**Teaching Notes**

**Enhancing Native Student Achievement: What Works?**

By

Tanya Altstatt Menchaca

**Learning Outcomes**:

-Understand the purposes and provisions behind policies established to improve K-12 education including the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

-Explore the process of education reform in a tribal community and the factors that contribute to success and failure

-Analyze educational leadership and key elements of good leadership

**Audience:** This case is suitable for college courses and especially relevant to courses in education, management, public administration, political science, sociology, and Native Studies.

**Implementation:** This case can be taught in a variety of ways through individual assignment or group discussions and assignments. Students generally read the case in advance and then work the case in class. The questions below have been designed to work the case in small groups with each small group responding to different thematic questions and then reporting out to the class as a while.

**Directions for Small Group Case Discussion:**

**Approach #1:** *Divide into small groups of optimal size (4-7 people). Read the case in advance. Now it is time for each of the small groups to do some analysis and learn from one another. Each group is given a theme and some questions to discuss. Record your responses and be prepared to report out to the entire class after 40 minutes of working in your group.*

**Group 1: Education reform policy**

1. What were the key provisions of NCLB ?
2. What were the elements in the NCLB policy that you think are especially important in promoting education reform and gains in student achievement? Do any of features seem problematic to you? Explain your reasoning for choosing these factors.
3. What were the critical elements in promoting sound educational reform at Makah? As the education policies played out, what were some of the obstacles faced by the Makah schools? How were these dealt with? What was the resolution?
4. Now that Renker has left, what should be done to continue to make progress?

**Group 2: What works in school reform?**

1. Some contend that successful reform efforts often take years to bear fruit. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Describe how you reached this conclusion with specific examples in this case.
2. What are the critical turning points in this case? Describe how each influenced the outcomes.
3. Using the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools, create a second column showing which of the dimensions were present in the Makah efforts to improve their schools.
4. What were the key elements of the education reform process---in the formal policy and the people and approaches taken at Makah--- that you see in this effort that seem important to you?

**Group 3: Leadership**

1. A combination of internal and external leadership is evident in this case. List the external and internal leadership efforts that were important in terms of people and policies and why you see them as significant.
2. Who were the key leaders in the educational turnaround described in this case? Why do you see them as key leaders?
3. Describe how each of the identified leaders exercised leadership on this issue.
4. What are the important lessons you learned from this case about leadership?

**Group 4: Tribal Administration**

1. Why do you think the Makah tribal council was disengaged with the schools for a longh time?
2. Why did this change?
3. How did the Makah tribe exercise leadership in the education reform effort?
4. What should be done to ensure that the relationship between the education system and the tribal council stays good? Why is this important?

**Group 5: The principal changes**

Ann Renker recently stepped down as principal of NBHS. What advice would you give to her successor? How might others (and who?) contribute to the transition to make it a good one? Imagine and be prepared to present several scenarios of what is likely to happen over the next year or so…..the good and the bad. Is the departure of one person really all that big a deal? Why?

**Group 7: Learning from others**

Imagine that you are one of the educators at Makah and a group of tribal people from another tribal community have asked to meet with you to talk about the Makah school turnaround. They want to learn from you since their schools are also facing substantial challenges. Re-enact your discussion with them. What worked? What should they do? What questions and advice do you have for them? Please be prepared to present a role play of your meeting with them.

**Approach #2**

**An additional teaching suggestion from the field**: During our group’s discussion, there were repeated opportunities to embed our inquiry through the lens of indigenous approach, philosophy, and epistemology.

**Overarching question**: In this case, what shifts did you see in community participation, leadership, organizational change, and relationships?

**  Community Participation**

         How would you define community?

          What role did the community play?

          What is the role of education in indigenous

          communities?

**  Leadership**

       Who are the leaders in this case?

        Can you point to an example where a leader guided the

        learning?

        What are the lessons learned with Elders?

        What are examples of indigenous learning and knowing

         illustrated in this case?

**  Organizational change**

       What examples of the histories of distrust between public

         education and tribal people are manifest in this case?

       What did the staff/teachers need to be successful?

       What were the methods of acknowledging achievement,

        success, and completion?

        Based on this case, what value shifts did you see?  In

          what ways are these shifts aligned with Makah tribal

           values?

        What shifts happened in the power and governance of

           the school?

**  Relationship**

       What is the relationship between community and school?

        Does the community serve the school? The school serve

         the community?

       What shifts happened in the trust of relationships in this

          case?

       In what ways might the relationship between school

         leadership and staff the tribal members and leaders

         matter in this case?  Between tribal leaders and the

         tribal community?  Between the principal and the tribal

         community?  Between the principal and superintendent?

       What are some of the examples of the relationship of

         place, language, and culture in this case?

**Assessment:** Assessing student learning is an important dimension of case teaching. Usually assessment is done through tests, position papers, end-of-case essays or reflection questions. Students may also be asked to assess the effectiveness of their group’s process.