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**Indigenous pedagogy in the classroom: a service learning model for discussion.**

*Michael D. McNally.*

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Scholars of Indigenous religious traditions are keenly aware of how difficult it is to lead our students into the fluid dynamics of oral religions within the conventional structures of text-based academic inquiry and classroom learning. This pedagogical struggle is surely related to the search for words nimble enough to interpret Indigenous traditions in a scholarly interpretive idiom that more properly belongs to the study of "religions" and/or "cultures." As Ines Talamantez has put it in various public contexts, "Native communities have their own theories of culture," their own sovereign ways of knowing, teaching, and learning traditions, and scholars have seen it increasingly as our task to indigenize the language that religious studies brings to Native lifeways.

Still, this is not a problem of vocabulary alone; more elementally, I submit, it is a structural one, a presenting problem to pedagogy and scholarship alike. What makes Indigenous theories of culture distinctive is in part that they are less a matter of theory than of process, and thus we cannot just enumerate the content of the theories more effectively; we must engage their dynamism in creative ways.

In my reflections here I wish to wrestle with the challenges and possibilities for the classroom of recognizing and seeking to close the gap between conventional academic discourse about Native peoples and Indigenous modes of cultural teaching and learning. First, I will identify some distinctive contours of Anishinaabe Ojibwe approaches to cultural transmission. Second, I will reflect on my experience incorporating service-learning in classes on Native traditions. This pedagogical approach, I want to suggest, can modestly incorporate some Indigenous pedagogy into classroom learning that becomes, as a result, more solid because it is more in tune with the structure as well as content of Native tradition, more memorable because human encounters work against the grain of deeply rooted stereotypes concerning Indigenous peoples, and more transforming because students emerge with a sense of both the beauty of Indigenous traditions and of what's at stake with Indigenous cultural survival. But before I take up the specifics of my experience with service-learning, I will turn to several distinctive marks of configuring knowledge, cultural authority, teaching, and learning as they happen on Indigenous terms among Anishinaabe Ojibwe communities, with whom I have fieldwork experiences spanning a decade. (1)

#### DISTINCTIVE CONTOURS OF OJIBWE PEDAGOGY

Ojibwe pedagogy is distinctive in at least four relevant respects. First, Ojibwe pedagogy privileges knowledge rooted in oral traditions flowing through the complex authority of Elders over book knowledge. Today this is emphatically the case concerning knowledge about the sacred, especially in light of cultural dispossession and appropriation. Perhaps it is not surprising that one finds broadly in Ojibwe communities a hermeneutic of suspicion (if not dismissal) applied to many formulations of tradition in texts, even those of Ojibwe authorship.

There are a number of implications here. One is the relational, situational nature of cultural transmission. Cultural knowledge is transmitted in concrete situations of utterance between Elder and

student, tailored to the moment and filtered by means of the particularities of their relationship. Indeed, the relational and situational nature of such exchanges, together with the artfulness practiced by Ojibwe Elders in such moments, cannot be effectively imagined in such mechanistic terms as "cultural transmission"--that refers to the predictable well-oiled rotations of a drive train with all its finely machined cogs, joints, and fittings. Here we have an embodied art.

But more than the distinctive configuration of cultural "transmission," this aspect of Ojibwe pedagogy illustrates the relational and situational construction of--or better, improvisation on--cultural knowledge. Cultural authority does not rest simply on those with an authoritative command of some thing called "culture" but the authority of people invested by the community with the authority to articulate culture. And here is where Elders come in as more than folk who have lived many moons and have therefore accrued wisdom as a matter of course. To be sure, the authority of Elders has to do with the acquisition over time of both cultural knowledge and judgment, tempered by years of experience, but eldership in the sense Ojibwe people tend to speak of it is less a function of biological age than it is a function of community recognition. It is the prerogative of an Ojibwe Elder to improvise, within bounds, on cultural knowledge to address the circumstances of time and space. Knowledge is used in service of community.

Another implication is temporal. Knowledge of and stories about the past in lived moments of oral exchange are never simply locked up in bygone eras: they become tangible realities that create a felt relationship with the past that cannot easily be engendered in histories that are written and read alone. The resonant authority of an old person's voice, speaking with the economy and resonance of Ojibwe idiom, can collapse the abstraction of historical duration and make the Treaty of 1855 or Allotment Policy feel like they occurred yesterday. Jack Goody and Ian Watt observe that "the pastness of the past depends upon an historical sensibility which can hardly begin to operate without permanent written records." (2) But this is not merely a function of orality. Native communities' sense of proximity to what non-Natives might deem a distant past is not simply a function of orality. The daily lives of most Native people are powerfully conditioned by treaties and century-old U.S. policies.

Finally, these exchanges between Elder and student are typically ceremonialized in Ojibwe tradition. Seeking knowledge, a student classically offers tobacco to the Elder and thereby creates a relationship heavily ramified with traditional associations. Offering tobacco is the elemental ritual practice in "prayer" establishing appropriate relations between a "pitiable" devotee and a "pitying" spirit--and ethical context to the proceedings, since a student thus subordinates him or herself to the Elder and claims the Elder's generosity, consideration, and commitment to proceed "in a good way." (3)

Second, Ojibwe pedagogy couples the knowledge taught and learned about tradition with responsibility on the part of both teacher and student to use that knowledge on behalf of community well-being. Here the orality of privileged cultural exchange ensures that stewards of cultural knowledge can exercise considerable control over who learns of it, how and in what contexts they shall learn it, and what expectations accompany the passing on of knowledge. Here is a kind of structure of intellectual sovereignty the value of which has been accentuated in light of challenges to political and other kinds of sovereignty.

I learned much about this from my own chastened experience under my late Ojibwe teacher, Larry Cloud Morgan. I first made arrangements by phone from the hallowed halls of Harvard University to do language study with him, a fluent Ojibwe speaker, poet, and widely respected community activist. When I inquired what appropriate amount of grant money I should seek for his services, Larry replied in a manner at once stern and gentle, "the language is not for sale: why don't we work on language and culture one day a week in exchange for four days of your helping me with my various projects in the community." As that summer of 1991 progressed, Larry became a spiritual leader and advisor to a grassroots civil disobedience movement known as Camp Justice, challenging what were seen as ill dealings by the White Earth tribal government and allied outside interests in the development of a casino. The two of us were shuttling to and from the reservation, securing legal representation,

lobbying officials, organizing support, and writing press releases. Needless to say, the one day per week we had set out to devote to language instruction yielded to whatever time and energy we had in the car driving between Larry's home in Minneapolis and the northern Minnesota reservations. Although I was ecstatic to be doing engaged community service in the context of my fieldwork, I became frustrated that it was August 1 and all I could generate were the words for "deer," "bear," and "coffee." I remember keenly one five-hour drive back to the Twin Cities after a tireless week at White Earth, when I let my frustration show to my friend and teacher through my anxious presence. After all, I thought, given my facility with language and Larry's fluency and ability to teach, I could have picked up an enviable amount of Ojibwe that summer. But instead of "giving" me the different conjugations of transitive verbs with animate objects, Larry closed up and remained silent for hours. I realized later that I had become in Ojibwe parlance, *miindawe*, pouting like a tired toddler who did not know exactly what he wanted. If I did not learn those conjugations, I did learn that lessons taught "in a good way" come to those fit for them and when conditions were fitting for them.

Third, Ojibwe pedagogy engineers firsthand learning situated in and implicated in a student's experience, at the direction of but not determined by the authority of the Elder. Ojibwe children are refreshingly, boisterously present in every ceremonial and other community occasion I have experienced. They are taught skills of active watching and listening, not simply the content of what to look or listen for. They are taught to take in cultural lessons experientially, to take them in over time, and to not expect spoon feedings of segmented units of knowledge. Until I developed more discerning appreciations of such things, I took my own teacher and other traditional Elders to be "passive" educators. I now see them as very thoughtfully proceeding in a very deliberate, very Anishinaabe way. Although I assert this without benefit of what I trust is a rich body of Scholarship on educational psychology, people claim knowledge derived experientially is deeper in some way. What is more, the knowledge they claim is less likely to become ossified by ideological orthodoxies.

Finally, Ojibwe pedagogy makes room for holistic reflection that engenders synthesis across the putative boundaries of a modern Western sociology of knowledge: those differentiating religion from politics, economics, medicine, art, and history, and differentiating knowledge about "religion" from the spiritual experience and ethical concerns that surround it. Here the situational and relational nature of the oral flow of cultural knowledge, as well as the stressed link between cultural learning and community well-being, to which I have already alluded, defy lessons that are easily categorized according to the differentiated fields of inquiry and practice in the modern West. Learning herbal knowledge, for example, involves plant biology, ecology, physiology, psychology, and some familiarity with the historical, economic, and social causes of illness, not to speak of appropriate ritual prayers and rehearsal of sacred narratives. Likewise, learning about more overtly "religious" or narrative knowledge takes the student into the terrain of history and politics. In Ojibwe terms, one does not get a lecture purely on Ojibwe cosmology in the abstract; one gets cosmology embedded in the dense realities of peoples' lives and with practical concerns of people's well-being in full view.

I do not want to overstate the practical aims of Ojibwe pedagogy here. Cultural learning was not just a matter of effective food-gathering strategies or exquisite ethnobotany, and Ojibwe life has been characterized as a long process of accruing knowledge. Still, the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake alone seems of questionable value, I think, to many Ojibwe people. My teacher was only partially kidding when he introduced me publicly as an "Ojibwologist." Some years ago at an academic conference where the scholars were carrying on and on, as we too often do, about Native religions evidencing no knowledge or concern for the historical or political contexts surrounding their subject, one guest from that region's Native community stood and said, her voice cracking with conviction: "you cannot understand our ceremonies until you understand the hurt in our communities."

A final implication is spiritual. I think it fair to say that, in Ojibwe terms, the work of teaching and learning religious and cultural knowledge necessarily cannot be a wholly secular, wholly dispassionate, undertaking. One's investment must run deeper than purely scholarly interests, and this

can be disquieting for those of us with a principled distinction between comparative religious studies and theology or ethics. Basil Johnston, in *Ojibway Heritage*, writes, "the purposes of traditional Ojibwe education were both to serve the practical needs of the people and to enhance the soul (to grow in spiritual ways)... To possess only the skills of living without knowledge of the spirit would be to live a life without purpose, depth, and meaning. To rely solely upon inner growth was to ignore the harsh reality of life in earlier times." (4)

## SERVICE LEARNING

Having charted some of the terrain of Ojibwe pedagogy, I wish now to turn back to the pedagogical culture that, alas, nearly all scholars share: that of the classroom, the hour, the syllabus, the lecture, the discussion, the essay assignment, and the authority of the PhD. Without extolling the virtues--and they are considerable--of our disciplinary differentiation of knowledge, and the enviable training our students generally receive in American higher education, let me describe how I have drawn on the resources of academic service learning to approximate in my class on Native American religions some of the distinctive structures of Ojibwe pedagogy, or at least to suggest to my students the structural disconnects between the conventions of the University classroom and Indigenous idioms of teaching and learning.

First a definition: I take "service learning" to be a pedagogical posture that bases learning on students' experience in community service projects at the behest and direction of Native communities and agencies and that thoughtfully engineers students' structured reflection on that service. Crucially, this is more than extracurricular volunteerism, more than a supplement to classroom learning. The service and structured reflection on it are at the heart of the two primary course objectives. First, students, through their modest service, are given privileged access to both the urgency of the struggles Native communities face today and the vitality of the spirited responses those same communities mount in response to those struggles, drawing as they do on culture, tradition, and sometimes ceremony. In a word, they develop a politicized fire in the belly for the subject matter where they had brought intellectual curiosity and/or spiritual hunger. Secondly, students' learning moves more meaningfully against the grain of stereotypes of Native religions frozen in the amber of the ethnographic present, mystified beyond recognition on the New Age shamanism workshop circuit. Students are expected to reflect critically on how their experience serving in real live Native communities--including their experience of the pitifully modest nature of their contribution--squares with the authority of the various scholarly materials--novels, ethnographies, narrative histories, Native newspapers, and films--that together comprise the other foundation for classroom learning. (5)

I have used this model with, admittedly, varying degrees of success over the last five years and in two very different institutions: first in the history department at Eastern Michigan University, a large commuter school of largely working class, ethnically diverse students who present a bewildering range of student aptitude and commitment; and secondly at Carleton, a highly competitive, rural liberal arts institution, whose students come largely from privilege but who are also characterized by uncommon curiosity and commitment to their work. I should add that service learning makes a particular kind of sense in working with traditional college students of elite, usually white backgrounds: that is, to give them an opportunity to recognize their privilege and to locate their learning in service across the boundaries of class and race that elite education all too often does not foster. But as my experience with many first-generation college students at Eastern Michigan University suggested--including a healthier proportion of Native students--service learning also makes a particular kind of sense in that it offers the crucial opportunity to integrate their on- and off-campus worlds, which otherwise remain in considerable, sometimes unhealthy tension.

Projects have ranged from providing computer-based Ojibwe language curricula to an Ojibwe language immersion school, to classroom assistance in a Minneapolis magnet school whose curriculum refers to Anishinaabe and Lakota traditions, to manual labor in a reservation cooperative's strawberry fields, to Web-based community organizing on the Alaska Native Wildlife Refuge and

against hydroelectric power damaging to Manitoba Cree and Ojibwe communities, to teaching girl scouts the history of stereotyping images of Indians. I am blessed to have been teaching in places with considerable proximity to Native populations both urban and rural, but I have also found that distance is no deal killer: students have successfully used the phone and the Web and vacation time to connect with leaders of Native communities far away, often in parts of the country from which the student came and to which he or she will return.

For my pedagogical purposes, the quantity of the contact is less important than the qualitative experience of the work. For example, one relatively undistinguished but sincere student whose service--an advocacy project--took place solely on campus and whose only contact with Native persons was through a phone call and materials supplied by an advocacy organization came to recognize and name her own desire to be "saving Indians" degraded by tragedy. "It was clear to me," she wrote in her structure reflection essay, "that although the Cree Indians may be unhappy, poor, and living in polluted lands, it is likely that they are a large part of the force for change in that region. If our role as nonnatives is not to save the Indians, then it must be to work alongside them."

Service learning requires considerable effort. Up front, one must seek out and build sincere relationships with Native individuals, communities, or agencies, establish the terms of the students' service, and guard against inflated or unmanageable expectations for students' modest contributions. Then, one must work out the logistics and raise the additional resources that transportation, honoraria, and the like will require. Finally, ensuring that five or six projects are going smoothly requires considerable day-to-day effort and sometimes can come at the expense of one's general class preparation. Most importantly, service learning with Native communities requires considerable faith in students one does not know well to work respectfully with and potentially further sap the energy of overworked and under funded contacts at Native agencies.

Even with all that added work and risk, I can still say the benefits of service learning continue to exceed expectations. For the Native communities and organizations, the services rendered are typically modest, but in my experience they are no less appreciated. These communities, organizations, and schools are, of course, typically overburdened and understaffed, and help with specified tasks around the edges, at their behest, consistently have been helpful. That said, I have learned the importance of establishing realistic, often overly modest expectations in my preliminary conversations with Native organizations and community people. (6) Similarly, I have also learned the importance of reminding my students of the dangerous tendency to exaggerate the contributions that such projects can make to Native communities, making reference to the audaciousness of nineteenth-century non-Indian "reformers" setting out to "resolve the Indian question" at Lake Mohonk conferences.

In this work the primary gains from the service are realized in the lives of the students themselves. In the classroom the service projects are but the springboard for structured reflection that moves unmet expectations about Indians from frustration to unlearning and that squares experiential learning with other course materials. I introduce the course by suggesting that service projects will mean that the course will not proceed with the same old, same old. I am now emboldened to assert that there is thus more at stake than a standard class and that students unable or unwilling to invest themselves accordingly--for whatever reason--should probably imagine themselves in another class. I loosely arrange five to six projects in advance. They are, with a few exceptions, group projects, and students' primary reflection happens through conversations among co-participants in the van or the car or in preparation. As the term proceeds, I try to meet individually with each student to let them narrate their experience and typically to identify their unmet expectations for the exotic and to convert the frustrations that some feel into significant moments for learning. Students organize and give group project presentations in the last two weeks of class that harvest the range of experiences and force them to further articulate just what it is that they have been learning. Finally, take home final essays enable each student to name how service in Native communities educated them and, in particular, how their service experience squared with the texts, lectures, class speakers, and other kinds of authority in class.

## SERVICE LEARNING AND OJIBWE PEDAGOGY

Readers will surely agree that our college classrooms can never fully assume the structures of Ojibwe pedagogy as even I have summarized them. Still, even modest gestures of service can result in an experience here or there that thoroughly serves to reorient an individual's learning. And if properly guided, the cumulative effect of those experiences can resituate the entire culture of the class in terms of the four distinctive contours of Ojibwe pedagogy that I have identified. I turn now to gauge more specifically how my service learning course has engaged the structures of Ojibwe pedagogy in the classroom.

First, the privileged orality of Ojibwe pedagogy carries with it significant ramifications. Students who did a weekend of field labor at Winona LaDuke's White Earth Land Recovery Project and who were taken under the wing of Joe Legarde, a White Earth activist who makes his living largely off the land, were deeply impressed by the direction they received from several Elders there. In particular, they were moved by an account of an activist ethnohistorian connected to the community about the force of oral traditional knowledge concerning the length of time that the Ojibwe have occupied their current land base. Those students, and others who heard them testify in class presentations, reported in final essays that the service projects enabled them to call into question the authority of the ethnographic texts of the course. "Everyone on the reservation had stories from times gone by and there were a few of them that were powerful enough to move mountains. Joe Legarde especially had some stories that were so awful that I can't see how he told them with a smile." Because of the stories, another reflected, "the White Earth trip was not just a weekend away from campus or just a service learning experience ... [it] made me take a step back and evaluate my entire situation. I could never learn from a book what I saw and experienced there."

Second, service learning grounds learning in experience. The first weeks of my course are characterized by readings from Robert Berkhofer's *White Man's Indian*, Phil Deloria's *Playing Indian*, the "Song of Hiawatha," and the history of U.S. Indian policy that disclose the cultural politics of romanticizing Indians, and this in contrast to student's encounter with back-issues of *Indian Country Today*. (7) But unlearning racism can seldom if ever happen through book learning and essay writing alone. Service projects of any sort consistently engineer jarring experiences that stir up the tidiness of categories carried deep within students' minds. Students connected with the Inupiat and Gwich'in Steering Committee came to learn that Alaska Natives do not speak with a single voice on the drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. Students tutoring in the magnet school dedicated to Dakota and Ojibwe culture learned how difficult it was just to get kids living in abject poverty settled, fed, and mentally much less physically present before any cultural education could begin. Students sore with the *weltschmerz* of their study of the tragedy of Indian histories realized the artfulness, resilience, and razor-sharp edge of Indian humor. Like the Trickster in the long ago stories that students had read, contemporary Ojibwe people told memorable stories, laughed in memorable ways. As one student put it in her final reflection paper, "what you think you will learn [from service learning projects] and how you plan on learning it is usually not the final experience."

Third, learning through reflection on service among Native communities traverses the boundaries of our academic sociology of knowledge. I try, through the books I teach and lectures from my own experience, to come to fuller terms with what Native people mean when they say so consistently, "We don't have a religion, we have a way of life." Such a claim can, as you know, become cliché, and a class can emerge from a discussion of a book in its conviction along such lines without ever really being confronted by the implications. In my experience, though, students emerge from service projects with a keener and politicized insight that Native religions are nowhere and everywhere at once. But this often remains inarticulate until the end of the course. In their presentations, many students will be understandably immersed in relating the complexities of a particular issue and the details of the efforts that their Native agency or community has made on that issue. I have taken to asking whether they would interpret the depth of commitment many Native people bring to tasks of

resistance, wellness, and survival in terms of religion or spirituality.

Finally, and most importantly, service learning can instill a characteristically Ojibwe sense of the necessary connection between knowledge and responsibility. My students bring genuine curiosity and often a deep desire for a spiritual connection to their study of Native peoples, but as many who teach in the field know, this seldom carries with it an awareness, much less an appetite, for the history, the politics, and the injustice that come with that territory. Classroom presentations, organizing campaigns, and the gathering steam of the class as it nears its conclusion confirm that most students emerge from their service-learning experience with a fire in the belly that can be stoked but ultimately cannot be lit in the classroom alone. For example, I was concerned this past fall when an unusually large group of students chose what arguably could have been the least demanding of the possible projects: helping set up, serve, and take down the annual Feast for the Dead that the Minneapolis Catholic Indian Ministry and Kateri Community provides for the broader Native community at the Minneapolis Indian Center. I knew the group included a number of students who I had come to think of as terrific people, but they were "wet wood" with respect to their engagement with the class theretofore. Imagine my surprise, then, when they told not just of the poetics of a ceremony that brought the Catholic mass together with a pipe ceremony, an Ojibwe water ceremony, and a Dakota honor song in a trilingual, Ojibwe/Dakota/English liturgy for All Souls. They spoke with fervor of the politics of death in Minneapolis's Indian community. Among the dead that year, whose names were read in the liturgy, were victims of suicide, homicide, and even a deeply disturbing case of police brutality. But even the wettest wood of the lot, a football player who had gone undistinguished for eight weeks, told of how, after they had set up but before the crowd arrived, they took a stroll around the Indian Center grounds. They encountered an apparently drunk homeless man who heckled them, "What are you (various epithets) doing on Indian land?" and deliberately stood in their way of getting back in the building. Keep in mind these are students of a college with a beautiful and largely safe rural campus. Afraid for their safety, one of them told him there was a feast for the dead and that they were volunteering to help out. The man softened, said his mother's death that year was why he was drinking. He asked the football player to "say hello to my mother in the ceremony." You could hear a pin drop in the room following the relation of the story during class presentations.

It has also been my privilege to witness students carrying their newly politicized appreciation of Native traditions into the sphere of advocacy and action. One group, having been steeped in Anishinaabe regard for the sacred food--some call it medicine--known as manoomin or wild rice, and having been alerted to the concerns of the industrialized process of paddy-farming wild rice, persuaded the campus food service franchise to contract with a grassroots White Earth organization to provision its extensive wild rice purchases. Best of all, I found out about the initiative not in a class presentation but after the fact--from someone else--for the semester had ended. Ultimately, I remain unsure how enduring the students' convictions are in this regard, as those of us can relate whose white privilege enables the fire in our belly to ebb and flow with new circumstances, but the seeds planted by the Native community people they meet and nurtured in class assignments have in some cases been, students say, the more important experiences they have had in college thus far, and have a shot as a consequence of growing fuller and bearing fruit in as yet unimagined ways.

Nine years ago, during my first on-campus job interview at a Canadian university, I met with a First Nations advisory circle that the religion department had established to help with the interview process. I recall vividly a two-hour interview around a table with Native community members and being asked the following question by the committee chair: "Michael, as you know this campus sits across the street from a Greyhound station through which numerous Native people pass each day to and from their difficult lives in the city and on the reserve. What will you do to bring the accrued wisdom that passes through that bus station every day and how will you get your students out into such places where Native people live in need?" Intrigued, though speechless at the time, I replied, "I don't know exactly, but I long to teach at an institution where that question is posed formally during the job interview." By now I have a solid response to the question and can only affirm the importance of continuing to ask it of ourselves and of our students.

This article was first presented to the Indigenous Religions Group at the American Academy of Religion in November 2003. For what I have come to learn about Ojibwe pedagogy, I am grateful to the following Elders and teachers at White Earth: Charles "Punkin" Hanks, Ethelbert Vanwert, Joe Legarde, Dan Kier, Erma Vizenor, the late Jack Potter, the late Josephine DeGroat, and especially the late Larry Cloud Morgan. Ines Talamantez has modeled effective Indigenous pedagogy for me in classes. I also acknowledge my students at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and especially Carleton College for what I have learned from their service experiences. Dale Rice at EMU, Dean Shelby Boardman, Candace Lutt, and colleagues at Carleton College have supported service learning in my courses. Finally, I am indebted to my wife, Devon Anderson, and to our children, Svea and Coleman.

## NOTES

- (1.) A fuller account of my field and community work with respect to Ojibwe communities in Minnesota, especially at White Earth, as well as my own social location in that work can be found in *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. vii-xi.
- (2.) Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 24, as cited in Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 119.
- (3.) Having invited one guest speaker to class and having quietly offered him tobacco in what I took to be a largely formal gesture, admittedly by a white guy, that recognized his ability to say whatever he wished in my class, I was struck how seriously he took it. He started the class by removing his watch and glasses, offering the tobacco to spirits, and prayed in Ojibwe for no fewer than five minutes--all untranslated--in order to have the class proceed "in a good way." Class presentations that begin with such a prayer do not proceed according to a college classroom's standard operating procedure, and what transpired in the following hour moved people in ways that it would not have had I not, in a largely unwitting way, offered tobacco.
- (4.) As cited in Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisconsin, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (Afton MN: Afton Historical Society Press, 2002), 68.
- (5.) In my experience, this also bears unexpected fruit in the way that students critically appreciate their educational process, their own privilege, and the power differentials involved in the construction of knowledge on university campuses.
- (6.) I should add that student work and my own logistical efforts have enabled me, through my teaching, to extend, deepen, and enrich my own relationships in the Native communities on which my scholarship rests.
- (7.) Robert Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian* (New York: Vintage, 1978); Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1998).