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Review of *American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum* by Teresa D. LaFromboise

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American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum. Teresa D. LaFromboise. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 517 pp. Index. \$16.95 paper (ISBN 0-299-14924-2).

This resource provides excellent suggestions for teachers and counselors working with Native American youth at the upper elementary and

secondary levels. Its recommended curriculum is divided into seven sections, each dealing with skills important for survival in today's world.

The book's first two sections furnish lesson plans for building self-esteem and exploring emotions and stress, issues essential to Native American youngsters' well-being that are often overlooked in school curricula. Problem solving skills are stressed in the third section. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sections deal with issues surrounding suicide. Given the disproportionately high suicide rate for Native American youth, these sections provide many essential lessons for teachers.

The book's final section deals with plans and goals for the future, both long and short term, helping students see how they might actualize their dreams. Emphasis is on the particular issues Native American students face in planning for a purposeful future. Throughout the volume readers will find information and activities dealing with alcoholism and drugs in a context stressing the importance of community.

The curriculum, used successfully at Sequoyah High School, employs a skill-based approach; a myriad of practical activities and handouts is provided throughout the text likely to be helpful to all teachers who work with Native American adolescents. Some of the activities would be appropriate for parents' groups as well. Because the book was collaboratively developed by students and community members from the Zuni Pueblo and the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, its content is authentic and realistic.

Despite its many fine features, the book has its drawbacks. To begin with, it is heavily oriented toward suicide prevention, with less attention given to drug and alcohol abuse issues which are serious problems on a number of reservations. Moreover, suicide prevention has to begin much earlier in the school curriculum. Children with adjustment problems need to be taught coping skills as soon as they start school. Thus, it would have been helpful if some of the lessons had been targeted toward younger children. And finally, the book is culturally "generic." Tribal and clan affiliations are crucial to Native Americans with strong ethnic identities. The book is successful in what it does, but instructional leaders will have to supplement it with information and activities relevant to the local situation.

In sum, however, the curriculum presented in this volume is well planned and well written. Lesson plans are clear and provide specific objectives and excellent suggestions for implementation. It is well worth the investment of money and time to integrate this curriculum into the school program for Native American adolescents. **Lee Little Soldier**, *Department of Education, Texas Tech University*.