

K-12 Miwok Educational Modules

Sage Innerarity | Amherst College | Elk Grove, CA, USA | Summer 2021

Overview: Over the course of the summer, I will use Dr. Kahente Horn-Miller's model for [Collaborative Indigenous Learning Bundles](#) as inspiration in order to create a similar curricular module at the K-12 level. Dr. Horn Miller's CILB were created in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Act in Canada and are being implemented at Carleton University as a means of bringing Indigenous knowledges and voices into academic spaces. Each bundle consists of an interview with an Indigenous knowledge keeper, a lesson from an Indigenous expert, and multimedia resources which can be incorporated into pre-existing lesson plans. As a citizen of the lone Band of Miwok Indians, I am uniquely situated to interview elders and community members with whom I am already acquainted, and who have expressed excitement about the opportunity to share their knowledges as part of this project. For my Project for Peace, I will partner with the Miwok Heritage Center under the guidance of the Center's Executive Director, Glen Villa Jr., who has agreed to collaborate with me on this project. Having worked with the MHC last summer through the Engaged Research Program at Amherst College, I feel extremely confident in my partnership with them. Through our collaboration, I will connect with the members of my community who wish to share their stories. I will then utilize the footage from their interviews along with literary and archival research to create my own Miwok Educational Modules

Intention & Anticipated Impact: Dr. Kahente Horn-Miller, explains that sharing these stories within educational settings is one way that we might not only give voice to these stories, but allow for non-Native peoples to develop an understanding of our histories and presents. By correcting colonial narratives to center Indigenous experiences and truths, we may foster understanding and dialogue across difference among students. Such work provides students with both the knowledge and tools to build solidarity and thus peacebuilding during their formative years, tools which they may then carry with them as they navigate the world together. Thus, my long-term goal is to lay the foundation for K-12 educators to easily access and utilize modules of Indigenous knowledges to supplement, and in some cases correct, the lessons they currently teach. To reach this long term goal, I will need to achieve my short term goals of creating Educational Modules which pertain specifically to settler colonialism in California and connecting with K-12 educators to begin conversations about incorporating these modules into their curriculum.

Demonstrated Need & Research: Growing up, I rarely saw myself and my people accurately represented, if represented at all, in my K-12 curriculum. I felt my strongest sense of belonging when my mother came into my elementary school classes and taught mini lessons on Miwok peoples, and I eventually learned to teach these classes myself as I grew older. It was this experience that inspired this project, especially given that many of the narratives I grew up hearing in school have yet to change. In fact, there are still [prominent California historians](#) who refuse to name John Sutter's atrocities as such and instead label him a "complicated man." This work would thus build on the changes being made to Sutter's Fort in Sacramento, CA to more accurately reflect Sutter's violent legacy. Daniel Heath Justice notes in his work *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, "... continuity across the generations is how the people survive as the People: continuity of stories, languages, relations, ceremonies, and of course, the very lives of the People themselves."¹ This calls our attention to the fact that Indigenous knowledges and methods of knowledge sharing are not only important to our learning within academic institutions; they are crucial for our survival, and have sustained us in spite of settler colonial attempts at our erasure and extinction. The CILB model incorporates Indigenous voices, experience, and ways of teaching and learning such as learning on the land, collaboration, and storytelling. The continuance of such learning within academia allows Native students to feel a sense of belonging, to learn more easily because the nature of the learning is more familiar, and to continue in the same processes of learning even when removed from our home communities. Furthermore, non-Native students would begin the process of understanding settler colonialism from an early age so that they might be stronger allies to their Native peers.

Relevant Experience: In the class Native American Literature, taught by Professor Lisa Brooks, I explored the long history and presence of Native authors of both fiction and non-fiction. It was in this course that I encountered Daniel Heath Justice's *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, which remains central to my work. During my first year I also took *When Corn Mother Meets King Corn* and *American Origins*, both of which gave me the opportunity to conduct research and produce a final project of my own choosing. For *Corn*, I co-produced an interactive digital storymap which focused on connections between violence against the land and violence against Indigenous women. For *American Origins*, I produced a

¹ Justice, Daniel Heath. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Indigenous Studies Series. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018.

revised version of my high school's AP Literature syllabus to center Indigenous literature and put it in conversation with texts typically included in the curriculum. During my Sophomore year in Native Futures I read works by Cutcha Risling Baldy and Leanne Simpson, both of whom inspired me to center my community in my work and provide my own lived experiences as guides for regathering and sharing knowledges within my community. I subsequently took Research Methods with Professor Robert Hayashi, in which I narrowed my research questions and determined that my primary methodologies will be Narrative Histories and Life Inquiry/Autobiography. This focus on methodologies, ethnography, oral histories, and interviews left me thoroughly prepared to conduct my own interviews going forward. During my first and sophomore years I worked as a research assistant to Prof. Brooks on the Occom Project, which focused on the life and kinship networks of Mohegan author, preacher, and community leader Samson Occom. Through this work I learned how to navigate and utilize archives, strengthened my analytical skills, and worked with ArcGIS and ArcGIS storymapping. As a Mellon Mays Fellow, I conducted independent research and produced a final research prospectus for my current work that focuses on creation stories. I am now in the process of incorporating this research into my Senior American Studies thesis on settler colonialism in California.

Implementation Strategy: Over the summer, Glen Villa, Jr. and I will work together throughout the interview process. His experience in interviewing, grant writing, and digital archiving will help to support this work. I will conduct interviews and Glen will oversee and run recording devices, as well as insert guiding questions or comments when necessary. I will also review the footage and make note of common themes, things that worked/did not work, and changes I wish to make going forward. My collaborative efforts with Glen will be continually negotiated and revisited throughout the process. **Phase 1 – Interviews (Week 1-4):** Identify and schedule interviews with elders and knowledge holders. After conducting interviews last summer, I found scheduling to be the hardest part and thus plan to set the schedule during the first week. Once the interviews are scheduled, we will be able to assess which knowledges our interviewees have and wish to share with us, as some have expressed past interest in sharing about specific areas and experiences. This will inform the questions we ask, though we will cover areas such as the Gold Rush, Sutter's Fort, and boarding schools. We will conduct at least 5-10 interviews with community members, as well as gather texts/videos/images which can be utilized in classrooms to supplement the current curriculum. **Phase 2 – Editing & Research (Weeks 5-8):** Edit interview footage; assess current curricular standards, supplemental materials, and course textbooks; compile archival and literary research into modules for use in classrooms. Researching current textbooks and grade-level standards will allow me to make the modules as relevant as possible. **Phase 3 – Finalizing Modules & Outreach (Weeks 9-12):** During the last weeks, I will finalize the modules (one for kindergartners, one for fourth graders, and one for US History) and begin sharing the modules with local community members and educators. Finally, I will create and share a proposal to urge the implementation of MEM in local elementary, middle and high school classrooms.

Risks: The challenges and setbacks that may occur are likely related to what interviewees are willing or unwilling to share, especially given the fact that some of the topics we discuss will be more difficult. To mitigate some of this, we will actively be checking in with interviewees as well as building in breaks during the process. These breaks will allow interviewees time to resettle themselves if and when topics become too difficult and will make the interviews feel less intimidating. Because we are in community with one another these interviews will also be informal in nature and will be posed as conversations in which elders can share whatever it is that they feel is important or comfortable for them. Though COVID-19 is still a concern, all participants are fully vaccinated, which greatly reduces the risk of transmission.

Assessment: If I am able to gather, learn, and share these stories in the format of CILB, my project will have been a success. Many of these stories have not been told for many years, and as storytellers and knowledge holders grow older, it becomes more important that we give space to their stories. Having an archive of videos with elders from the community sharing their knowledges will allow community members to learn from these stories, as well as give educators an opportunity to Indigenize their courses. I plan to keep a reflection journal throughout the summer as I conduct interviews. I have a research journal which I began when I entered into the Mellon Mays program, and which I currently use to keep track of questions and insights as they come up, reading reflections, and any of my own personal, internal thoughts. It is my hope that these Miwok Educational Models will be utilized by both K-12 educators and Indian Education teachers/tutors in their work with Native students. More broadly, I am hopeful that my MEM can serve as a model for other students to do similar work within their communities— in addition to creating these

modules, I will share my notes and reflections with Indian Education so that Native students in the program who wish to create modules which center their communities.

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Project Name: K-12 Miwok Educational Modules
School: Amherst College

Note: all funds in US dollars.

Projects for Peace grant: \$ 10,000.00
 Additional Funding, if any:
Total funding available: \$ 10,000.00

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:
 \$ -

TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
 \$ 10,000.00

Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
700	4200		150			300	850	1500	
			150			850	200	500	
			150						
			150						
			150						
			150						
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 700.00	\$ 4,200.00	\$ -	\$ 900.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,150.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -

Total Student Expenses: \$ 5,800.00

Total Project Expenses: \$ 4,200.00