Native Culture & Language in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO)

January 2021

The AI/AN FACES 2019 Workgroup*

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OVERVIEW

The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015 (AI/AN FACES 2015) was the first national descriptive study of children and families enrolled in Head Start programs operated by federally recognized tribes (known as Region XI AI/AN Head Start[1]; see Bernstein et al., 2018, for an in-depth description of the study). Region XI programs incorporate their unique history, community traditions, and beliefs into their operations and integrate language and culture into the delivery of services to children and families. AI/AN FACES 2015 was informed by a workgroup comprised of Region XI Head Start directors, researchers from universities and Mathematica (which conducted the study), and federal officials from the Administration for Children and Families (which funded the study). AI/AN FACES 2019 is the second round of the study and formed its own workgroup to give advice on updates including updates to study measures.

> The NCLCO, which captures Native culture and language in the classroom, was updated for use in AI/AN FACES 2019 based on feedback from the members of the AI/AN FACES Workgroup and findings from AI/AN FACES 2015.

Children's Native culture and language are important components of the Head Start experience in Region XI, and therefore a particular focus of the study was to document the Native language and cultural experiences that children attending Region XI programs have in their classrooms. The AI/AN FACES 2015 Workgroup, in particular the Region XI Head Start directors, urged that the study capture the cultural experiences in the classroom in addition to using more common measures of classroom experiences. An observational measure of culture and language in Native classrooms did not exist, so the study team collaborated with AI/AN FACES 2015 Workgroup members to develop an observational measure of Native culture and language in the classroom. The Native Cultural & Languages in the Classroom Observation (NCLCO) records the types of culturally significant materials that surround children in Region XI Head Start programs and classrooms and can capture information on materials' use. The AI/AN FACES 2015 Workgroup provided suggestions and feedback on types of items to include in the NCLCO, as well as examples of each item type listed in the final measure.

The AI/AN FACES 2019 Workgroup built on the foundation of the original NCLCO and suggested updates to include more detail on the cultural practices section of the tool, and more clarity in the cultural items section. For example, the original NCLCO had seven questions on Native language use and storytelling during the observation, while the updated 2019 NCLCO has 17 such questions. These updates were intended to measure more systematically details about children's exposure to Native language and storytelling, taking information that was captured in open-ended responses in the original NCLCO and developing closed-ended questions about the context in which they occurred for 2019. For example, the language and cultural practices questions in the original NCLCO asked whether Native language use occurred in the classroom

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[1] In this document, we use the terms American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), tribal, tribe, and Native to refer inclusively to the broad and diverse groups of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, villages, communities, corporations, and populations in the United States, acknowledging that each tribe, village, community, corporation, and population is unique from others with respect to language, culture, history, geography, political and/or legal structure or status, and contemporary context.

and, if so, whether it was used in instruction or in conversation. The questions also asked if storytelling following a Native oral tradition occurred. For both Native language use and storytelling, the 2019 NCLCO adds closed-ended questions about how often the Native language was used during the times it was used, and what other languages were used at the same time (and for Native language use it also adds a closed-ended question about who spoke the Native language). There are also updates to some cultural items questions to further clarify what should and should not be counted in each category (for example, "cultural books" now specifies that books can be mass-produced or homemade).

It is important to note that the NCLCO does not detail the quantity or depth of use of items existing within a classroom, but instead records the presence or absence of a particular item. For example, a classroom may have 100 cultural books, which would score the same as another classroom with one book.

To our knowledge, AI/AN FACES is the only study so far to have used the NCLCO, but other studies have adapted the measure to capture the unique cultural and language experiences in classrooms.[2] Data collection using the NCLCO in spring 2020 was curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, experiences using the tool for training and in a subset of AI/AN FACES 2019 programs can inform addition updates for future rounds of AI/AN FACES or other research.

Information about the AI/AN FACES 2019 study design and instruments can be found in the study User's Manual (Bernstein et al. 2021a) and Spring 2020 Supplement User's Manual (Bernstein et al. 2021b). The User's Manual and Spring 2020 Supplement User's Manual are available at https://www.childandfamilydataarchive.org.

For more information about the 2015 version of NCLCO, including findings from AI/AN FACES 2015, please see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/native-culture-language-in-the-classroom-observation for the measure and https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/native-culture-language-in-the-classroom-observation-brief for findings.

Technical reports, data tables, webinars and briefs based on the AI/AN FACES data may be found at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/american-indian-and-alaska-native-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces.

References

Barrueco, S., Layzer, C., & Caswell, L. (2017). *Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Cultural Items and Language Use Checklist (MSHS CILU)*. Developed for the MSHS Study. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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[2] The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study created the Cultural Items and Language Use Checklist (CILU, Barrueco, Layzer, & Caswell, 2017) based on the NCLCO.

Bernstein, S., A. Kopack Klein, M. Dang, M. Scott, B. L. Carlson, N. Aikens, S. Skidmore, A. Li, J. Cannon, R. Lu, N. Reid, M. Reid, S. Rakibullah, M. Cavanaugh, R. Jones, K. Feeney, A. Edwards, S. Albanese, D. Robinson, J. Grazi, A. Hollister, L. Malone, J. Agufa, and H. Zhou. "American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2019: User's Manual." Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 2021a.

Bernstein, S., A. Kopack Klein, M. Dang, M. Scott, B. L. Carlson, S. Skidmore, A. Li, J. Cannon, R. Lu, M. Reid, M. Cavanaugh, R. Jones, D. Robinson, J. Grazi, L. Malone, J. Agufa, and H. Zhou. "American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2019: Spring 2020 Supplement User's Manual." Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 2021b.

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SECTION E: NATIVE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION (AI/AN cohort only)

For each row a-j, please indicate whether you observed any items in that category by checking "yes" or "no" in column 1.

- **For any row a-j where you checked "yes" in column 1, please complete column 2. Check "yes" in column 2 if you observed children or staff using these items. Otherwise, check "no" in column 2.**

- **For any row a-j where you checked "yes" in column 2, please complete column 3. To complete column 3, enter clear and legible notes describing how items in the category were used, and by whom.**

- **Examples in the first column might not include all relevant items you might see. By relevant, we mean native to the area or significant to the community. Examples in the first column might not be relevant in all communities.**

	E1		E2		E3
	Item present?		**If present, did children or teachers use item during observation?**		**If present or used, please describe.**
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
a. **Cultural books** (e.g., Native teachings or teachings from elders; books about traditional or Native food; Native history, customs and practices; books that reflect oral tradition, including imparting lessons about how one should act in the world or how the world came to be – themes might include creation, seasons, nature, animals, spirits/trickster figures, and human relations); may be mass-produced or homemade	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
b. **Native language labels** (e.g., objects labeled in Native language)	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
c. **Cultural displays** (e.g., posters or photo collages that represent the community, baskets, dream catchers, cradle boards, medicine wheels); may include displays that are meant to be used and interacted with	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
d. **Native music and instruments** (significant to the community - e.g., audio recordings of flute, drums or other traditional music; drums and flutes; ribbon twirlers)	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

	E1		E2		E3
	Item present?		**If present, did children or teachers use item during observation?**		**If present or used, please describe.**
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
e. **Natural objects** (native to area or significant to the community - e.g., tree bark, berries, mud, stone or rocks, leaves, pinecones, animal parts or bones such as feathers, shells, snake skins, animal skins or pelts, or antlers; traditional medicines such as sage, tobacco, or sweet grass; gourds; rattles; corn pollen)	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
f_r. **Toys representing animals** (puppets, stuffed, plastic, or wooden representations of animals native to the area or significant to the community – e.g., an eagle, turtle, or bear).....	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
g. **Native architecture** (native to area or significant to the community - e.g., dwellings and structures such as teepee, wigwam, hogan, pueblo, longhouse, cave or cliff dwellings)	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
h. **Native dress or regalia** (significant to the community - e.g., moccasins, shawls, blankets, tunics, beaded clothing and jewelry, jingle bells, headdresses, bandolier bags, button blankets)...	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
i. **Native food** (native to area or significant to the community - e.g., wild rice, fish, corn, deer, mutton, fry bread, squash, beans, whale – all can be fake/plastic or real)...........................	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
j. **Other items** (specify) .... _____ _____	1 ☐	0 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

E4. **Was a Native language spoken during your observation?**

   1 ◯ Yes

   0 ◯ No → **GO TO E5**

E4a. **Was the Native language used informal (for example, as part of a conversation)?**

   1 ◯ Yes

   0 ◯ No → **GO TO E4c**

E4ai. **Who spoke the Native language in an informal (conversational) context?**
MARK ALL THAT APPLY

   1 ☐ Adult(s) and child talk together as a pair

   2 ☐ Adult(s) and children talk together as a group

   3 ☐ Adult(s) talk *to* an individual child (e.g., talk to child but child does not use Native language)

   4 ☐ Adult(s) talk *to* a group of children (e.g., talk to children but children do not use Native language)

   5 ☐ Adults talk to each other (e.g., children just in room but not part of conversation)

   6 ☐ Children talk to each other (e.g., in free play on their own)

E4aii. **Thinking across the informal Native language use you heard, how often was the Native language used?**
MARK ONE ONLY

   1 ◯ Less than half of the time

   2 ◯ About half of the time

   3 ◯ More than half of the time (but not all the time)

   4 ◯ All the time (Native language only during those times)

E4aiii. **While the Native language was used informally, what other languages were used?**
MARK ALL THAT APPLY

   1 ☐ None (Native language only)

   2 ☐ English

   3 ☐ Another language *(specify)*

   _____

E4aiv. **In what context/during what activity was the language spoken? For example, was it during circle time, center time, meal time, etc.? Where did the activity occur (e.g., the block area, the art table)? If used in combination with English, what was the topic of conversation?**

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E4c. **Was the Native language used formal (for example, as part of a lesson)?**

   1 ◯ Yes

   0 ◯ No → **GO TO E5**

E4ci. **Who spoke the Native language in a formal context (as part of a lesson)?**
MARK ALL THAT APPLY

1 ☐ Adult(s) and child talk together as a pair

2 ☐ Adult(s) and children talk together as a group

3 ☐ Adult(s) talk *to* an individual child (e.g., provide instruction but child does not use Native language)

4 ☐ Adult(s) talk *to* a group of children (e.g., talk to children but children do not use Native language)

5 ☐ Adults talk to each other (e.g., children just in room but not a part)

6 ☐ Children talk to each other (e.g., working together based on a lesson or input from the teacher)

E4cii. **Thinking across the formal Native language use you heard, how often was the Native language used?**
MARK ONE ONLY

1 ◯ Less than half of the time

2 ◯ About half of the time

3 ◯ More than half of the time (but not all the time)

4 ◯ All the time (Native language only during those times)

E4ciii. **While the Native language was used formally, what other languages were used?**
MARK ALL THAT APPLY

1 ☐ None (Native language only)

2 ☐ English

3 ☐ Another language *(specify)* _____

E4civ. **In what context/during what activity was the language spoken? For example, was it during circle time, small group time, etc.? Where did the activity occur (e.g., the block area, the art table)? If used in combination with English, what was the topic of the lesson?**

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E5. **Did you observe any storytelling (storytelling is typically an oral tradition but could occur with a book)?**

₁ ◯ Yes

₀ ◯ No ⟶ **GO TO E6**

E5a. **Who did the storytelling?**

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E5b. **Thinking across the storytelling you observed, how often was the Native language used?**
MARK ONE ONLY

1 ◯ Less than half of the time

2 ◯ About half of the time

3 ◯ More than half of the time (but not all the time)

4 ◯ All the time (Native language only during those times)

E5c. **During storytelling, what other languages were used?**
MARK ALL THAT APPLY

1 ☐ None (Native language only)

2 ☐ English

3 ☐ Another language *(specify)* _____

E5d. **What was the story about?**

_____

E5e. **Please provide any additional information about the storytelling (for example, who listened to the story and where did they sit, what if any materials were used).**

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E6. Did you observe any other activities that demonstrate how children are exposed to culture in this program (for example, prayer circle; beading; children using a talking stick or feather as a method of taking turns while speaking; culturally affirming messages are communicated)? Please only include observations you have not already listed.

1 ◯ Yes

0 ◯ No ⟶ **GO TO SECTION B**

E6a. Who was there?

_____

E6b. What were they doing (what was the context and activity)?

_____

E6c. What, if any, materials were used? Specify if any of the materials were culturally significant.

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E6d. Please provide any additional information about this activity.

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