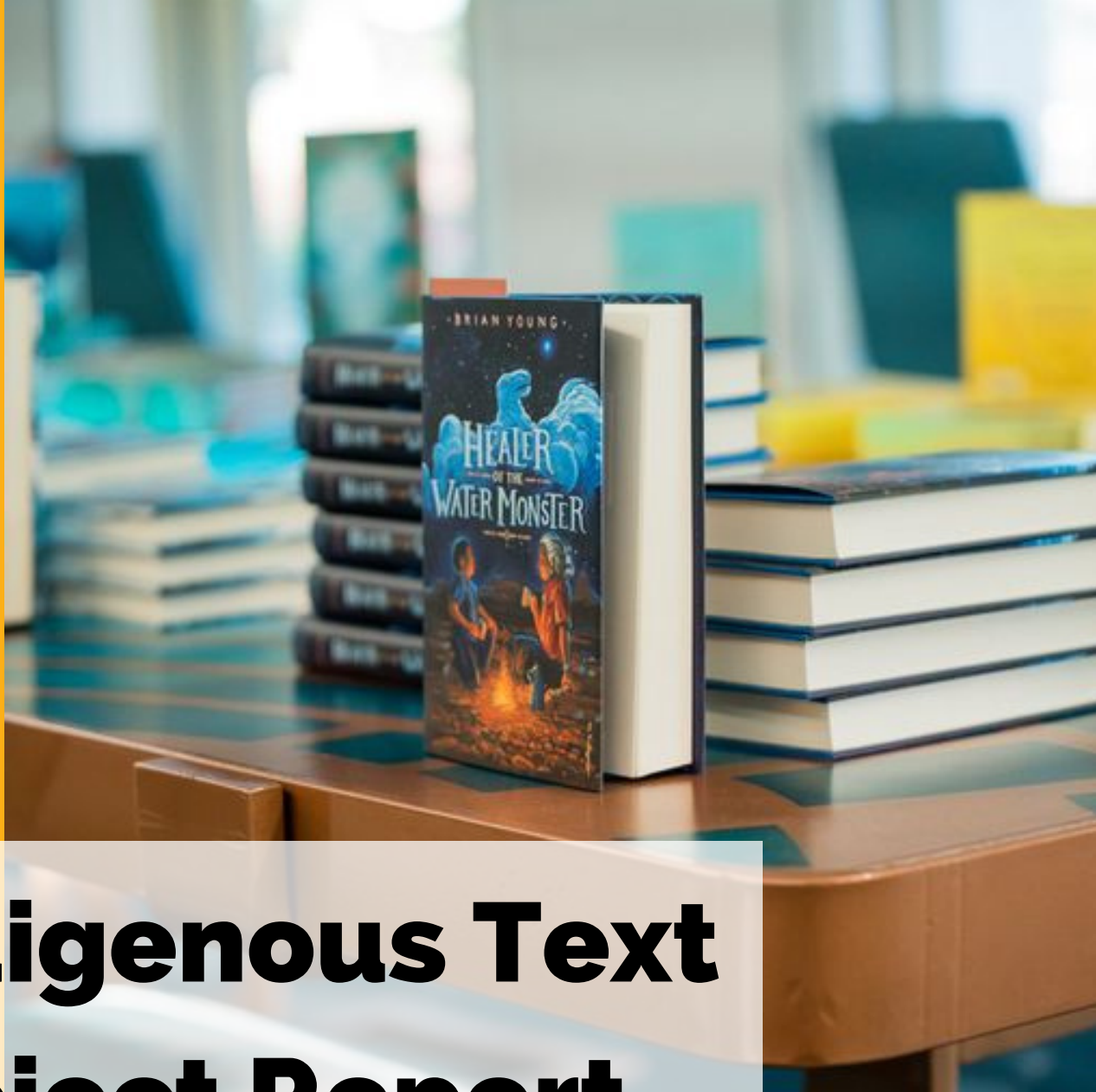


November 2022



Indigenous Text Project Report

Arizona Department of Education



Office of Indian
Education

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Executive Summary

The Indigenous Text Project began as a simple request and quickly blossomed into a three-part project focused on elevating and affirming Indigenous knowledge and literature within K-12 learning environments. Each of the three parts provided educators with Indigenous-authored youth literature to increase student access to diverse texts with hopes they will see themselves and/or their culture(s) accurately and respectfully represented within educational environments. The

Changing the Narrative: K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium was the first of the three-part project series. Its overall purpose was to bring Indigenous-serving educators together for a day long in-person event focused on building their capacity to integrate Indigenous literature using culturally sustaining and revitalizing approaches. The *Indigenous Author Panel* was the second project within the series, it provided Indigenous-serving educators with the opportunity to hear award-winning Indigenous Young Adult (YA) authors' perspectives on diversity, inclusion, and equity in Native American youth literature with an emphasis in culturally sustaining-revitalizing education. Following the author panel, the final project entitled *Using Indigenous Literature: Educator Panel*, brought together three Indigenous-serving educators to connect and share how they accurately as well as respectfully integrating Indigenous YA literature within their respective educational environment. Each event within the three-part project was created in partnership with Arizona Humanities - it is through their K-12 Literacy Initiative that both Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Humanities were able to impact and mobilize K-12 environments through innovative literacy programs.

Project Partners

The three-part project welcomed a diverse and dedicated group of partners that individually sought meaningful ways to connect and assist Indigenous communities throughout the state. The following paragraphs will provide a general overview of each of our partners and their respective work.



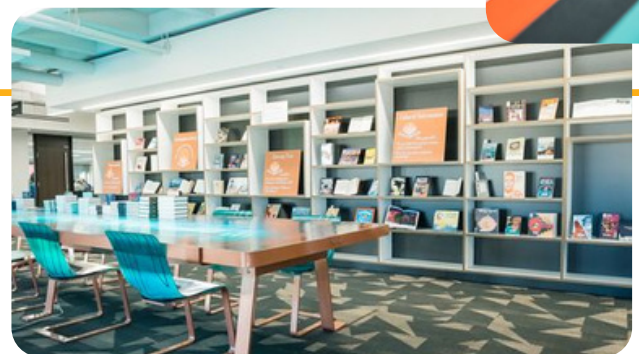


In the early summer of 2022, Arizona Humanities [1] launched a new *K-12 Literacy Initiative* [2] which aimed to cultivate strong literacy skills at an early age to build a just and civil society. The initiative called for literacy programs in K-12 Arizona schools that were both innovative and engaging. Thus, it was this unique initiative that provided the Office of Indian Education the ability to create

a three-part project that elevated and affirmed Indigenous knowledge and literature within K-12 learning environments. After entering a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Arizona Humanities in the summer of 2022, the projects offered professional learning opportunities, community connections and literature and literacy to educators across the state! Arizona Humanities provided all of the funding for the three-part project, and it is through their mission - *to build a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning and reflection* - that we were able to serve Arizona educators and students.

K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium

As the first in-person professional development opportunity post-pandemic, the symposium required both internal and external partners to adequately support and provide guidance to Native-serving educators. The day-long event welcomed external partners: Arizona Humanities and Arizona State University's Labriola National American Indian Data Center [3]; and internal Arizona Department of Education partners: Office of Academic Standards [4], Office of English Language Acquisition Services [5], and Office of Educational Equity. The following paragraphs will outline the role of both external and internal partners.



[1] Use the following link to learn more about Arizona Humanities (current work, grants and programs), <https://azhumanities.org/>

[2] Learn more about AZ Humanities K-12 Literacy Initiative, <https://azhumanities.org/azreads/>

Arizona Humanities played a vital role in the preparation, planning and overall sponsorship of the in-person event. As previously stated, the funding they supplied truly mobilized the event through travel stipends, honoraria for respective session facilitators, and, most influential, supplementation of Indigenous-authored literature. All attendees walked away with three diverse titles by Indigenous authors which allowed educators to be supplied with material to begin hands-on application of elevating and affirming Indigenous knowledge within their classrooms.



In addition to Arizona Humanities, OIE proudly partnered with the Labriola National American Indian Data Center located within the Hayden Library at ASU. It was crucial that the in-person symposium was held at a facility where educators could not only learn about integrating Indigenous literature, but also be fully immersed within an environment where culturally sustaining and revitalizing approaches can be seen, experienced, and valued. Thus, it was incredibly impactful to have the Labriola center host the in-person event [6]. Furthermore, as an Indigenous library center led by an all-Indigenous staff seeking to collaborate with and proactively meet the needs of ASU Indigenous students, faculty, and regional Tribal communities they played an influential role in providing a culturally safe space at Arizona State University. In addition to hosting the symposium, Labriola staff facilitated a professional learning session which included the creation of an interactive book display and discussion on *Valuing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Respecting Cultural Protocols*.

[3] Learn more about ASU Labriola National American Indian Data Center, <https://lib.asu.edu/labriola>

[4] Connect and learn more about ADE-Office of Academic Standards, <https://www.azed.gov/standards-practices>

[5] Use the following link to learn about ADE-Office of English Language Acquisition Services, <https://www.azed.gov/oelas/vision>

[6] Read about the K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium via Labriola Blog, <https://lib.asu.edu/news/labriola-blog-office-indian-education-symposium>



The day-long symposium offered OIE an opportunity to bring together three distinct program areas within the Arizona Department of Education for meaningful cross-agency collaboration. With the agency mission of *advancing equity and excellence for all students*, ADE staff facilitated professional learning sessions in partnership with OIE to meet the unique needs of Native American students across the state. In addition to facilitation, all ADE staff supported educators during a hands-on application session which included co-planning and co-creating of classroom lessons. All presentations from ADE internal and external partners can be found on the ADE-OIE Professional Learning website [7].

Virtual Panels for Educators

The Indigenous Text Project also included two virtual panels that occurred at the beginning and end of November to celebrate Native American Heritage month. Each panel included a K-12 educator audience, a moderator and an Indigenous-authored book giveaway. Like the *K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium*, Arizona Humanities played a crucial role in the overall success of both panels. In addition to providing funding for Indigenous-authored books and honoraria for panelists, they also provided meaningful connections to more than half of the Indigenous Young Adult Authors which included Darcie Little Badger, Dr. Debbie Reese, Eric Gansworth, Brian Young and Dr. Cynthia Leitich Smith. Overall, both panels provided educators with a unique opportunity to connect and learn about the importance of using Native American youth literature with an emphasis on culturally sustaining-revitalizing education.



Eric Gansworth



Dr. Debbie Reese



Cynthia Leitich Smith



Darcie Little Badger



Brian Young

[7] Use the link to explore ADE internal/external presentations and resources,
<https://www.azed.gov/oie/professional-learning-resources>

Budget

All three-parts of the Indigenous Text Project were funded directly by Arizona Humanities. All costs for each part of the project are outlined within the table below:



**K-12 Indigenous
Literature & Literacy
Symposium**



**Indigenous
Author Panel**



**Using Indigenous
Literature:
Educator Panel**

ITEMS	COST
Books	\$3,200
Honoraria	\$500
Attendee (Travel/Parking)	\$6,000
Books	\$1,000
Honoraria	\$2,500
Books	\$1,000
Honoraria	\$300

Project Goals

The three-part project included various goals that aligned with the Office of Indian Education's (OIE) priorities, the division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion's (EDI) mission, and ultimately, the guiding vision of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) - equity for all students to achieve their full potential. As the state agency is tasked with overseeing Arizona's K-12 public education system, it was imperative that the project series met ADE's mission of advancing equity and excellence for all students by serving school leaders, educators and staff, collaborating with communities and leading with data-driven best practices. Furthermore, the division of EDI calls for educators and leaders to consider how equity is addressed in policies, procedures, practices, and programs. Lastly, the OIE prioritizes strategic partnerships to promote shared responsibility for Native American students' educational experiences. Project partners leveraged these approaches to meet the specific objectives of each event.



**"Equity for all
students to achieve
their full potential."**

K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium

Each of the three events had specific objectives – beginning with the Changing the Narrative: K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium. With an intentional focus on Indigenous-serving educators, the one-day symposium sought to build their capacity in two areas; first, in their ability to use Indigenous literature in the classroom through culturally sustaining and revitalizing ways; second, in their ability to elevate and affirm Indigenous knowledge in K-12 environments respectfully and appropriately. Both objectives were accomplished through community-based participatory professional learning that emphasized building relationships, co-learning, and equitable participation from all attendees.



Indigenous Author Panel

The Indigenous Author Panel, which was the second event, included three goals. First, provide Indigenous-serving educators with a unique opportunity to learn from and connect with Indigenous Young Adult authors. Second, create an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of both Young Adult literature written by Indigenous authors as well as Indigenous communities. Third, cultivate a space to hear the importance of Indigenous Young Adult literature with an emphasis in culturally sustaining-revitalizing education.



Using Indigenous Literature: Educator Panel

Finally, the Using Indigenous Literature: Educator Panel, the last project, sought to achieve three goals. One, provide Indigenous-serving educators with an opportunity to collaborate, communicate and connect with other Indigenous-serving educators. Two, cultivate a space to hear real-world examples of classroom lessons focused on integrating Indigenous-authored literature. Three, leverage an online platform to elevate peer-to-peer learning to respectfully integrating Indigenous YA literature within K-12 educational environments.



Lynette Stant
3rd Grade Classroom Teacher
Salt River Schools
2020 AZ Teacher of the Year



Tonya Bidtah
Instructional Coach
Whiteriver Unified School District

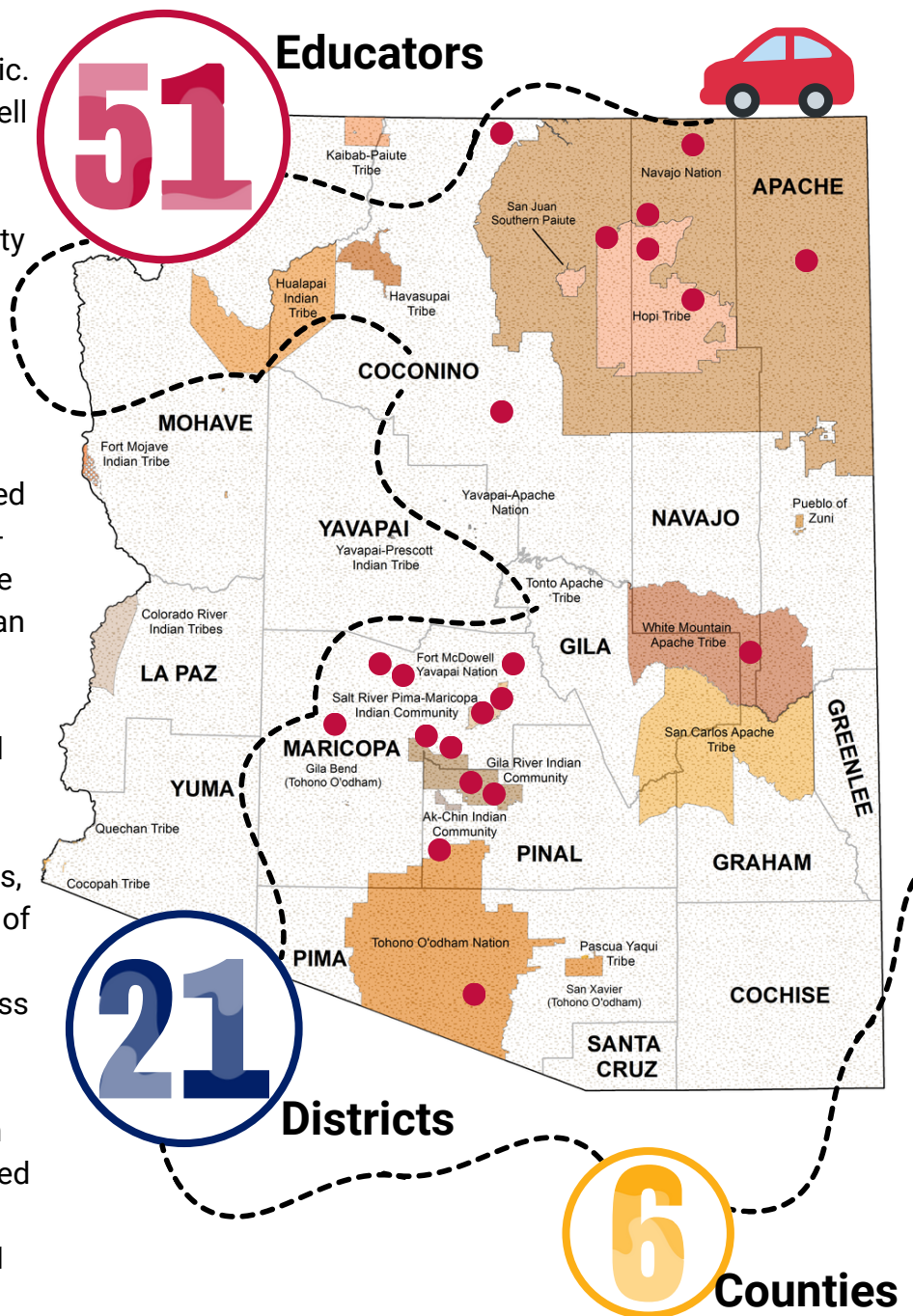


Amber Stevens
Native American Specialist
Osborn School District

Project Impact

The overall success of the Indigenous Text Project was measured through attendance (both in-person and online) and quantitative/qualitative data collected via survey. It is imperative to note that the K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium was the first in-person

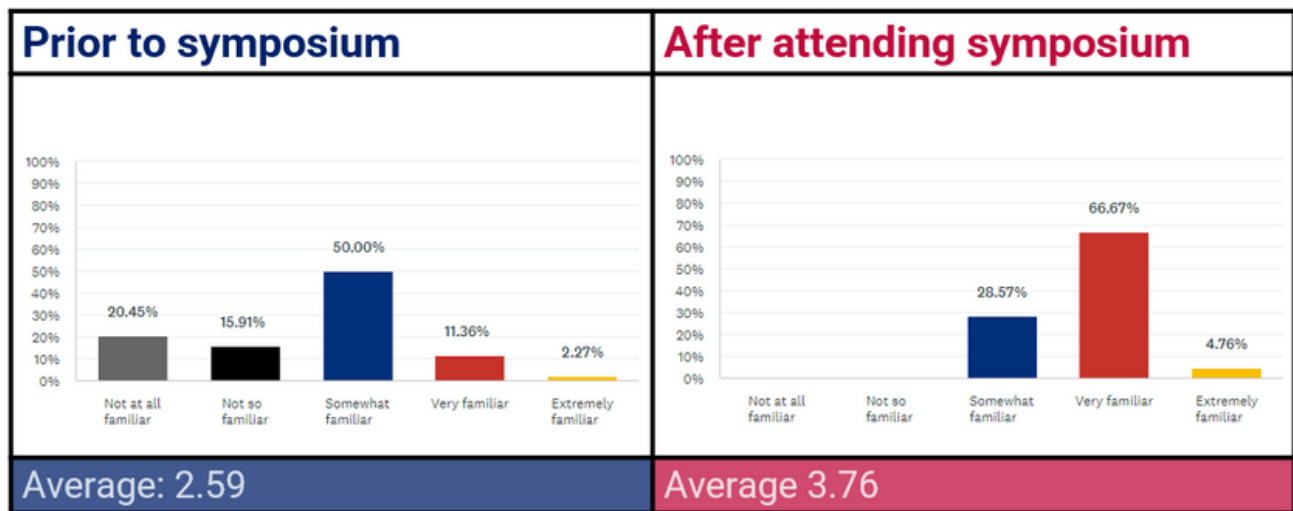
event hosted by the Office of Indian Education post-pandemic. Therefore, event capacity as well as total attendees was directly affected by the pandemic gathering guidance and capacity limitation. With a limit of 60 attendees, the in-person event successfully welcomed 51 educators registered for the event! Of these attendees, 19 educators qualified and received travel stipends to attend the in-person symposium. Each of the 19 educators traveled more than 300 miles one-way which allowed them to receive reimbursement for lodging and mileage. All travel reimbursement funding was provided by Arizona Humanities, it was the subconscious effort of AZH to offer an equitable opportunity for educators across the state to attend the symposium. With that said, extending this opportunity with funding to support travel allowed the in-person symposium to welcome 51 educators from 21 districts across 6 counties.



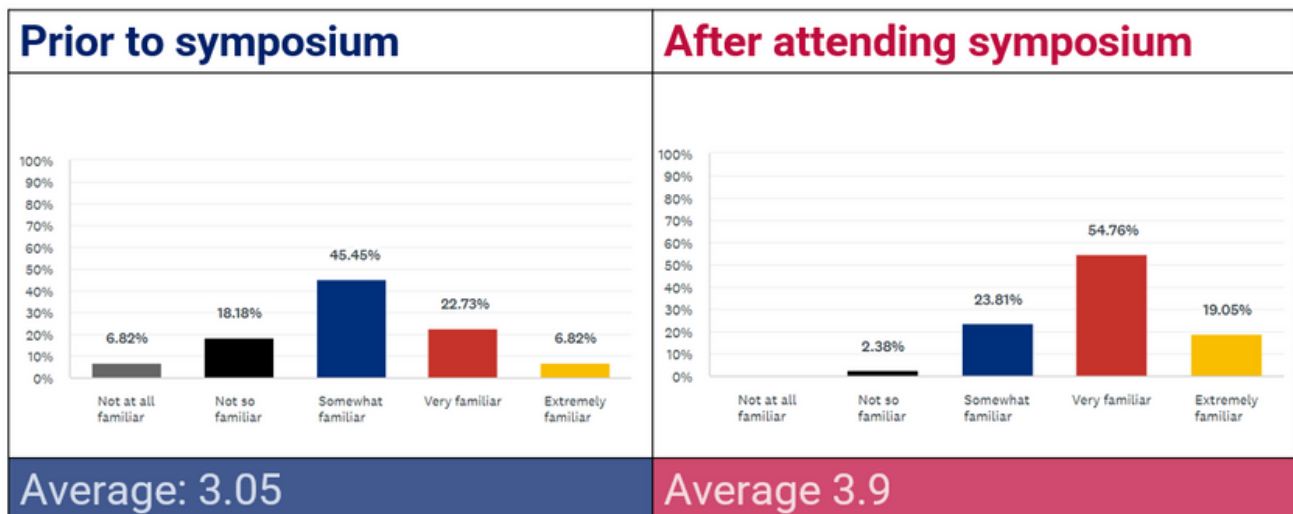
While the event attendance displayed diverse K-12 environments, both qualitative and quantitative data gathered after the event displayed an immense amount of success. A handful of questions regarding overarching themes of the event including familiarity with

ADE's equity, diversity and inclusion work; familiarity with Indigenous Knowledge Systems and cultural protocols; and confidence with planning supporting academic discourse in the classroom were asked on a scale from not confident to extremely confident. The data showed steady growth and improvement – please see the graphs below to understand familiarity prior and post symposium.

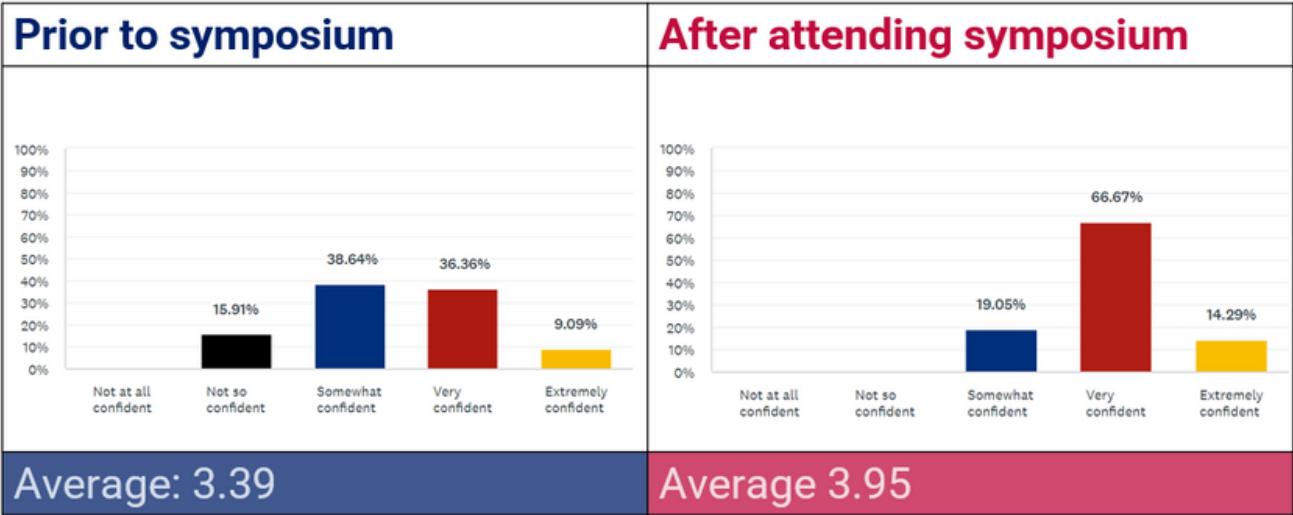
Impact on **familiarity** with ADE's equity, diversity, and inclusion work



Impact on **familiarity** with Indigenous Knowledge Systems and cultural protocols



Impact on **confidence** in planning for or supporting academic discourse in the classroom



In addition to quantitative data, attendees provided meaningful qualitative data to support the overall success of the in-person event. When asked about the best part of the symposium, one educator stated,

“The best part of the symposium was learning directly from Indigenous educators and professionals how to reach our Indigenous and POC students.”

Other comments regarding content and networking opportunities can be read below:

“I found the sessions around indigenous ways of knowing and analyzing texts to be enriching, challenging, and enlightening.**”**

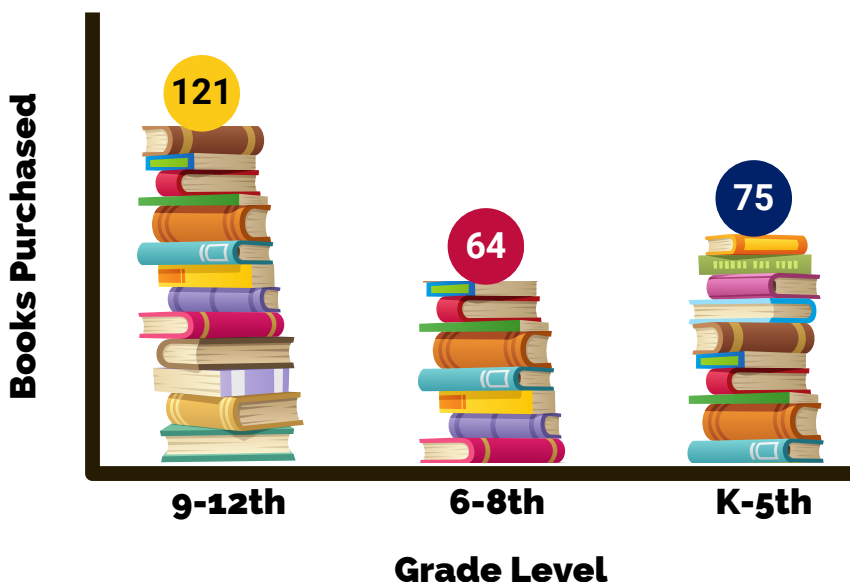
“It was wonderful to meet other teachers and work through the concepts together.**”**

“Just sharing and learning from colleagues was so meaningful to me. I also really enjoyed the resources we were given to begin adding more indigenous authors to my bookshelf and curriculum.**”**

In addition to measurable outcomes, each of the three projects offered supplemental instructional material which included Indigenous authored books. A total of 264 books were distributed across the three projects; The K-12 Indigenous Literature & Literacy Symposium offered 77 books to 9-12 grade educators, 24 books to 6-8 grade educators and 55 books to K-5 educators. Both the Indigenous Author Panel and Using Indigenous Literature: Educator

Panel supplied their virtual participants with 54 books each – this included 44 books for 9-12 grade educators, 40 books for 6-8 grade educators and 24 books for K-5 grade educators.

activities, key takeaways, contact information for all presenters and partner organizations, and QR codes to access all digital resource collections. For digital resources, all internal ADE partners were



tasked with gathering links to free and accessible resources that educators could use to deepen and apply their learning. All resources from ADE staff can be accessed online [8]. Furthermore, the ASU Labriola team created a digital library guide to accompany the event which includes information on the book display, access to all slide deck presentations used that day, and links to resources related to their

Resources Produced

The Indigenous Text Project produced several digital and physical resources. In preparation for the Changing the Narrative symposium, the ASU Labriola team designed and curated an interactive book display that featured both positive and negative examples of representation within children's, young adult, and academic literature. The display continues to be viewable by the general public, including students, faculty, and staff, on the second floor of the Hayden library. Additionally, comprehensive learning guide was designed, printed, and distributed to each participant. This guide included guidance,

specific workshop sessions on literary representation and analysis and cultural knowledge protocols [9]. The two virtual events also produced valuable digital resources for educators interested in integrating Indigenous literature and knowledge into K-12 classrooms. Both events were recorded and accessible on the Office of Indian Education's website [10]. While the Indigenous Author Panel recording was only available for 30 day following the live event, the Using Indigenous Literature: Educator Panel recording will continue to be accessible for free on the website indefinitely. All these resources can be leveraged to sustain the impact of the three-part project.

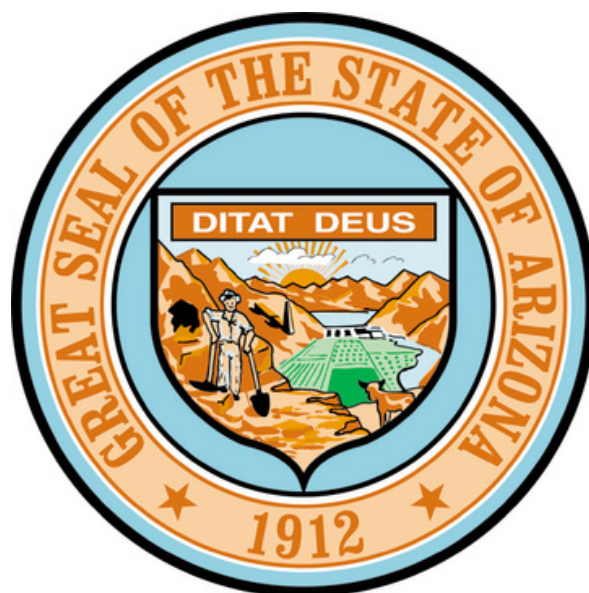
[8] Use the link to explore free and accessible digital resources, <https://bit.ly/ADELinks>

[9] ASU Labriola Digital Library guide, <https://bit.ly/ASULibGuide>

[10] Explore ADE-OIE Professional Learning page at <https://www.azed.gov/oie/professional-learning-resources>

Future Implications

As with any professional learning project, sustainability was a concern in this project. The project team believed that each of these events as standalone opportunities or as a concerted effort, would not be sufficient in ensuring educators had the appropriate skills and knowledge to integrate Indigenous literature and knowledge into K-12 learning environments across Arizona in culturally sustaining and revitalizing ways. In addition to making the previously mentioned resources free and accessible to all public educators, the OIE team plans to convert all professional learning materials into an asynchronous course that K-12 educators can engage with in order to receive continuing education credits needed for recertification purposes. Additionally, select partners from ADE plan to host a quarterly virtual community of practice to bring together educators who attended any of the three events interested in continuing their conversations and collaborations around integrating Indigenous literature and knowledge in their classrooms. Lastly, all participating partners have expressed interest in making the Changing the Narrative symposium a recurring annual event with revised and new content in each iteration. As the impact data from all three events shows, K-12 educators in Arizona and beyond are interested and committed to improving their practice within this topic area but are in need of ongoing professional learning and technical assistance. A continuation of the Indigenous Text Project would allow the Arizona Office of Indian Education and its partners to meet this need and ultimately contribute to more equitable and inclusive educational experiences for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Arizona.



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