

Katie Potter:

Hi, everybody! Welcome to our webinar, Building Critical Foundational Skills in Early Childhood with Contemporary Indigenous Peoples and Native American Stories. My name is Katie Potter, and I'm the Senior Literacy Manager at Lee & Low Books. I am a white woman wearing a pink and white striped dress with my brown hair pulled back in a bun. I have a blurred background, and I am joined today by Dezi Lynn of the Diné Nation. Dezi is the Educator Initiative Manager at the National Indian Education Association, and we are thrilled to be joined by Dezi today, and she is going to introduce herself in a little bit.

But first, we have some logistics to get through, a few housekeeping announcements. You can enable closed captioning on your screen. In the Zoom meeting controls toolbar, click the Show Captions icon. This will also all be dropped in the chat for links on how to learn more. If you choose to enable the subtitles, you can adjust the size of the captions at any time by selecting subtitle Settings. Right now, the audience is in listen-only mode, but please type in any questions that you have throughout the webinar in the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen in the toolbar, and you can type your questions into the box that appears.

So, we have a lot to get through today. First, you'll be hearing from me all about our new Drumbeat Decodable Book Collection and building foundational skills with this series. I'm going to be talking about some resources associated with Drumbeat and the takeaways from these books. And then we'll hear all from Dezi about finding quality contemporary Native American and Indigenous peoples' literature and supporting, Native American and Indigenous peoples, multilingual learners, and some more information about NIEA.

And here's Dezi!

Dezi Lynn:

Thank you, Katie!

Hello, my name is Dezi Lynn, my pronouns are she/her, and I am the Educator Initiative Manager with the National Indian Education Association. I am Native American, I have, tan-ish skin, and longer-ish hair that's brown, and I curled it today, so it's a little bit wavy. My background is the logo of our National Indian Education Association with some waves in the colors of turquoise and orange, rust color and maroon. I'm also wearing a black shirt with a rust-colored cardigan, and I am very happy to be here. I introduced myself in my traditional language: Navajo, Diné Bizaad, and I mentioned that I am from an area called Coppermine, Arizona. And also that my clans are the Split Rock clan and the Towering House clans, and my dad is of Danish ancestry, so, I would be considered a mixed native.

My background is in mild-moderate special education, and I have been with the National Indian Education Association for a little over 2 years now, and I am very happy to be here.

Katie Potter:

Thank you so much for joining us today, Dezi. We're really excited to hear from you in a little bit.

But first, I am going to introduce you all to our new Drumbeat Decodable Book Collection, and we are just so excited and thrilled to have these books. I'm going to give a little bit of background about the series first. So, it's published in collaboration with Indigenous Education Press. The Drumbeat Decodable Book Collection is a groundbreaking early reader series that's designed to strengthen phonics skills and offer much-needed Indigenous peoples and Native American content to literacy programs today.

So we, in this first set of 5 books, we're working on the short vowels and it's providing the systematic practice that young readers need to become phonics-wise. So these books are highly decodable, they're child-centered and contemporary, and they also have these wonderful complimentary resources. All of the books have free downloadable lesson plans that I'll talk about in a little bit, and they also have free supplemental resources and activities in the back of the book that are downloadable. Again, I mentioned the free lesson plans, and I'll talk about the process, but we consulted with the team over at Good Minds, and their author and language and knowledge keepers all had incredible input into these lesson plans. Each book has a word list, high-frequency words, story words, and, as I mentioned, short vowels.

So, a little bit about the team at Good Minds and Indigenous Education Press. The series was written by Anishinaabe educator Sandra Samatte, member of the Ne-biimiskonaan (Skownan) First Nation, Treaty 2 Territory, and illustrated by Anishinaabe artist Julian Grafenauer, member of the Ditibineya-ziibiing (Rolling River) First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory. Sandra gave us some questions to, some answers to interview questions that I'll read in a little bit, but she's an author and CEO of Indigenous Education Press, and Julian is lead illustrator and graphic designer at Indigenous Education Press. And also, they have a starred review from School Library Journal, if you want to check it out on our website.

I'm going to give a very brief overview of the five books:

Rhett and Jet, it's short E. Find out what Rhett and Jet catch in their net on their fishing adventure.

The next book is Tim and Robin. Tim helps an injured robin heal its wings so it can fly again. This one, it focuses on short I.

Duck and Cub focuses on short U. Join Duck and Cub as they play in the mud and then splash in a tub of suds.

And... In Grandfather Rock, follow Tom and his dog, Dot, as they have fun at the dock.

All of these illustrations, as you can see, are so joyful, playful, and engaging to young readers as they are learning to decode and embarking on their literacy journeys.

So, as I had mentioned before, the books all have these free resources in the back. So, as you can see, there are fill-in-the-blank sections, word lists, read and review. You can make photocopies of these, put them up so you can see on the projector. And they... you can also find them on the book pages on our website, and all of this will be dropped in the chat.

So, we asked Sandra some questions to give more context to the Drumbeat series, just because they are so groundbreaking and critical, especially in the field of early literacy and early learning. And so I'm going to read some of Sandra's responses to these questions to give you an overall context to the entirety of Drumbeat and their mission at Good Minds.

So the first question is, why did you choose to set all the stories in nature? More specifically, the Drumbeat series showcases First Nations and Indigenous people connecting with nature in a contemporary setting. Why was that important to you?

So Sandra responded, the land or nature has always been woven into Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing. By setting all of Drumbeat Decodable stories in natural environments, I wanted to reflect the relationship that First Nations and Indigenous peoples continue to have with the land, water, sky, and all our relations. The stories are based on my experiences as an Anishinaabe mother, educator, and author from Skownan First Nation. These connections are not something of the past, they are vibrant, present, and ongoing. For me, it was important that young readers see Indigenous families, children, and communities interacting with nature in contemporary settings. At culture camp, playing, harvesting, storytelling, because these are everyday realities. The stories affirm that our languages, cultures, and teachings are carried forward through relationships, and that connection to the land continues to shape our identities. The Drumbeat Decodable series showcases this objective through characters who are actively engaged with the land, walking along rivers, noticing animals, listening to the drumbeat of Mother Earth, spending time with elders who share knowledge. The text together with the illustrations encourages children to see nature not just as a backdrop but as an active presence in the story, to respect, learn from, and care for Mother Earth.

So that was Sandra's response to the first question. Sandra's response to the next question, how did you and illustrator Julian Grafenauer collaborate?

She responded, collaboration is a very meaningful part of creating the Drumbeat Decodable series. Julian and I have worked together for at least 10 years. We work closely to ensure that each story's vision is carried forward with cultural accuracy, care, and creativity. Indigenous Education Press is committed to writing and illustrating from an Indigenous perspective. Julian is from Rolling River First Nation Treaty 4 Territory, and I am from Skownan First Nation Treaty 2 Territory. We share a commitment to grounding the IEP books, including this series, in an Indigenous perspective, ensuring that the imagery reflects our communities in ways that feel authentic and truthful. I developed the storylines, characters, and teaching goals for the Drumbeat Decodables, while Julian brought them to life visually. We are constantly in communication, sharing sketches, refining details, and discussing how visual elements could complement the phonics focus, while also carrying cultural depth. Julian's design and artistic experience allowed the natural setting, family relationships, and subtle signifier, cultural signifiers to shine through. Our collaboration creates a balance, the written text provides literacy scaffolding for early readers, and the illustrations expand the stories with layers of meaning, place, and identity.

The last question pertains to the book that I am going to be reading next, Jan at Camp. And it's a really nice segue into the meaning behind Jan at Camp and the different themes and topics posed in the book. So the question is, Jan at Camp provides students with the opportunity to connect with and learn from critical Native American and Indigenous peoples content, specifically featuring culture camps. What does this book mean to you?

Sandra responded, Jan at Camp holds a very special place in the Drumbeat Decodable series because it highlights the importance of culture camps in strengthening identity, learning, and belonging. For many Indigenous communities, culture camps are spaces where young people come together to learn from elders, knowledge keepers, language keepers, and community members. The setting is the land, providing space for land-based learning. They are places of language revitalization, cultural teachings, and intergenerational connection and learning. Including a culture camp in this series was intentional. I wanted children, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to see how these camps are not only sites of learning but also places of friendship. In Jan at Camp, the characters are experiencing nature, learning skills, and connecting with teachings that is grounding and providing a sense of who they are. For Indigenous readers, this representation can affirm experiences they know and understand. For non-Indigenous readers, this book provides a window into the strength of our cultures today. This book means a great deal to me because it reflects a truth that is close to my heart. Culture camps continue to nurture our future generations. By placing this story in this setting, I

wanted to honor the resilience of our communities while showing children that literacy and cultural knowledge grow strongest when rooted in place, family, and tradition.

And with that, I'm going to read Jan at Camp for you all. Oh, and I realize that my background, I need to unblur my background so you can see it clearly. So this is Jan at Camp.

Dad gets up at dawn.

Dad yawns.

Dad taps Jan.

At breakfast, Jan has an apple, jam, and him.

Dad has a plan.

A plan to go to the culture camp.

Jan grabs a snack.

Jan puts it in her backpack.

Dad grabs his hat.

Jan and Dad jump in the tan van.

Jan and Dad drive in the tan van.

Jan and Dad are at the culture camp.

The Culture Camp is on the land near Sand Lake!

Jan sees a cat!

Jan sees a fat cat.

Jan wants to pat a fat cat.

The fat cat lives at the culture camp with Elder Fran.

Elder Fran, Jan, and Dad pat the fat cat.

Jan and the fat cat play catch!

Time for the fat cat to take a nap.

The fat cat takes a nap on the black mat.

Nap, nap, nap!

Elder Fran shares a story with Jan and Dad.

Elder Fran teaches Jan and Dad how to tap a tree or sap.

Jan and Dad tap a tree.

Jan and Dad tap a tree for sap.

Tap, tap, tap!

Jan is glad.

Jan is glad to learn how to tap sap.

Jan is glad to learn from Elder Fran.

Jan is glad to be on the land.

And then in the back, you can see the read and review here. Point to each short A word and read aloud. And then fill in the blanks, and word lists. And this is inside the book. So that's Jan at Camp, I hope you all enjoyed that!

So now I'm going to break down how to address foundational skills, and I want to make sure I give Dezi enough time, so I'm going to go through this. But to really give you all some ideas on how to incorporate this immediately in your literacy setting through different lessons.

So, lesson 1: You're working on Short A. You're reading and sounding out Short A, and you're focusing on decoding all of the short A words in the book. Highlighting them, finding them, really emphasizing them to your students.

So, in lesson 2: You can build on the content knowledge and background schema that you read from the first time that you engaged with the book. Pointing out what culture camp is. If students can connect with it, if they know what a culture camp is already, or they're learning about them. Who's Fran? What tapping a tree means? Using the word elder. Learning about all of these terms. Again, to emphasize, we worked with Sandra and the team at Good Minds, their language and knowledge keepers, all in the lesson plans, so we highly encourage you to look at them prior to reading these books with students and to ensure that you're teaching about these concepts, and terms correctly.

So, in lesson 3: We're diving into close reading and comprehension. You're focusing on aligning to the Common Core, literal and higher-level thinking questions. A literal question would be, what does Jan learn how to do at culture camp? The answer is right there in the text; it's a literal question. Higher level thinking question, do you think Jan had a good time? How do you know? They need to make inferences and connection from the text. They're not going to find it just in the text itself.

Lesson 4: We're going to focus on writing. This is a great story, teaching about a personal moment, having students relate this book to their own lives, and then dictating or writing about the ideas themselves, even though they can rhyme, as some rhyming words were presented in the book.

Lesson 5: You're diving into overall units, thinking about community helpers. If you're doing a unit on trees, this would be a perfect book to align to that. Thinking about park rangers, arborists, looking at other books and magazines with trees.

And then lastly, and most importantly, you should be framing all of your lessons around this, but highlighting the representation of Indigenous peoples and Native Americans in a contemporary context. Dezi's going to talk a lot about this too, but inviting language and knowledge keepers from your communities. Looking at the resources that we've presented here, the University of Maine and Native Land Digital have wonderful resources and maps dedicating to learning about and connecting with local tribes and nations. And also connecting with other contemporary Indigenous peoples and Native American texts.

All that is to say, we recommend not withholding rigor just in pursuit of foundational skills. These are decodable books but look how much you can do with them. Look at all the content that's posed in these books that are, at the same time, teaching these critical foundational skills.

So, in the next slide, I talked about this already, but in the lesson plans, you'll see, in these interdisciplinary areas, we give other connections. So, learning about culture camps, as I mentioned; touching base with knowledge and language keepers in your community, skilled community members and elders; writing pieces and ELA tying to contemporary Native American and Indigenous literature. And finally, the lesson plans, again, are free. This is what they look like. There are different sections, and all the lesson plans follow the same format. Getting ready to read, reading the book, after the first and second reading sections, and then some interdisciplinary sections. So please, we really encourage you to check these out, especially with the Drumbeat series. All of the drumbeat books have lesson plans that you can see pictures of here, so not just Jan at Camp, but all of the books on these lesson plans for free on the book pages, and that's being dropped in the chat. We are really proud of these lesson plans, I want to say, that Sandra and the team at Good Minds were so gracious in offering their expertise and helping us with these, so we are really indebted to them, and we thank them for their time in the language and knowledge keepers as well. So, these are, classroom resources recommended from Good Minds about different, resources to consult for your teaching or whatever educational setting that you're working in. Dezi's also going to share some resources as well from the NIEA. And also, in the chat, feel free to drop in resources that you use and recommend as well.

And, last but not least, the takeaways from Drumbeat before I pass it off to Dezi. So, Sandra and the team at Good Minds really wanted to make sure that the Drumbeat series shows Indigenous peoples and Native Americans in nature through a contemporary lens, and clearly that was showcased through Sandra's prolific answers that were so insightful about the importance of drumbeat. Drumbeat reinforces and builds on phonics programs. You can slide these into your literacy block to complement any phonics or curriculum program that you're using, whatever curriculum you're using in your classroom. These are designed to teach short vowels, so you can certainly use them to complement your, your teaching. And then, providing opportunities for students to connect with and learn from the books, most importantly.

And with that, I am going to hand it off to Dezi, who's going to talk more about contemporary Native, Native literature, and we can't wait to hear from you, Dezi. Thank you so much.

Dezi Lynn:

Yes, thank you for allowing me to be here again. I was happy to see these decodables because I feel like, native literature is expanding and growing, but we do not have enough voice or representation in that phonics or instruction space or even the assessment space in regards to what's available for Native representation. So this is a wonderful start to what could be occurring, for publishers and classroom practices alike. But, I'm just happy to be here, and I'm looking forward to talking a little bit more about looking for authentic voices in their application in the classroom. Jenny? I'm okay if we go to the next slide.

Just to introduce those of you who may not know about our organization, the National Indian Education Association was started in 1969 by a group of parents and a few educators who wanted to ensure that their voice was heard in the National Indian Education Act of 1972. So, it was very much a policy-focused organization for years, and we have had, a critical role in very relevant policies related to education for Native students, nationally, as well as the state level, since 1968. Recently, we also realized that some of that policy was not actually getting into classrooms, and we wanted to make sure that the enactment of policy was available to educators and students, and so that the actual fulfillment of what we were advocating for could show up and benefit our students in a positive way. So, these are our core pillars. One of the things that we focus on is, ensuring that teaching and learning, and culturally relevant practices are available to educators that serve Native students. In fact, that serve all students. Next slide, Jenny.

So, this is, just a little bit more information about what I do with the National Indian Education Association. My role is the Educator Initiative Manager. We realized that a key

role to serving our students was making sure that our educators have everything that they need in order to be able to serve Native students, but also be able to teach accurately about our students. We need more educators in this space, more Native educators, so we did have a strong start with recruitment, but also empowering those educators in those spaces so that they are able to stay and have the skills that they need to find success in the classroom. It's twofold, because we also realize that empowering educators includes Native American educators, as well as non-Native educators, because 92% of our students are in public school systems, and multiple states have information around Native subjects and Native state standards, we need to ensure that all educators have access to correct information and relevant teaching practices in order to serve our students, but also to ensure that the information about our peoples is accurate. Next slide.

So, the first thing that I wanted to talk about was, finding relevant content about Native American peoples, which, for many of you who might be new to this subject, because of the traumatic injustices of the past with the U.S. government and state entities. The stories about our peoples were erased about who we are and the truths behind our histories, and were meticulously crafted and recreated to not place accountability on colonizing systems, including the education systems. So for years, texts about Native peoples were rarely written by Native peoples. And when they were, they, we were depicted as antiquated. And actually, recently, there is research from Dr. Joaquin Muñoz from the University of British Columbia with the lenses that many books and literature erroneous lenses about who we are. The five areas that he discussed in his research were that there is an emphasis on history, which ties in with us being antiquated. There's an emphasis on history from a non-Native perspective. There is a prioritization of non-Indigenous authors, and that's across the board for, literature or content or standards. There is a reliance on heteronormative patriarchy, that that perspective is often the most dominant perspective when our stories are told. The valuation of English language writing is prioritized. And there is a heavy focus on the magical, mystical Indian. So, in order to be able to portray us in a way that was easier to deal with, our texts were not written by us, and our stories were not written by us.

So, currently, there is a burgeoning of new Native authors and illustrators in children's and young adult literature. And it is a beautiful, time that we are able to live in, where so many different Native authors are, coming out with beautiful books. The artwork is done by Native illustrators, and we still need more. We have some amazing, authors and illustrators out there, but there's still room to grow. The need for that representation to continue is strong. And on that, we have kind of a little bit of an imbalance of this era where our story was written by non-Native people, and that, colonizer audacity to share our stories was strong, and we're moving into a new era where we need to tell our own stories. We want to tell our own stories. So with that, there is a big responsibility on, anybody who uses texts, whether

it's teachers or, curriculum creators, publishing companies, librarians. multiple people that have access, caregivers that have access to texts, to be able to assess the authors and illustrators with their authenticity around Native representation. Especially with texts for younger children, because that is their first exposure to who we are as Native peoples. We must be represented accurately from the start, so that our representations are correct from the beginning, versus those correct representations coming in later and trying to correct what has already been misportrayed about us from the start.

With Dr. Muñoz's research, he gave us five lenses to help us move toward a new direction, and what he focused on was contemporary visions of who we are, focusing on Indigenous authors that also, represent that represent, where we are coming from on a contemporary perspective, oh, sorry, but focusing on Indigenous authors that are writing from their lens, from their nations that they belong to. Exploring feminist and queer author stories and heroes, exploring Indigenous language and Indigenous Englishes, and a focus on the futurity of the mundane, recognizing that we live valid, present-day lives, and that those should be portrayed in the literature that we use with our students.

There are two tools that we that I'm going to share with you now that we recommend. One of them is the CRAIS tool from NAU, and that link will be placed in the chat. This is more of a broad, general tool that can be used to identify and strengthen the integration of culturally responsive principles, specifically for, with, and in Indigenous-serving schools, or, generally speaking, not just schools, but also libraries, public libraries, any space that will hold books, bookstores, museums that are selling texts, this is a relevant tool for those spaces. One of the main things that it talks about is how to analyze curriculum planning and development so that it authentically represents Native voices.

The second tool that I'm going to have dropped in the chat is actually from Debbie Reese, who is a well-known children and literate, children's literature, young adult literature, guru. She's very, very well known in her work in regards to helping others understand how we can ensure accuracy and what's reflected about us. So, the worksheet that's going to be dropped in the chat is actually something that she worked on with the National Museum of the American Indian. And the Native Knowledge 360 program in order to create this worksheet that actually emphasizes a lot of the things that the, Dr. Joaquin Muñoz's research shows, but also helping us move forward in a way that we can shift that balance where that non-native perspective is shifted out of what we use, and then more authentic voices are shifted into the spaces that our students and young children need to be exposed to. Jenny, you can go to the next slide.

This requires vigilance, knowledge, and understanding in determining which texts are those authentic voices, and that those skills first of all, should be learned and understood by

those who are choosing content, or reflecting on content, or creating anything related to this content. But also, just the conversations about those authors and those illustrators, what nations they're coming from, how they're connected to those nations, how their people, are portrayed, and those conversations are relevant, and they need to be conversations that these educators, caregivers, librarians have with students, or anybody that they are near or around. Also recognizing that these caregivers, educators, have a voice and have power in what is chosen to be in the spaces that they expose our students to just to help us really put our voices and our stories in the right places. Jenny, if you can go to the next slide, I would appreciate it.

Okay, so as I mentioned, with that balance around what is accurate, what's not accurate, what's relevant, what's not relevant when there are problematic when there are texts that are problematic. It's an opportunity for conversation. It's an opportunity to recognize the historical inaccuracies and the injustices that were prevalent to put Native peoples in the current situations that they're in. It's not just about what is wrong with the text, but also why those inaccuracies are there. In the process of historical erasure and assimilation, our lands were taken away, our cultures were taken away, our languages were taken away, our communities were taken away, our children were taken away, our voices were taken away, and despite all of those attempts to erase who we are. We have remained, our communities have, are strong. Currently, present day. Our children are strong, and we are reclaiming our voices. I know a lot of people can sometimes hear about land back, but there's also this movement for our voices back, for our own stories and our voices to be heard. But we also need to have those conversations with our students in order for us to understand that decolonization process that must occur. It's not just saying, this is a good book and this is a bad book, but recognizing that our peoples and our stories were romanticized and antiquated and pushed into this mystical realm told by non-Natives, for a purpose, and what was that purpose, and how do we dismantle those practices for to help our students understand the change that needs to occur. So, this must be part of the conversation that educators, have to understand independently on their own, and also for them to be able to have those conversations with their students, or even with peers, or with leadership, in order for them to advocate for authentic voices. Also parents. Parents need to be able to understand why those are relevant when they advocate for the representation in, curricula that might be chosen for different school districts. Jenny, if you can go to the next slide.

So, I focused a lot, a little bit, on just being able to determine authentic voices. Oh, one thing I also wanted to mention was just the representation, especially for our young children, about the roles that different members of the family play, members of the community play in the visual representation. Visual representation is just as strong in those

texts as the words that are shared in them. Moving into this subject around supporting multilingual, Indigenous peoples and Native American learners. This information, actually, I collaborated strongly with our native language specialist, Niiyo Gonzalez, who comes with a strong background in native language learning. She's a native language teacher, leader, and has held strong roles in every aspect of education. And she has a lot of background knowledge on the importance of supporting our native language learners in school systems.

A couple of things that I wanted to point out is the fact that literacy is a choice in some of our native languages. Although reading English is incredibly relevant for them, not all native languages have a written way of portraying their language, so reading and writing is sometimes, optional or not available to some of our native languages that don't have that option. For many native languages, verbal, being able to verbally speak it is the only way that we have access to those languages. In addition to that, the intent in active reading and writing in native languages is different from the Western academic purposes of reading and writing. So if we think about the way Western or academic purposes for reading, are used in the education system, it is part of a practical application, reading and writing is used to portray, share, or process information. It gives people, students, access to the knowledges that are valued within the education system in order for them to not only access it from the reading level, but also to portray understanding, to portray knowledge in the writing process as well. So for them to process that information, from that perspective of the academic, the Western academic perspective, it is very much for them to be able to function in society and to find success in the academic system. Additionally, the Western academic purpose of reading includes leisure, as adults, as students, as children, to absorb storytelling. Reading and writing is a way for us to be able to absorb storytelling, to participate in recreational reading. It holds those two purposes in the Western academic perspective, so reading is critical to students in this space in order for them to be able to tap into those two purposes. When we think about native languages from the writing, reading and writing perspective, with native languages, as I mentioned earlier, first of all, it's not always available, but the purpose of it is in order for speakers to be better speakers. The language is written in order for people to better understand the language, or how to say the words in their language. It is not, it often can be, used for recreational reading. There are authors that use words in native languages to be able to portray, poetry or verbal imagery that is not available in the English language. But often, one of the reasons why native language is relevant in reading and writing is for them to be better speakers. As an example, my language, Diné Bizaad, or the Navajo language has a written system, I do not use the written form in order for me to communicate with others very often to portray a message. I more often use English for that. But when I am learning my language, I will write down

specific words, and the way that I have been able to learn the way it is written in order to understand when is there a high note, when is there the nasal sound, when is there a glottal stop, the way that it is written helps me be able to understand it in my mind in a way that I can say it better, not because, not in the same way that the Western academic purposes of it, are used, but more so for me to be a better speaker of the language. You can go to the next one, Jenny.

So, on that note, I wanted to bring up that revitalizing languages is incredibly important for, for our communities, that we need to support native language teachers in schools, as well as those native languages spoken in the home. Access to those languages should be made available to family members, as well as students. As far as resources are concerned, some of the most and most relevant resources are the local communities that have their language-specific resources available. The community will know and understand what they have regarding their own language. But in addition to that, we have a couple of general resources that we have provided with our organization. The first one is actually not currently out yet, but we are doing a National Native American Educator Landscape Analysis that will be coming out this fall. There is a large portion of that that will include how to provide systemic support for native language teachers. That portion of the report was written by our native language specialist, Niiyo Gonzalez with her incredible background and experience in this space. In the future, we hope to develop guides for different languages that use reading, writing, and literacy development, for instructional purposes and for reading assessments in those languages. But as I mentioned, it requires more than just these resources, that supporting multilingual learners, native multilingual learners in this space. Requires, relationships, safe spaces for those students to be able to access the language, and for the educators to be able to do the job that they, they need to, to do.

One last thing, we actually did a webinar, the our organization, the National Indian Education Association, did a webinar last September. It was titled, When Indigenous Students Are Identified as English Learners in School: Contexts, Opportunities, and Dilemmas, and I will have the link for that dropped into that chat. And that focused more specifically on English learners, native students that are identified as English learners. One of our, previous employees, Dr. Daphne Little Bear, was a great support on creating that information and those resources, so I highly recommend you go to our website, where those webinars, the recording for those webinars are held. And that website will actually, and that recording will give you, even more resources on, when Native students are identified as English learners in school.

I also wanted to say just that this the decodable text that the drumbeat decodables are relevant in the aspect that Native literature is incredibly important, but our perspectives should also be found in that day-to-day phonics teaching space. Our authors, our native authors and the native literature that is, growing. Every day is, is incredibly relevant, but also we need to be using native voices, native depictions, contemporary depictions of who we are in that application space of phonics and day-to-day literacy instruction. Even, and it is sometimes incredibly difficult, considering the fact that decodables, we are limited in what we are able the words that we're able to use. I love one thing that I really appreciated in the decodables, the drumbeat decodables, was words like culture and offering, because even though those are not decodable words, they are relevant words that our students can learn and are able to learn.

Also, the representation of our students, again, should happen. Accurate representation of who we are should happen, earlier on with our students, and not in the upper grade levels. I mean. It should be occurring at all levels. On that note, NIEA does, believe strongly in the importance of Native American literature and authors. We wanted to share out that we will have an Educator Day in Spokane, Washington on Wednesday, October 8th, which the day, the entire day, will be geared towards, culturally relevant teaching practices, how to support students, how to support communities. Multiple sessions around native language, teaching. If you are in the area, or if you can come to our Educator Day, we would love to have you. It is a pre-convention event. Our convention actually occurs from October 9th through 11th, but the Educator Day is free and available to anybody who is a practicing educator or wants to learn more about those teaching practices. Our keynote authors this year are Christine M'Lot, who works with High Water Press, as well as Cynthia Leitich Smith, who is with Heart Drum. And in order for us to provide more access to these authors, so that it's not just an in-person event on one day of the year, we are holding pre-Educator Day webinars to have more conversations about how to use literature in your classrooms. And the relevance of that, our first webinar with Christine M'Lot is on September 9th, and I will have the link to register for those webinars in the chat, if you would like to participate in that. In addition to that, the following week, on September 16th, we will have Cynthia Leitich Smith share. The title of her session is Native Authors for Young Readers: Stories and Voices for the Classroom, and this will highlight new authors, Karina Iceberg, Christine Hartman, and Kauakanilehua Mähohe Adams, who are new authors in the book that was just recently released yesterday, *The Legendary Fry Bread Drive-In*. So, we'll be able to hear from authors about the relevance of their work and how it applies to teaching spaces. from that. If you can go to the next slide, I would appreciate it.

Our organization is also working on a national Native American Educator Landscape Analysis. As I mentioned earlier, we are trying to meet the needs of educators, trying to help

us guide the direction to recruit, empower, retain educators. We need to hear Native voices. So far from the respondents that we've heard from so far, we've learned that 61% of our respondents have asked for culturally relevant pedagogical professional development and resources. And also that 64% of educators have considered leaving the field in the last year. There is a lot of other, incredible data on this that we are gathering. We'd love to hear your feedback. I'm going to have the link for that survey placed in the chat, but we'd also love to know what do educators that are serving Native students, what do they need? This is something that we have been sharing recently, so if you have already taken it, or if you have seen any of our webinars recently, it's the same survey, you don't need to repeat it twice. But we would love to hear your feedback. The survey is not just for Native American, educators, it is for non-Natives as well, it's for administrators, it's for Title VI, professionals. So it has a lot of different options for you to answer the questions to help us better understand how to serve, our students and your experience. And I will hand it back to you, Katie.

Katie Potter:

Thank you so much, Dezi. So, I wanted to mention that we have, coming next spring, the long vowels with Drumbeat. So, there's going to be an additional 8 books in the series. I know someone had mentioned about providing feedback about the decodability of the first five. Send me an email, kpotter@leeandlow.com. We'd love to hear from you. But I just wanted to let you all know that this is coming out next year, from the team over at Good Minds.

Again, so the drumbeat, to emphasize that drumbeat is underneath the Bebop umbrella at Lee & Low Books. So our Bebop books are our early literacy school-based, imprint, with books that follow simple sentence patterns, familiar words and concepts. You can contact us at quotes@leeandlow.com to learn more. We have Spanish, Spanish titles for early readers. So, please reach out if you want to learn more or have additional questions.

Okay, so we have about 10 minutes for question and answer. I know that the chat has been wonderful and highly active, so thank you all so much for participating during this webinar. It's so wonderful to see that. So we are going to do our best to get through all of the questions today. So first, Dezi, this pertains to what you were just talking about. Does the NIEA have local organizations? I would like my local educators to have access to some resources.

Dezi Lynn:

We don't have branches as some other organizations do. We are a more national,

few in numbers, as far as what we were able to accomplish, but the majority of our resources are available online. We do our best to, hold national webinars so that everybody can have access to the things that we discuss, or the webinars that we hold. The majority of that is on our website. Also on our website, we have our professional learning opportunity, and for you to kind of go through what your local educators would need. If there's funding to bring our staff into your space, that's another alternative. But more than likely, it is gonna be information or resources found on our website. If you can attend the conventions, they are in different places each year. This year we will be in Spokane, next year we will be in Buffalo, New York, and the year after that, I might be I know we will be in Michigan at some point. I want to say Grand Rapids in 2027. But I could be wrong. I'll find out, I'll throw that in the chat, sorry.

Katie Potter:

Okay, so another question that I'm going to read to you, Dezi.

When you, another POC, a race minority but non-Native, when you are differently marginalized, but also not part of the colonizer dynamic, what is the best way to be, in the role of a teacher and librarian, be an ally that obliquely understands to raise and support Native voices? What is needed most? I hope I captured that question correctly.

Dezi Lynn:

And I hope I understood it correctly. Thank you for that question. I do feel like we are in an era where there is no reason for a non-native to speak for us. We have enough talent and experience and professionals in every space where Native voices should be the foremost, speaking about who we are and what we need. So I do believe that in any space, centering Native voices is what's most important. That is not to say that we do not need allies. Allies are incredibly relevant to who we are, and the work that we can do, sorry, are incredibly relevant to the work that we can do. I believe that as allies, centering Indigenous voices, Native voices, centering Native peoples, centering Native present-day conflicts, issues, concerns that we have. But also recognizing the incredible assets that we bring into these spaces. It is not just about Native representation and Native voice, it's also the fact that with that representation and voice, we bring an incredible amount of experience and knowledges that are assets to the situations that are impacted by everyone around us. So just as non-BIPOC individuals, finding who those voices are, finding how they're speaking out, finding the issues that our people are speaking out on, and then elevating those voices and elevating those individuals in those spaces is, incredibly relevant, I think. I hope that answers the question.

Katie Potter:

Yes.

I wanted to address a clarifying point, that I'm going through the chat. Keep in mind that these books are regional, not all Native American students relate to tree tapping or culture camps. For example, the natural environment in Canada and the northern area is very different from the cultural landscape in New Mexico and Arizona. Maybe a section or disclaimer in the teacher lesson plans address this.

Yes, they do. When you go to the lesson plans, we have information about where to learn about all of the, the themes and different terms that are used in the books. Again, we consulted with Sandra and Julian at Good Minds about all the resources and terminology that we should use, and land, Native Land Digital is a great resource also to learn about regional nations and tribes. So thank you so much for that for that clarifying point.

Let's see, I'm going through other questions. I know there were many questions, and we answered the best in the chat about slides.

Dezi Lynn:

Can I add to that, Katie?

Katie Potter:

Sure.

Dezi Lynn:

As I mentioned earlier, this is a new space for us, for our perspectives to be in this space. It's new. There's plenty of growth that can be done, in regards to making even better or more accurate, texts in that phonics and literacy space. It's just the start. I think that those questions or those conversations are relevant for your students when you use these texts or any other texts, but also providing that feedback, I think, to, anybody that is part of that process so that they can understand, like, the importance of recognizing that. And the tools that we also provided, like, one of the relevant things is just recognizing that they are specific to, that they, Native authors should be writing from their own nations that they belong to, and then identifying what those nations are. And it's the same with texts as well, that they should be identifying that the nations that they come from. So just having those conversations around those types of, different, those opportunities for growth and having conversations around those opportunities for growth can create change and further impact for this space.

Katie Potter:

Thank you so much, Dezi. That was really helpful. And I hope that was, clarifying to the person who brought up that point. Thank you so much.

Dezi, we just have so many points about how they are so appreciative for your expertise and sharing your passion. Thank you so much! And I especially love Renee:

Especially keeping Native kids at the center of the work. Thank you so much.

Just want to address, there were lots of questions, and I know our team is working hard behind the scenes to clarify. The recording and the you know, the recording to the entire webinar and the resources that Dezi and I mentioned will be sent out within the week where you'll receive an email, if you registered for the webinar, you will receive an email with all of that information, and we are just thrilled to see all of the enthusiasm for this information. Dezi, especially all the resources and information that you shared, particularly the multilingual learners is so critical. We have some educators sharing that they're doing this type of work in their schools, so thank you so much.

If you want a certificate of attendance, you can email me, kpotter@leeandlow.com, and I would be happy to send you a certificate if you need to share that with your team.

I am. . . Oh, are any other questions?

Were these stories and lessons created with the collaboration, partnership, and permission from the Native Nation?

As I had mentioned earlier, Sandra and Julian and the team at Good Minds created this series themselves, and the team at Good Minds Indigenous Education Press they hold that very near and close to their mission, as I had mentioned during Sandra's responses. We hope we will have a blog post with all of Sandra's responses to those questions for you to look at further. Again, they gave context to the series and how they worked on on the Drumbeat books.

I think I answered everything, unless, Dezi, you saw anything that you'd like to... to say before we conclude? Thank you all so much, Dezi. I don't know if you have any closing remarks. But really, this, it was just so amazing to see this chat, and the appreciation for your work, Dezi, at the NIEA.

Dezi Lynn:

Yes, thank you all so much for joining us. This was wonderful to be able to have this conversation, and hopefully we can see more in this space moving forward.

Katie Potter:

Alright! Thank you, everybody, and again, you can sign up for our newsletter, follow us on socials, and hope you have a wonderful, rest of your day!

Dezi Lynn:

Thank you!

Katie Potter:

Thank you so much!