMPLICATES OTHER SCHOOLS

· Sporting Events Prompt Racism through the Façade of School Spirit

- "Lets scalp those Redskins"
- "Send 'em Back on the Trail of Tears"
- Recent events in Lawrence



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #4: HOW FAR WOULD YOU TAKE IT?

- Would you show up to a Pow-wow, dance, or cultural event as an Indian mascot super fan?
- Would you do the tomahawk chop?
- Would you claim to know Indian songs? Or sing those songs at a traditional event?
- Would you claim to be an Indian/Brave/Chief/Redskin/Redman?
- Are we preparing students for these awkward interactions in this modern diverse world? (They have all happened to me)



WHO'S TRADITION IS IT?



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #4 MASCOTS AS A SCHOOL SPONSORED BULLYING PROGRAM

- "Hey Pocahontas"
 - "Can you pay in Wampum?"
 - "Hey Chief (Insert made up demeaning Indian name here)"
 - Mocking traditional clothing
 - Mocking traditional songs
 - Hijacking and mocking Indigenous identities – "I'm a _____, and my whole family were raised as _____, and were proud of it!"
- "I dread playing here at Shawnee Mission North," McKinney, a basketball player, wrote. "Having an 'Indian' as your mascot is bad enough, but to have your school call their values 'tribal tenants,' your band yell 'do it for your culture' during our free throws, and to do the tomahawk chop during the starting lineup... this is beyond disrespectful. I'm so irritated and pissed off that this is still happening."
- (<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article13434629.html>)

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #5
ETHICAL DILEMMAS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

- Truth vs. Loyalty
 - Research on Mascots vs. Community Passion for Mascot Traditions
- Individual vs. Community
 - Indians are usually a small minority in most communities where mascots are used
- Short term vs. Long term

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #6
WHO QUALIFIES AS A REPRESENTATIVE?
WHO SHOULD HAVE A VOICE?

- Students?
 - "...he said he wants to see the students have a voice in the decision but believes that it is an 'adult problem to solve. Student should not be caught in the middle'" (Aurther, 2012, p. 7)
- People with "Indian Heritage"
 - Enrolled Members of a tribal nation
 - Community members? (remembering the ethical dilemma of Individual v. Community)
 - National Indian Education Association and National Congress for American Indians and MANY MORE (<http://www.changethemascot.org/supporters-of-change/>)

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #7
LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE
 (WATERS, MARZANO, & MCNULTY, 2003)

Exhibit 7: Comparison of first-order change & second-order change

First-order Change When a change is perceived as:	Second-order Change When a change is perceived as:
An extension of the past	A break with the past
Within existing paradigms	Outside of existing paradigms
Consistent with prevailing values and norms	Conflicted with prevailing values and norms
Implemented with existing knowledge & skills	Requiring new knowledge & skills to implement

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #7
LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE
 (WATERS, MARZANO, & MCNULTY, 2003)

The researchers were most surprised, however, by the second factor that emerged in this analysis: second-order change. Eleven of the leadership responsibilities correlated at a level of statistical significance with second-order change. As shown in Exhibit 2, seven were *positively* correlated with second-order change, and four were *negatively* correlated with second-order change.

Exhibit 2: Responsibilities correlated with second-order change

Positively correlated	Negatively correlated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment • Flexibility • Change Agent • Ideals and Beliefs • Monitor and Evaluate • Intellectual Stimulation • Optimize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Communication • Input • Order

Michael Fullan (2001) and others have written about “implementation dip” associated with second-order change. Declines in performance in schools (and other organizations) when struggling to implement changes requiring new knowledge and skills, that challenge prevailing norms, or conflict with personal values are well documented. The implementation dip is the experience of things getting worse before they get better.

MeREL’s factor analysis offers some empirical validation of the implementation dip. It suggests that when schools undertake an initiative with second-order implications for most stakeholders, teachers may feel there is less cohesion and more fragmentation in the school and less clarity regarding the school’s vision (*culture*). They may also feel like the principal is less accessible and less willing to listen to their concerns (*communication*). Furthermore, they may feel like they have less influence on the day-to-day functions and direction of the school (*input*). Finally, they may feel like patterns of behavior, communication, and decision making are no longer predictable (*order*).

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #7
LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE**

You have inherited the habits, routines, and well established norms of a system

But, American Indians are still alive and in the present with their own cultural systems after having endured our own challenges with change



**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION #8:
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SCHOOL-
COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

What message does your mascot send to other stakeholders?

- Consider recent events in Lawrence/Shawnee Mission and Manhattan
- How can changing the mascot be a learning experience for the community, AND simultaneously an opening for improved efforts in diversity, inclusion, cultural responsiveness, multi-culturalism, etc.
- What type of relationship do you have with the native nations in NE Kansas?

CONCLUSION AND KEY QUESTIONS

- What do students learn about American Indians and do they leave our school prepared to appropriately interact with American Indian populations? What do we teach through our formal and informal curricula? Do we teach about American Indians outside of the generic exotic Other, stuck in the past stereotype?
- Who has the right to claim American Indian identity, heritage, or traditions?
- What is our public image and how is it received outside of our community?
- How do we wrestle with research which proves that mascots are harmful?
- What would change look like in our community? How would we implement it?

QUESTIONS?

