Introduction

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This thematic issue of the *Quarterly* focuses on the education histories of American Indians. Conceptually, substantively and methodologically, the articles and essays examine American Indian histories and demonstrate how they might further the field of the history of education. Terminology, of course, warrants attention. In the following pages, we refer to tribal names as they are typically translated into English, acknowledging that the names differ in Native languages and have changed over the centuries. In general designations, we use the terms American Indians, Indians, Native Americans, Native, and Indigenous Americans interchangeably, the common practice among contemporary U.S. scholars. Canada tends to favor First Peoples as a broad reference. Other countries have evolved their own terminology. We also use the terms Euroamerican, white and Anglo interchangeably and the term Hispano for self-identified Spanish descendants living in present-day New Mexico. In studying American Indian histories, geographical designations can be confusing, grammatically convoluted, and anachronistic, and for all these reasons, contested. To clarify matters, we use contemporary continental, state, and regional nomenclature, knowing that such places would mystify people living in previous eras, notably pre-Columbian times. While debates over terminology can be significant, this collection tries to move beyond them to highlight distinct histories that complicate our understanding of the past and thus deserve recognition.

The authors pose fresh queries about what qualifies as education and productive searches for its pasts. Indeed, we argue that American Indian histories *are* education histories. The plural form is important, and we try to make clear why the diversity of tribes, nations, and confederacies dictates recognition. Research on American Indians in recent decades is recasting our topic. Emerging is a dynamic, contextualized, and conceptually nuanced field of inquiry. The literature pays careful

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attention to nomenclature, place, names and cultural variables, drawing sources from multiple disciplines, oral traditions, spiritual commitments, and ritual performances such as storytelling, songs, and dances, all potential reservoirs of historical information. Methodologically and substantively, the findings contrast, often sharply, with scholastic approaches to historical interpretation. They suggest a distinct mindset at work. Forcing reconsiderations, the literature tends to question basic definitions of education, assumptions about memory and time, and the reliability of standard scientific practices, including those operating in history and professional specializations.

In these queries, an immediate problem arises. The relevant literature lies scattered across the journals and publishers of diverse disciplines. Our intention in resolving these technical issues is to help readers remain oriented to the significant particularities of Native histories and the ways Indians experienced and thought about their worlds. Achieving these goals requires synthesizing multiple contributions to American Indian education histories into conversation with each other, ambitious undertakings in any format. Plus, there are theories to test, findings to assess, and fundamental questions to reframe. With American Indian narratives and analyses systematically added to the mix, the agenda invites redesigns of the scope and directions, the content and methods, of our field and as Native historians have long argued, those of United States history itself. The project is timely, with far-reaching implications for the history of education generally.

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