

Panel Title: Amplifying Indigenous Literature and Activism

Panel Abstract: This year's conference proposal asks how can we "listen to and amplify voices that have historically been silenced or ignored due to marginalization in its many forms?" As Dawn Quigley (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) discusses in her 2016 essay "Silenced: Voices Taken from American Indian Characters in Children's Literature," Indigenous voices continue to be silenced, including in K-12 classrooms dominated by inaccurate, destructive white-authored books about Indigenous people in which the American Indian characters literally do not speak. In contrast, this panel amplifies Indigenous authors, stories, and approaches to activism. Come listen.

Panelists: Martha Viehmann, Zara Rix, and Mandy Suhr-Sytsma

Paper 1 Title: Building Empathy on Common Ground: Tim Tingle and the Choctaw Way

Paper 1 Abstract: Tim Tingle's writing for children, such as the picture book *Crossing Bok Chitto* and the middle grades novel *How I Became a Ghost: A Choctaw Story of the Trail of Tears*, raise awareness, teach empathy, and empower children. His writing benefits children of all races and ethnicities because it raises cultural awareness about the Choctaw people and nineteenth century Native American life in the US South more generally, shows how empathy arises from understanding the common experiences that can bridge differences without erasing distinctive identities, and places children at the center of the action in plots that revolve around the restoration of social justice. This award-winning author is among those who are raising up future activists with good story-telling that is rooted in the moral foundations of social justice and age-appropriate information that refuses to whitewash the white supremacist ideologies behind enslavement and the removal of Indigenous nations. A guiding principle within Tingle's writing is the instructions for right living that he represents as the Choctaw Way.

This presentation will explore how Tingle, an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is uniquely positioned to undo stereotypes about Native Americans that are commonly found in children's literature in books that position children as leaders, raise awareness of Choctaw life, culture, and history, and model how to build empathy and community while resisting oppression.