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## Book Review: Unsettling Settler-Colonial Education: The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model

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Book Review

## ***Unsettling Settler-Colonial Education: The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model***

By Cornel Pewewardy, Anna Lees, and  
Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn (Eds.)

*Teachers College Press, 2022, 240 pages*  
*\$130 (Hardcover), \$44.95 (Paperback)*

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**U**nsettling Settler-Colonial Education: The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model, edited by Cornel Pewewardy, Anna Lees, and Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn, is the third book in the Multicultural Educational Series that focuses on the education of Native American students. The editors remind educators that Indigenous education existed well before settler colonialism and that Indigenous educators and communities have consistently worked to undermine settler colonialism for centuries. As settler colonialism has continued to silence, hide, and erase Indigenous history, languages, culture, and education, this book plays a vital role in sharing examples of educators reclaiming and naming Indigenous histories, stories, and culture through the power of storytelling through the

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testimonies of educators who have utilized the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM), a framework developed by the lead editor, to further this progress.

The editors intentionally included 28 contributors to share their stories, connections, and ways to incorporate TIPM throughout four formal segments of education: (1) *Birth to Grade 12 Education*, (2) *Teacher Education*, (3) *Higher Education*, and (4) *Educational Leadership*. Showcasing TIPM in these various components of education highlights the versatility of TIPM and the ways it can holistically be incorporated into various spheres of formal education. The beginning of each chapter details a title, the authors, and their ties to Nation(s), Tribe(s), or their settler lineage in a way that honors the ancestral knowledge the author brings into their writing, which has shaped their experience. Highlighting the authors' narratives through poems, storytelling, pictures, autoethnographies, and collective storytelling, each section upholds the importance and tradition of Indigenous ways of knowing (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). While settler colonial education forces many to focus on individuality, self-promotion, and neoliberalism, the themes throughout this book highlight the need to abolish settler colonialism through community, love, and reciprocity.

Adding to the breadth of Indigenous critical frameworks, such as TribCrit (Brayboy, 2005), the contributors of this book showcase the simplicity and versatility of TIPM and how it can be utilized through various aspects of education to create change. To better understand TIPM, the editors describe their previous scholarship, which further details how TIPM is used to describe the various layers of Indigenous consciousness and how one can develop critical consciousness and promote action for social transformation (Pewewardy et al., 2022). TIPM breaks down four approaches to unsettling settler colonialism and potential resistances educators may face when promoting action within these levels. The first approach, the *contributions approach*, describes the level of critical Indigenous consciousness where educators still need to develop their consciousness to examine curriculum content and school structures critically (Pewewardy, 2022). The second level, the *additive approach*, describes the level where

educators begin to recognize structures rooted in settler colonialism are harmful to Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) children (Pewewardy, 2022). At this stage, educators may be overwhelmed by organizational structures, but they begin incorporating multiple critical perspectives and information into their curriculum.

The *transformative approach* describes the third stage of this model, where educators have a deep awareness of how settler colonial policies impact BIPOC children, incorporate critical and decolonizing pedagogies into their curriculum, and begin mentoring others on how to do the same (Pewewardy, 2022). Finally, *cultural and social justice action* is the final stage of TIPM where educators demonstrate a deep understanding of critical consciousness and promote both theoretical and concrete actions to decolonize their curriculum and school-wide policies and procedures (Pewewardy, 2022). Although there may be more minor setbacks within cultural and narrative change, they remind us that progress is still being made and resistance should not deter educators but reinvigorate their work and generate creativity to create change through new avenues.

At the end of the book, the editors share their collective closing, bringing the various contributors together for a discussion about the various needs for this work to continue and ways they can partner moving forward. Throughout their dialogue, three significant themes arose: decolonization and Indigenous reclamation, land recognition and relations with the land, and an intentional movement toward healing (Pewewardy, 2022). Closing this section, the editors share a song, *Comanche Beloved Song*, composed and translated by Dr. Cornel Pewewardy, highlighting the love, care, and action needed from within and outside of this community. Through this practice, they instill TIPM through their praxis by incorporating song, collectivity, and unity despite how academia can silo people.

While most of the book discusses the importance of education at various levels, Michael Yellow Bird describes the importance of tying this work to human rights in the *Afterword*. Yellow Bird (2022) shares the work Canada has done to recognize and address the harms that Indigenous communities have experienced. With the establishment of a Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the signing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the experiences of the communities were shared and utilized to create a TRC strategic plan that highlights various strategies to unsettle settler colonialism within education. Yellow Bird (2022) calls for the United States to do the same work as Canada to move beyond much of the performative action that has taken place.

While this book has done substantial work promoting TIPM, this book can be expanded in some ways. First, this book strongly needs to acknowledge the linear progression of TIPM as a framework. While we are consistently learning and understanding the impacts of settler colonialism and how to abolish it from our systems and practices, we may internalize settler colonialism without realizing it and further do harm to ourselves and our communities. Second, this book substantially emphasizes formal education without fully highlighting the impacts of co-curricular education outside the classroom. While policies, procedures, and curriculum can transform the realm of education, some aspects of learning in communities outside of the classroom have not been explored. Co-curricular education can also lead to a substantial impact on educators and communities outside of education. Finally, this book places a significant emphasis on the United States. While contributors highlight the importance of solidarity, community, love, and healing, there are opportunities to expand this work to include Indigenous communities that have also suffered from settler colonialism throughout the world. Connecting TIPM to UNDRIP and TRC can further promote global human rights education.

Overall, this book substantiates the vital role TIPM as a framework can play in unsettling settler colonialism. For centuries, the voices, stories, and experiences of Indigenous communities have been silenced due to settler colonialism, white supremacy culture, and more. This book serves as one of the many ways communities can work together to ensure these stories and histories are not lost but centered when radically reimagining what the future of education can and should look like. Through the substantial use of Indigenous ways of knowing, the need for collective communities that

promote healing, and the power of radical reform, the contributors and editors have highlighted the vital ways TIPM can help progress unsettling colonial education throughout various levels within formal education.

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