Chapter 1
Traditions of Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge and the Western Music School
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Vocabulary
ongwehonwe, atnuhana, tipat-shimuna, atukan, agnutmakan, gisu’lq, kelulesgub, Neskweduk, anana, Ganohonyohk, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, pijitsirarniq, aajiiqatigiingniq, ilimmaksarniq, qanuqtuurnungarniq, piliriqatigiingniq, avatimik kamattiarniq

“There are few people on earth who have been mythologized as much as Native Americans, as much as First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. The idea of “Indians”—the name a European mistake—has been mythologized by writers of history, anthropology, and fiction, by filmmakers, composers, makers of crafts, and others” (page 1).

AA

After reading pages 1-3, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

1. What cultures are represented in your classroom?
   1a. Are there Native Americans? If so, what is their affiliation?
   1b. Are there students who have immigrated to your community from another country?
   1c. How many students speak a language other than English in their home?
2. Conduct Activity 1.1 on page 2 and prepare a class presentation based on the data received.
3. What are the three themes that thread through each chapter?

Names Matter!

After reading pages 3-5, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

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1. How many different groups of indigenous people are in the United States?
2. What are the three indigenous groups customarily identified in the 1982 Canadian Constitution?
   2a. How many First Nations groups are in Canada?
   2b. How many Inuit groups are in Canada?
   2c. How many Metis groups are in Canada?
3. Discuss the use of the term “tribe” to identify indigenous peoples.
4. Give examples of multiple names used to identify specific groups. Begin to build your lists of names as suggested in the introduction to this manual. Give historical names and contemporary names, including translations were available. For example, The Haudensaunee were historically referred to as Iroquois, but refer to themselves as ongwehonwe.
5. Give examples of the return of local names in indigenous languages. Why is this practice important to Native Peoples?
6. Identify the four majority Inuit territories in Canada. Locate each on a recent map of Canada.

**Writing This Book as an Encounter**

After reading pages 5-9, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

**AA**

1. What are the roles in which the author views herself in writing this text?
2. Discuss the life and career of Sadie Buck. Enter this information in the Personal Portraits discussed in the Introduction to this manual.
3. Discuss the life and career of Stephen Augustine. Enter this information in the Personal Portraits discussed in the Introduction to this manual.
4. Discuss the life and career of Karin Kettler. Enter this information in the Personal Portraits discussed in the Introduction to this manual.
5. Discuss ways in which indigenous beliefs may be appropriately shared with non-Native Americans or other tribes/nations.
6. Why do First Nations, Metis, and Inuit hesitate to share such knowledge?
7. Explain the Haudenosaunee expression “You have to be invited” as it relates to the sharing of knowledge.
8. Discuss whether non-Native Americans can truly understand and respect certain types of ceremonial knowledge.

**Traditional Ways of Knowing**

“Many indigenous teachers emphasize that experience is a way of knowing. Furthermore, they stress that knowledge and ways of knowing are impossible to distinguish. The process of transmission is part of the knowledge itself” (page 9).

After reading pages 9-11, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

**S,C/U**

1. What limitations do Inuit elders place on their oral histories?
2. How does this practice contrast with earlier ethnographers?
3. Why should a local belief or tradition not be assumed to be a belief or tradition of all people in a larger group?
4. How may knowledge come to a person in Native American cultures?
5. How does this compare with acquisition of knowledge in Western cultures?
6. How have modern technological developments in cross-cultural communication facilitated sharing of knowledge?
7. Give examples of how Native Peoples have shared knowledge in the past.
8. What are the dangers of articulating traditional indigenous knowledge in print?
9. What role does music play in the transmission of traditional knowledge?
Traditional Indigenous Knowledge

“In the late twentieth century, there was a subtle shift in the discourse from ‘traditional ways of knowing’ to ‘traditional indigenous knowledge,” from discussion of process to the identification of a distinctive body of knowledge that indigenous communities maintain and use” (page 11).

After reading pages 11-12, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

S, C/U

1. Identify and discuss examples of the types of indigenous knowledge sought by outsiders.
2. Discuss some of the problems with using the term “traditional indigenous knowledge”
   2a. How does it promote a homogeneous view of knowledge at the expense of localized cultures?
   2b. How may it promote stereotypes?
3. How may a reader determine purposes for use of term TIK?

The Great Texts of Native American Communities as TIK

“Every First Nation and Inuit tradition has a number of classic oral narratives that embody fundamental beliefs about cosmology, social life, values, and relationships. These are significant starting points in our endeavor to understand TIK” (page 12).

After reading pages 12-15, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. How do indigenous peoples distinguish between classic legends and other kinds of stories?
   1a. What terms do Innu apply to “classic legends and stories”?
   1b. What terms do Mi’kmaq apply to “best kept stories” and “more recent information”?
2. Several cultures (Innu, Inuit, and Mi’qma, for example) do not have a single creation story. What serves this role in their traditional knowledge?
3. How does an oral performance of a narrative embody traditional indigenous knowledge?
4. Augustine comments that in Native stories there is no ending and you have to think about what it means. Give several examples of this technique and how its use encourages independent thought and action.
5. Give examples of how humor is employed in Native stories and legends.
6. Why is the term “trickster” considered offensive? What is a more preferred term?
7. Read and discuss the Mi’kmaq creation story on page 15. Note that this is a series of stories linked by the presence of a “culture hero.” Search for other Native creation stories online or in print media and compare them to the Mi’kmaq narratives.
8. Why are stories inseparable from song and dance traditions? What contemporary performance venues continue the singer-dancer-storyteller model?

Listening: “An Arctic Lullaby” CD track 1
2. Listen to CD track 1 and note how sound effects created by the performers enhance the telling of the story.
3. Describe the changes in vocal characteristics for each character in the story.
4. Note the use of Native language mixed with English. What purpose is served by this?

After reading pages 16-19, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Briefly describe the Haudenosaunee creation story. Summarize the story and place it in Chart 1.1 in the category of “traditional stories”.
2. Read the description of the Great Law of Peace. Summarize or outline its important points in Chart 1.1 in the category “Great Law of Peace.”
   2a. Who was the “Peacemaker”?
   2b. Describe the structure of the longhouse and its symbolic representation of the Confederacy of Five Nations.
   2c. What was the decision making process given by the Peacemaker?
   2d. Explain the symbolism of the “Tree of Peace.”
3. Read the description of the Code of Handsome Lake. Summarize or outline its important points in Chart 1.1 below.
   3a. When did Handsome Lake (Gai’wiio) receive his visions?
   3b. What distresses had the Haudenosaunee recently suffered?
   3c. What religion was established in its present form through the Code of Handsome Lake?
4. Read the description of the Thanksgiving Address. Summarize or outline its important points in Chart 1.1 below.
   4a. What is acknowledged in the Thanksgiving Address?
   4b. How long may the Thanksgiving Address be?
   4c. What does the narrator thank in between segments of the address?
   4d. Encourage class discussion of what the term “This is the way it should be in our minds” means. Compare answers.
   5a. How is the Thanksgiving Address incorporated into this contemporary work?
   5b. What tradition is being honored through this work?

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**Chart 1.1 Great Texts of the Haudenosaunee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Description/Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Law of Peace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After reading pages 20-21, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

S, C/U

1. What is the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*?
2. Briefly define the processes that embody Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit:
   2a. pijitsirarniq:
   2b. aajiiqatigiingniq:
   2c. ilimmaksarniq:
   2d. qanuqtuurungnarniq:
   2e. piliriqatigiingniq:
   2f. avatimik kamattiarniq
3. Why do some Inuit distrust government uses of language?
4. Discuss the four aspects of traditional knowledge which appear to echo the principles of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. List and describe these.
5. Which of these principles is most relevant to the study of song and sound?

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**Language, Oral Transmission, and Worldview**

“Each language shapes and influences a view of the world. There are approximately eight hundred indigenous languages spoken in the western hemisphere” (page 22).

After reading pages 21-26, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Define “language family”, giving examples of both indigenous and nonindigenous examples.
2. Why are there numerous variations in indigenous spellings?
3. Identify the three language groups for the cultures upon which this text focuses.
   3a. Identify specific languages within each group.
   3b. To what extent are the specific languages mutually intelligible?
4. Visit several indigenous language websites and listen to examples of vocabulary and phrases.
4a. Write a description of each language you explore, noting tone quality of voices, vowel sounds, and other characteristics.
4b. Which languages sound most alike?
5. Give examples supporting the author’s statement that “in some indigenous formulations, concepts may not be polarized or even distinguished.”
6. Explain why students whose indigenous language is “verb-based” experience difficulties in mainstream schools. Discuss adaptations in teaching which may alleviate some of these difficulties.
7. Discuss the interrelationship between aural and visual in indigenous learning and the implications this has for the transmission of music and the teaching of musical skills. Give examples.
8. Sadie Buck explains that she is a person who “makes songs” rather than a “composer.” Conduct and internet and print media search to discover how musicians from other Native American groups identify what western culture would term “composing.” For example, many Native Americans in the United States make reference to “song catching.”
9. Discuss Karin Kettler’s view of how vocal quality shows respect or serves as a form of social action.
10. In many indigenous cultures, there is not a word that is equivalent to the English noun “music.”
   10a. Why does the noun “music” fail to convey the processes and relationships which exist in Native music?
   10b. Explore how many languages are spoken in your community and which words are used in these languages for “music.”
11. Discuss the use of puns and humor in indigenous culture. Explore this facet of indigenous culture in the music of a variety of Native American musicians. (Keith Secola, for example, is well-known for his use of humor for teaching about Native rights.)
12. Discuss the polysemic potential in indigenous languages. Are there equivalent concepts in other languages?
13. Stephen Augustine notes that his language is “conciliatory” and contains no words for war or aggression. How did the sophisticated ways of expressing conciliation in indigenous cultures facilitate adaptation of new ideas and traditions from foreign visitors during colonization?

Place and Attention to the Environment

“Indigenous knowledge is bound to the knowledge of place and environment” (page 26).

After reading pages 26-30, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Briefly explain the differences between the basis of European and indigenous religions in their treatment of time and space.
2. Discuss some of the ways in which indigenous groups selected where to live.
3. Discuss how similar environments produce similar stories and songs.
4. Give examples of how indigenous languages express very precise details about the natural world.
4a. Provide examples of how humans imitate the sounds of nature in their speech and music.
4b. How does music serve as a mirror of nature?

**Listening: “Traveling Song,” CD track 3**

5. Listen to CD track 3 and note:
   5a. Time of major events in the song. Note that time indications vary from playback device to playback device.
   5b. Describe the vocal timbre and style for each solo.
   5c. Can you distinguish between different soloists from the group?

**Chart 1.2 CD track 3: “Travelling Song”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Description/Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:04</td>
<td>Drum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:06</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:13</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:32</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:32</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:58</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:05</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:23</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:48</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:22</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:41</td>
<td>Duet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:48</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:08</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:32</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Explain why local knowledge must be taught along with a song. What type of knowledge should be taught?
7. Discuss how Sadie Buck approaches ensemble singing, including factors considered in placement of singers, external factors, and so on.
   7a. How does the environment effect arrangement of singers?
   7b. How is Buck’s approach similar to or different from that of the typical western studio voice instructors?
8. Listen to recordings of a number of Native American singers. Then, listen to an equal number of singers from the Western Art Tradition. Compare and contrast these styles of singing.

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**The Inseparability of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge, Oral Transmission, and Experience**

“Stephen Augustine emphasizes that oral transmission is the very reason that Native American cultures have survived. The passing on of narratives and songs is a responsibility that keeps them alive in memory and in practice” (page 31).

After reading pages 31-32, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

S, C/U

1. Divide the class into two groups to debate and discuss the statement: “All knowledge is social by nature.”
2. Discuss the challenges of accurately transcribing indigenous music in Western notation.
3. Discuss issues of song access and ownership among indigenous peoples.
4. In addition to the songs, what must also be taught when sharing songs cross-culturally?

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**Relationality**

“The emphasis on oral transmission is tied to the inherently relational nature of traditional knowledge. Relationship and reciprocity are emphasized in many contexts and in many ways in indigenous communities” (page 32).

After reading pages 32-33, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. How were conflicts among the Native Peoples settled through reciprocity?
2. Explain the origin of the responsibility to “raise the daughters of your enemy”?
3. How is balance achieved in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy?
4. What role does music play in achieving balance through ceremonial cycles?

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**What Ethnomusicology Brings to the Study**
“Ethnomusicologists and their forefathers (many of whom called themselves ‘comparative musicologists’) have been interested in Native American music cultures since the discipline began in the late nineteenth century. Many of their early initiatives were tied to the advent of audio recording technologies, and their motives were related to the salvaging of music that they feared would disappear with modernity” (page 33).

After reading pages 33-34, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

S, C/U

1. Identify and discuss early ethnomusicologists who studied Native American music and culture. Conduct an Internet and print media search to discover further information on those identified in this text, and identify other ethnomusicologists whose field was Native American music.
2. Discuss how the objectives of ethnomusicological research have shifted in recent decades.
3. What have ethnomusicologists emphasized in recent decades?
4. Discuss ways in which Native Americans have adjusted to increased interest and study of their cultures. How has this impacted the process of negotiation?