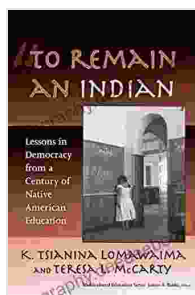


# Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education: Multiculturalism and Empowerment

For over a century, Native American education in the United States has been a contested terrain, marked by both assimilationist policies and efforts to preserve cultural identity. The history of Native American education provides valuable lessons about the challenges and possibilities of multicultural education in a democratic society.

## Assimilationist Policies

From the 1870s to the 1930s, the United States government promoted a policy of "Indian assimilation." Native American children were forced to attend boarding schools, where they were stripped of their traditional culture and language and taught to adopt the values and customs of white society.



## "To Remain an Indian": Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education (Multicultural Education Series) by K. Tsianina Lomawaima

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 6725 KB
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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 240 pages
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Assimilationist policies were based on the belief that Native Americans were "savages" who needed to be "civilized." They resulted in cultural genocide, destroying Native American languages, traditions, and ways of life.

## **Emergence of Multicultural Education**

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing recognition of the importance of cultural diversity in education. Native American activists and educators led the call for multicultural education, which seeks to respect and incorporate the cultural experiences and perspectives of all students.

Multicultural education is based on the principles of respect, equity, and inclusion. It seeks to create learning environments that are welcoming and supportive of all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, or language.

## **Native American Education Today**

Today, Native American education is a complex and diverse field. There are over 100 federally recognized tribes in the United States, each with its own unique culture and language. Native American students attend a variety of schools, including public schools, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, and tribal schools.

Despite progress in recent decades, Native American students still face significant challenges. They are more likely to live in poverty and experience educational disparities than their non-Native peers. They are

also more likely to drop out of school and have lower levels of educational attainment.

## **Lessons for Democratic Education**

The history of Native American education provides valuable lessons about the challenges and possibilities of multicultural education in a democratic society. Here are some key lessons:

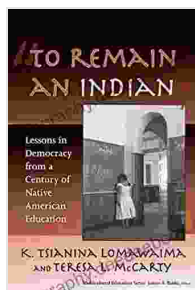
1. **Respect for Diversity:** Multicultural education requires respect for the cultural diversity of all students. This means respecting their languages, traditions, values, and beliefs.
2. **Equity and Inclusion:** Multicultural education seeks to create learning environments that are equitable and inclusive of all students. This means ensuring that all students have access to the same educational opportunities and resources, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, or language.
3. **Empowerment:** Multicultural education empowers students by helping them to understand their own culture and identity. It also helps them to develop critical thinking skills and to advocate for themselves.
4. **Community Involvement:** Multicultural education involves the community in the education of its children. This means working with parents, elders, and community leaders to create a supportive learning environment.
5. **Long-Term Commitment:** Multicultural education is a long-term commitment. It takes time to develop the necessary policies, practices, and resources. It also requires the active participation of all

stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members.

The history of Native American education is a reminder of the importance of multicultural education in a democratic society. Multicultural education respects diversity, promotes equity, empowers students, and involves the community. It is an essential component of a truly democratic education system.

## References

\* Multicultural Education: Key to Democratic Education \* Why Multicultural Education? \* 5 Elements of Effective Multicultural Education \* Multicultural Education in Indian Country: A Historical Overview and Contemporary Issues \* Bureau of Indian Education



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