

NATIVE AMERICAN ACCESS AND SUCCESS IN POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Education Studies
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2018

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Degree awarded September 2018

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy

Critical and Sociocultural Studies in Education

September 2018

Title: Native American Access and Success in Postsecondary Education

Native Americans continue to be one of the lowest represented ethnic groups in postsecondary education and present some of the lowest retention/graduation rates of any group. In the interest of supporting all students, this study examines Native American students' notions of success as well as their academic and personal experiences in a majority serving institution of higher education. Narrative Analysis and Iktomi stories are used to examine the Native student experience and the resources these students seek out as they navigate their academic and career goals.

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PUBLICATIONS:

Beghetto, R. A., Barbee, B., Brooks, S., Franklin-Phipps, A., Fukuda, E.,
Gardner-Allers, N., . . . White Eyes, C. (n.d.). • Light Bulbs, Bill Evans, and
Cat Hair: Exploring Representations of Creativity and Education in Images,
Videos, and Blogs. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 2(4), 188-206.
doi:10.1037/ppm0000003

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I walked through the subway doors as soon as they opened in somewhat of a hurry. Despite being the first off the subway, the rush of people was still a bit much to take in. I knew it was going to be hard trying to get Isik, who was only 18 months old, to walk quickly to the connecting subway. Isik was the youngest of my two boys. His brother, Kanim, stood extremely tall for a 3-year-old, and was capable of moving swiftly in his slacks and black dress shoes. A thick, black braid went down his back, while a tie went down his front. He loved to dress nicely. His little brother also wanted to look nice, but was not as quick on his feet, and he insisted on having me hold his hand. Kanim stayed no more than two steps ahead of me, trying to move quick but not wanting to move too far from us. I was fairly confident we would make it on time, but the anxiety lingered. And the speed at which everyone else moved did not help, I felt like a stone in a creek, water rushed right around and over the three of us.

Two crowds moved in opposite directions. To our right, people hustled the same direction, headed towards wherever. To our immediate left were the large pillars that went to the ceiling. This created a small gap in bodies, followed by traffic that moved in the opposite direction. Everyone moved with equal urgency. I had been acutely aware that we were not supposed to interact with the people going the opposite direction, but with two little boys, I didn't have time to process why. I kept to the center with my boys, people respectfully moved around us. Suddenly, I saw someone I knew walking the other direction.

It was him. I couldn't believe it at first. I recalled the night he went on his journey so well. Probably one of the worst nights of my life. My grandfather, "Pow Pow" as I

called him when I was my kids' age, Dr. Milton Davis, war veteran, professional football player and Super Bowl champ, scholar, farmer, family man, social justice advocate. I remember the two men who came to get him that night, years ago. I was angry. I arrived at his house minutes after he passed away, and there were already strangers there taking him away. With no where to send my anger, I found myself directing it at them and realized this would not make my mother nor grandma feel better, so I went outside and sat on the porch in the darkness. To this day, I don't really understand why I was so angry at them. For taking him away, perhaps? He had already made his journey. Maybe I was mad that his body was being taken away in the night by people I didn't even know?

I kept quiet, even when one of the two men went back into the house. Probably to talk to my grandmother or whatever, I didn't care. I didn't want to hear anything he had to say. There was nothing to say. Nothing he could possibly say could make any difference. My grandfather was gone, and unless he had some way of getting him back, I didn't want to hear it from him. And yet, when I heard the front door open, this unfamiliar man had the nerve to say something.

“Milt?”

I didn't move. I didn't respond. I waited for him to continue his line of thinking. Say something “nice” about my grandpa Milt. Or some sort of “Milt is no longer in pain” or “he has moved on to a better place” or some other bullshit cliché. But he didn't. And to this day, I don't know if he was pulling some gimmick party trick to grieving children, or if he meant what he said and just got the names wrong. What he said struck me harder and deeper than anything anyone else could have said to me at that time.

“It’s going to be all right, Milt. It’s going to be all right.” He put his hand on my shoulder for a moment and walked off into the night. I couldn’t believe what he said, and for the first time I moved, only enough to look up and watch him get in the van and drive away. As soon as the taillights disappeared over the hill, I stood up and sprinted up the hill into the thick grove of trees, searching for somewhere to hide. Or disappear myself. I am not sure. But the name switch, him calling me my own deceased grandfather’s name as if I were him, scorched my heart and sent me diving into the darkness...

And yet I spotted him here in this subway station. He was slightly taller, definitely younger, and in better physical shape than I recalled him in the few years prior to his death. He was once again swift, strong, focused. Suit, tie, black dress shoes. His dark eyes and face retained their intensities. Cold, locked onto what was immediately in front of him, while at the same time aware of things beyond. It was probably why he saw me. I never motioned, didn’t wave, and made no sound. And yet when he realized who I was, the ice-cold stare shattered and his face broke out into a smile.

“Hold on, Kanim.” Isik still had his hand wrapped around my finger, so I nodded upwards towards him. Crossing the gap between the people moving to and fro, it was obviously some sort of rule we were breaking, but he didn’t care. And frankly, I didn’t either if it meant I finally got to speak with him.

As he arrived he gave me a hug before words could be exchanged. He patted me hard on the back before letting me go, his smile remained. “These are the boys”, I told him. “Can you shake his hand?”, I asked Kanim, who without hesitation reached his hand out. Delighted, grandpa shook his hand. “Can you say ‘hi’?” I asked Isik, who still clutched my finger. He held up his other hand and open and closed his fingers over, and

over. It was his way of “saying hi” or “waving”. Grandpa quickly followed suit, “waved” in the same fashion.

“How are they?” his smile hadn’t changed since he first saw me.

“They are good. Happy, healthy.” I knew we were both pressed for time, but somehow it didn’t matter. I had to tell him how things were, since I didn’t know how much information he had access to. It was quite possible he knew everything, but if he already did, I knew he would still want to hear it straight from me. “Kanim is starting potty training but is hesitant. He is talking a lot and reading. More than other kids his age, I think. Obviously very tall, he is very active. And Isik...” I made a motion towards the baby “is small and chunky but very observant. He doesn’t talk much but I think it’s by choice, he likes to observe and be covert about his actions. He is a quiet menace.”

Grandpa’s smile grew when I said that. He watched them both for a moment before his smile vanished and he turned a serious frown towards me.

“How are you?”

“I am okay. Taking care of these guys. I am still working on my graduate program, I am collecting data right now. Still doing the cars thing, but now I have them, so...you know.”

“So, you are okay?”

I smiled when he asked, and knew he wanted to hear that nothing ever bothers me and that all is well and everything is wonderful. Truth is life is a challenge. “I’m making it work.”

“When will you finish grad school?”

“I have another year, but I want to be done sooner.”

“Good. Finish it off. I want to see you get that done. How is everything else?”

I felt like everything else was a mess, but it always had been and it wasn't much worse than when I saw him last. I felt the pressure of time, we both had places to be and we weren't really supposed to cross paths here, but it was the first and perhaps only time my boys would cross paths with him. In the moment, it felt real. And if this was the only interaction that my sons and my grandfather had between the three of them, then so be it. I would take it. Real or not.

“Things are great.”

“Great. Let me know if you need anything, okay?”

“I know. Thanks grandpa.”

“I can't see you as often, but I will see you soon.” He slowly started the direction he had previously been going again.

“I know. I still got things I have to handle,” I motion towards Kanim and Isik
“...until that day.”

“Until that day”.

“Can you say ‘bye-bye’?”

Kanim came quick with the response. “Byeeee!” Isik did his hand clasping wave.

Grandpa broke into a smile again and gave them a wave. I think he was genuinely happy. I hope he was. And, for him, it was right back to business as usual as he pointed at me. “Finish it off!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Good man.”

That was the last time I spoke to Dr. Milton Eugene Davis. “Pow pow”.

Native Americans - Current Challenges and Trends

Native Americans continue to be one of the least represented demographics in college settings (Czujko, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, as cited in the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 2005-2006; Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2012; Reddy, 1993) and often have the lowest retention rates on college campuses (Reddy, 1993; Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2012) while simultaneously being over-represented in this country's prison systems. Pavel et al. (1998) found that Native Americans entering post-secondary education possessed a substantially higher number of risk factors threatening their ability to succeed in college (35% had four or more risk factors compared to 22% of the overall undergraduate population).

In 2002, Native Americans made up less than 1% of the entire college student body nationwide, and most of those students were enrolled in two-year institutions (Czujko, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, as cited in the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 2005-2006). Most Native students (approximately 92%) attend public schools, while the remainder (approximately 8%) attend schools operated by individual tribes or the federal Bureau of Indian Education (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). College enrollment is dependent upon completing high school, and according to one study the national completion rate for all students in 2009 was 89.8% and only 82.4% for American Indian/Alaska Natives (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & Kewalramani, 2011, p. 44). Another study found that the national dropout rate was 3% for all students, 2% for white students, and 7% for American Indian/Alaska Natives (Stillwell & Sable, 2013, p.17). In the state of Oregon 40% of Native American students who graduate from high school attend college within 16 months of graduation, which is about the same rate as the

whole of Oregon students (Hammond, 2014), but these are of students who graduate from High School. Oregon has one of the worst graduation rates of any other state (tied with Colorado and Nevada) at 52% (US Department of Education, 2012).

Figure 1: Students Receiving College Degrees for 2015 by Ethnicity

Students Receiving Degrees at 4-year Institutions, Undergraduate, Fall 2015, Number and Percentage	All Students	White	AI/AN	NHOPI
4-year public, private non-profit, and private for-profit institutions combined	17,448,545	5,757,208 (33.0%)	66,375 (0.4%)	27,505 (0.2%)
4-year public institutions only	13,255,887	3,841,741 (29.0%)	46,107 (0.3%)	15,227 (0.1%)
4-year private nonprofit institutions only	2,841,460	1,589,232 (55.9%)	13,867 (0.5%)	7,115 (0.3%)
4- year private for-profit institutions only	1,351,198	326,235 (24.1%)	6,401 (0.5%)	5,163 (0.4%)

Notes: AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. NHOPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Data source: (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2017, p.5)

In the state of Oregon, one study found that in 2007 the graduation rate for Native Americans in post-secondary education was 42.7%, 27.7% less than the overall graduation rates (Faircloth and Tippeconnic, 2010, p. 12). The same study stated there is a graduation/dropout crisis among American Indian and Alaska Native students, as data drawn from twelve states indicate that on average, less than 50% of Native students graduate from post-secondary education (Faircloth and Tippeconnic, 2010, p. 3).

The percentage of Native Americans attending post-secondary education is lower than the actual percentage of Native Americans living in the United States, furthermore, the number of Native American students attending post-secondary education is lower than almost any other racial or ethnic demographic. On the one hand, this negatively influences student academic success with Native Americans as they will not have the same social and cultural support while attending a non-tribal college than students who, for instance, grew up in majority white culture. This can also negatively influence tribal economies if a tribe does not have many of its members receiving degrees in fields that can positively influence the tribe economically.

On the other hand, a lack of Native American representation negatively influences the college-going experience for all students, as it represents a lack of diversity and a narrowing of experiences and backgrounds that can be shared between students. It also pushes aside the unique indigenous knowledge of certain areas that has been gained through hundreds of years of experience by indigenous tribes who still practice their traditions. Having the indigenous perspective may amplify certain specific curriculums such as language, history, geography, biology, and others.

This dissertation examined Native American students attending traditionally non-Native-serving institutions. What were their definitions of success and did these students use institutional support structures, personnel, family, community, and or tribal supports to succeed in post-secondary education?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Currently, there are 567 federally recognized tribes in the United States (Federal Registry, 2018, p. 4235-4240), that is, they identify as being sovereign nations operating

under Federal jurisdiction within the country. There are also over 400 tribes who claim ancestral and cultural ties to the territory now more formerly known as the United States of America who are not recognized by the United States, (Government Accountability Office, 2012, p.6) although some are recognized by the state. Many of these tribes have maintained (to varying degrees) their traditional cultures, languages, heritages, social and religious functions, and practices concerning healthcare (Norton & Mason, 1996, p. 856).

This study contributes to the existing literature on Native American education by looking at the intersection of indigenous community life and 4-year higher education institutions. It examined the experiences of students who self-identify as Native American attending non-tribal institutions seeking to identify how these students negotiate identity and navigate polyvocal discourses from community and post-secondary institutions. Additionally, it further examined where narratives of success converge and diverge from what has been called settler colonialist narratives, assuming the university is a settler colonial narrative.

The following passage illustrates the importance of erasure of land claims (both moral and political), histories, epistemologies, and philosophies of indigenous peoples by colonial settlers.

In North America, settler colonialism operates through a triad of relationships, between the (white [but not always]) settlers, the Indigenous inhabitants, and chattel slaves who are removed from their homelands to work stolen land. At the crux of these relationships is land, highly valued and disputed. For settlers to live on and profit from land, they must eliminate Indigenous peoples, and extinguish their historical, epistemological,

philosophical, moral and political claims to land. Land, in being settled, becomes property. Settlers must also import chattel slaves, who must be kept landless, and who also become property, to be used, abused and managed (Tuck & Gatzambide-Fernandez, 2014, p 74).

This means that settler colonialism is designed to aid the settlers at the expense of the Indigenous peoples of that land.

Lastly, my research identified the resources and strategies Native American students deploy to manage, negotiate and disrupt various narratives and discourses within academe. These insights will help to inform practice and programming that will better support Native students who seek to attend non-tribal colleges.

Four central reasons dictate the need for this study: (1) The need to increase access to higher education for Native American students, (2) The need for Native American students, communities and post-secondary institutions to critique notions of success, (3) the need for post-secondary institutions to create relevant programs and supports addressing Native American needs related to persistence and retention, (4) personal interest and personal experience as a recruiter of and academic advisor for Native students preparing and attending a non-Native post-secondary institution.

Research Questions and Scope of the Study

The purpose of my research was to explore the educational lived experiences of Native American students in higher education. This research examined how Native American students define success and negotiate their identities while attending a majority white institution of higher education. Furthermore, it identified the support systems Native students tap into to navigate the university. This study presumed that Native students that

attend majority serving institutions draw on sources that do more than provide information, develop specific skills, or teach subject matter knowledge. It also involved negotiating the forms of identity that are different from those made available and required in indigenous students' home communities, as Luther Standing Bear (1933) termed it – being “doubly educated”, or knowledge of your own unique identity outside of the majority, as well as knowledge of majority culture and their intersections.

Another goal of this research was to provide counter-narratives for the lived experiences of Native students in post-secondary education, narratives that are largely lacking in research literature. And those that do exist typically focus on deficit models, not necessarily highlighting the successes experienced by Natives in post-secondary education. This research also identifies practices, people, and programs that influence Native American success.

As a result of my study, I better understand and provide additional voice to the Native American postsecondary experience, particularly as it pertains to competing narratives and discursive understandings of success. Within the voices of Native students, I document how they understand, negotiate and develop bicultural agency regarding settler colonial structures in higher education (Darder 2012). Underlying the purpose of my study was an interest in seeing whether notions of success held by post-secondary institutions were useful with all populations, and in particular Native Americans. Exploring this issue of “success” from the Native American perspective provides important information that can inform both post-secondary institutions (community college, tribal college, and 4-year universities), and tribal communities, about how best to prepare Native students for their higher education experiences within the context of competing narratives, and at the same

time help prepare non-tribal universities to receive Native students (as well as others) in a way that is mutually beneficial.

Research questions.

This dissertation examined Native American students attending traditionally majority-serving institutions and the resources they draw from to navigate this space. The goal of this research was to examine both how student participants define their own identity as Native Americans and how they use institutional personnel, community, and tribal supports to navigate university structures. It looked at how Native Americans define success and their presence at the university.

The central questions that guided the dissertation were: (1) How do Native American students define success in post-secondary education? (2) How do Native students perceive their presence at the University? (3) What are the primary sources of supports sought by Native American students in a predominantly non-Native institution (existing institutional support structures, familial supports, social supports, tribal supports, others)?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is organized into five major areas of focus. The areas include (a) historical overview of Native American education, (b) troubling notions of “success”, (c) bicultural student success, (d) social support and networks, (e) compare and contrast frameworks as well as supplying a framework for Native notions of success.

Historical Overview of Native Americans in College

As white colonial settler society began moving west, there was a persistent effort to relieve Native American populations of their human, social, cultural, environmental, and economic capital and change those Native Americans who survived the physical genocide to be more like those who held power in the dominant society (Brayboy, 2006). While there is increased awareness of the violent genocide that has occurred on this land, there has been a lack of awareness as to how that genocide has persisted to this day. In many ways, this genocide continues by the very people who are unaware of it. As Patrick Wolfe (2006) discusses, questions of genocide are not far removed from discussions concerning settler colonialism (pg. 387).

On December 9th, 1948, the United Nations assembled to define the term “genocide” using the definition set forth by Lemkin (1944). According to the United Nations’ Convention, under article 2, the act of genocide becomes more specifically defined, and whether this act is committed in time of peace or war, it is seen as a crime under international law.

“In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (United Nations, 1994).

Inflicting upon a group conditions of life calculated to bring about its destruction *in whole or in part* will be what I focus on here, as the process of de-culturalization and the process of “civilizing” Natives essentially strips Native Americans of their Indian and tribal identity. This not only influences a Native American’s idea of what it means to be Native, but also silences the experiences and knowledges gained by Native Americans, especially in the context of education, and when a Native is attending a non-tribal college. This, by Patrick Wolfe’s (2006) definition, is settler colonialism, or colonialism that “...destroys to replace” (pg. 388). In this case, it is not simply a physical destruction via the genocidal acts of the colonists, but the erasure of languages, cultures, histories, and ideologies of the indigenous peoples at that time to make way for the new ones driven by the Euro-centric colonists.

The war waged against the next generation of Natives was the next step in the process of genocide, after war and violence had swept through the older generations. “The next Indian war would be ideological and psychological, and would be waged against the children” (Adams, 1995, pg. 27). Forcibly transferring children of one group to another is exemplified by the environmental displacement of transferring Native youth from the

reservations to a space far from their traditional homes. Such transferring correlated to transferring them culturally, not just geographically. Patrick Wolfe (2006) argues that in the positive aspect, settler colonialism does not simply replace totally the native society, it also maintains the refractory imprint of the Native counter-claim (pg. 389).

The term “genocide” has often been referred to the physical destruction of Native peoples, but not necessarily the cultural, linguistic, philosophical destruction. “Throughout American history, the agonizing discourse concerning Indian/white relations is spoken of as ‘conflict’, or ‘assimilation’, or ‘postcolonial’ in nature, but never as ‘genocide’. As the twentieth century closes, it seems obvious that Genocide, in the matter of Indian/white relations in America, has not been just a matter of physical extermination. It has been broadened to include the concept of Ecocide, the intentional destruction of the physical environment needed to sustain human health and life in a given geographical region” (Cook-Lynn, 2007, p 187). The term “Ecocide”, or the killing of a physical environment, was referred to by Cook-Lynn here, referring to both the physical and spiritual environment of native cultures. Thinking about genocide in education helps view genocide as not specifically a conflict of violence. It is an erasure of people and a radical erasure of their physical and spiritual world.

Standing Bear’s (1933) critique of the Carlisle Indian School as not being a place where ideas are exchanged is perhaps a larger critique of American society. Settler Colonialism and its concomitant white supremacy assumes that there is nothing to gain from Indian ways, and this is wrong, according to Standing Bear. While he claims that Indians should be “doubly educated”, perhaps there is a duty that white Americans, too,

should be cognizant of Indian ways. He believes that white Americans are robbing themselves when they approach Native Americans as inferior to their own.

Under the definition of genocide, according to the United Nations, these students are still geographically displaced from their communities to attend school, and often are set up to be unsuccessful. To work against the grain and shift the present discourse surrounding Native Americans in higher education, it is important for post-secondary institutions and researchers to explore the first-hand narratives of Native American students in a way that will be productive and transformative for the schools which they themselves are attending.

Troubling the Notion of “Success”

Currently, notions of success by mainstream society are highlighted by common indicators that can be quantifiably measured. Common indicators include access to postsecondary education, retention rates, grade point averages, and degree attainment (Perna & Thomas, 2006, pg. 5). Frequently, these measures are used to leverage accountability and are often aligned with policymaker and practitioner interests (Perna & Thomas, 2006) and not necessarily that of under-represented community interest (developing a language revitalization program or other culturally relevant curriculums for instance). What is needed is a critique of the traditional views of “success” and a re-conceptualized notion of what “success” is from a Native American standpoint will allow for a definition of “success” that goes beyond quantitative metrics. “Researchers who ignore these complexities are operating with a blind spot about what constitutes the newly emerging American college student” (Rendon, 2006, pg.1). I would add that these “blind

spots” are applicable to under-represented groups as well, more specifically; Native American students.

For the purposes of this research, I explored how mainstream notions of success may or may not align with the varying definitions of success Native Americans may have. As stated by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NECLA), “Success means different things for different cultures”. Post-secondary success is often referred to in terms of mainstream expectations for employment, advanced degrees, and/or training leading to employment (NECLA, 2011). This assumes that there is only one definition of success, and that students of all backgrounds must conform to this definition if they are aspiring to be successful, regardless of their background and heritage.

Standing Bear was responding to the environment that schools reflect. He would not necessarily call it a bicultural system but thinking about schools that way is beneficial in that you can see that he brought with him the culture of his Lakota tradition to a space that was of the dominant culture of the time. Antonia Darder (2012) argues that culture and power are integrated and directly influence success or failure of bicultural students in majority education. Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (2001) also illustrates the social forces at work in how bicultural students build their social networks and seek support in the school context. The factors that these two authors argue influence student success and/or failure in schools, including an explanation of the similarities and differences in their frameworks will be explored. These frameworks will inform this study as Native students take part in Darder’s bicultural education, as well as experiencing a lack of representation of social networks that are themselves Native in post-secondary education. This means that Native students will have to be strategic in developing their social networks.

Bicultural Student Success in Education

Darder (2012) critiques traditional methods of addressing the underachievement of minority students in schools by pointing to the nature versus nurture debate. Darder (2012) argues that both ways of viewing the underachievement of minority students place the burden of achievement on the shoulders of the students themselves. She claims victim blaming is easier for many simplified conservative arguments, but liberal reforms also do not get at the root of the issue either, and many liberal solutions involve better preparing bicultural students for an unequal system (Darder, 2012). The conservative agenda insists that existing structures and practices of public schools be maintained, even when those practices (blindly or not) oppress others. This deeply positivist way of thinking promotes the hierarchies inherent in society and schools. Darder argues that conservative discourse sees individuals as responsible for their own success or failure, and education and knowledge are viewed as neutral. Liberal discourse, on the other hand, suggests that students are active participants in the generation of knowledge, however it still ignores the larger social issues that influence academic success. Academic success or failure can be explained through the individual's environment or history of social and emotional upbringing. Liberals are quick to point to an intervention that will help the individual adapt to society, but it still operates under the dichotomized view of the world, placing emphasis on having the individual adapt to the larger society, not attempting to reconcile larger social issues.

Traditional educational practices.

Darder (2012) critiques traditional educational beliefs, such as the myth of meritocracy, the idea that students are chosen and moved ahead based upon the talents that

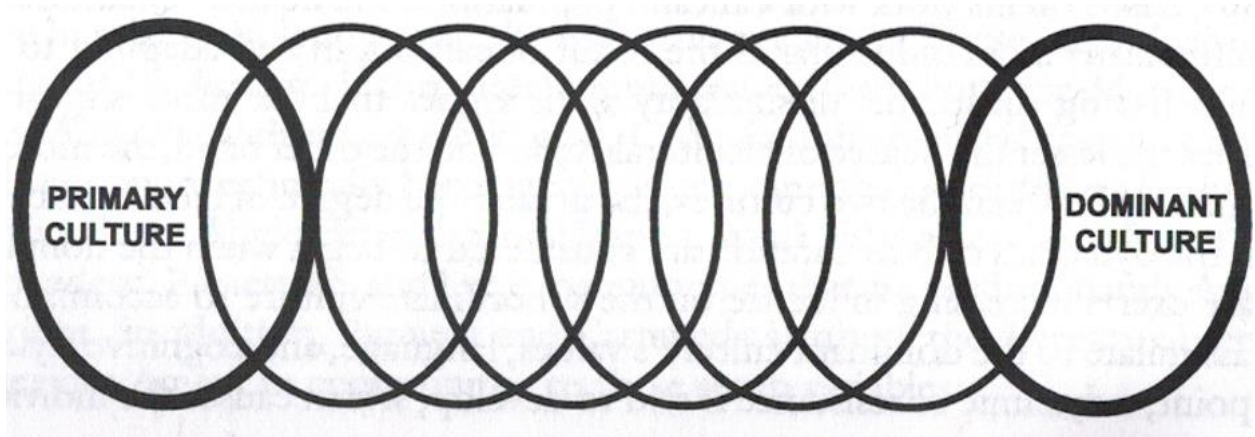
they have. The “talented” according to Darder, are mostly members of the dominant culture whose values inform the knowledge and skills a student must have in order to achieve academically. Darder also states that intelligence testing is problematic in that it is viewed as a value-free scientific tool to assess predefined knowledge and skills, and bicultural students fare less well than their counterparts (Darder, 2012). This can influence tracking and ability-grouping within the public school system resulting in a disproportionate number of bicultural students being placed into low-ability groups. Such tracking is also influenced by teacher expectations which adversely influences bicultural student success. This is accomplished by many factors, including the social context and prevailing social attitudes associated with race, class, and social, political, and economic ideologies. Teacher expectations are also influenced by pedagogical theories as well as educational structures and teacher practices. In addition, the curriculum proves problematic, as it embodies the values, attitudes, and biases of the dominant culture, thus creating a stratified educational system with bicultural students at the lower end of the academic ladder. Students are socialized into these structures that benefit that dominant culture that created them (Darder, 2012).

Power and culture.

Darder (2012) argues that culture and power influence a student’s academic success. She claims that all students go through a “Bicultural Process” where individuals learn to function in two sociocultural environments: their primary culture or the culture that they bring with them from home and the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live. It is a process in which a bicultural individual has to mediate between their primary culture and dominant discourse. Individuals will respond in different ways

when faced with cultural conflicts and daily instances cultural invasion. Any student who enters a school takes part in this bicultural process and must learn to navigate the dominant culture while the norms of their own primary culture still influence how they act and respond.

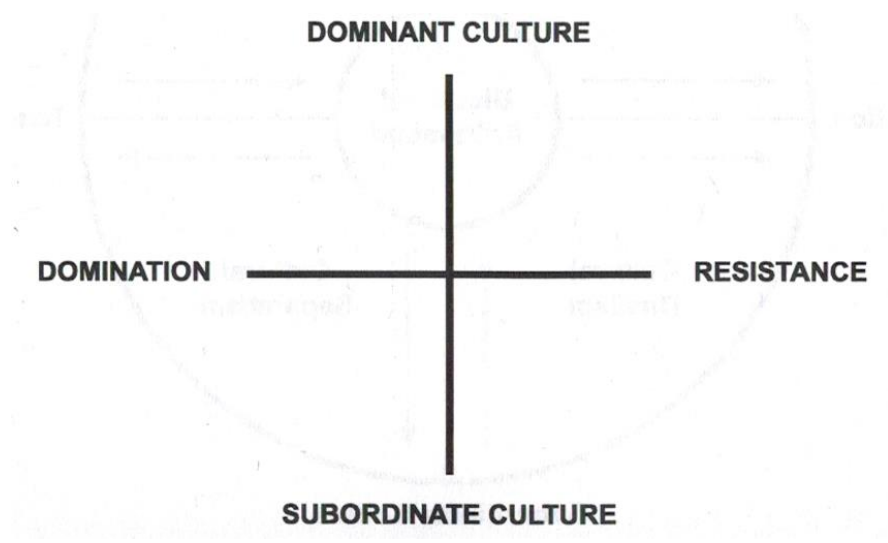
Figure 2: The Biculturation Process Represented Along a Dialectical Continuum



Darder’s “Biculturation Process,” as seen in figure 1 above (Darder, 2012, p. 50), illustrates the ways that dominant culture is reflected in the classroom and in school culture, with the primary culture representing the student’s home, family, or native culture. Through the continuum, some circles are more closely aligned with the dominant culture than others. The further away from the dominant culture a student’s primary culture is situated, the more likely the student will not feel part of that dominant school community. However, if a student is capable of traversing this wide territory and is able to learn how to retain their primary culture while at the same time moving easily towards the dominant culture’s norms, then the more socially resilient a student will be upon encountering another culture. This is similar to what Luther Standing Bear refers to as being “doubly educated” (1933).

Darder (2012) also uses an axis to illustrate the relationship between culture and power as seen in figure 2 below (p. 51). Darder believes that the daily responses of bicultural individuals against cultural invasion (such as daily instances of racism, etc.) can be better understood when thinking about them in terms of an axis relationship, where on one axis individuals move between dominant and subordinate culture, and on the other between forces of dominance and resistance.

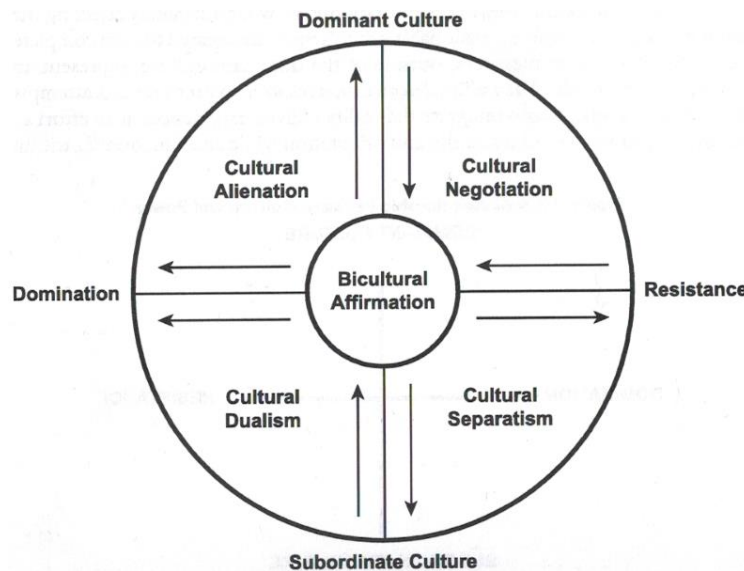
Figure 3: Axis Relationship Between Culture and Power According to Darder



Darder (2012) combines these two frameworks in figure 3 below (Darder, 2012, p. 52), in order to explain the responses individuals have to daily experiences of cultural invasion. “Cultural Alienation” refers to an individual who rejects their primary culture and fully assimilates or accepts and attempts to emulate the dominant culture. A “Cultural Dualist” refers to an individual who assumes two identities, one that conforms to the dominant culture, and one that retains the primary culture. These individuals have a great capacity to code-switch or to change their behaviors given the social context. A “Cultural Separatist” is an individual who rejects completely the dominant culture and retains only

the primary culture. Finally, a “Cultural Negotiator” is an individual who attempts to retain their primary cultural identity while at the same time transforming the society in which they live. A negotiator is different from a dualist in that a negotiator takes their primary culture and attempts to use it as deemed necessary within the dominant culture, rather than simply switching between primary and dominant cultural norms. It is important to note that individuals do not live exclusively in one of the quadrants. In other words, depending on the context, individuals may navigate two, three, or even all four of the quadrants.

Figure 4: Sphere of Biculturalism



Portes and Rumbaut (2006) also discuss responses to cultural invasion. They discuss assimilation as the adoption of all of the dominant cultural traits at the expense of the primary culture, and do not promote the idea of being doubly educated. “Selective Acculturation” or selecting which parts of both the dominant and primary cultures an individual wishes to retain, does promote the idea of being doubly educated. “Dissonant Acculturation” refers to the adoption of dominant cultural norms at the expense of the primary cultural norms, and “Downward Assimilation” would refer to adopting dominant

cultural norms while rejecting Native culture; this concept places the Native student in a double bind situation that still does not lead to any progress within the dominant culture due to lack of opportunity and/or lack of a primary cultural support network.

Social support and networks.

Reviewing the research of Stanton-Salazar (2001) provides another perspective emphasizing how dominant culture and mainstream settler colonialist education structures and systems disproportionately create representations of minority students (in this case Latino students and their families) as ambivalent or non-committal to their youth's success in schools. Stanton-Salazar claims that this ideology of non-committal support systems is not the case, and families, for the most part, want the best education possible for their children. In addition, Stanton-Salazar pushes for the involvement of parents in academic affairs when it comes to curriculum, teacher expectations, pedagogy, and overall educational practices including an emphasis on the development of moral character, not something formally taught in current curriculums. Stanton-Salazar argues that teachers and faculty either reproduce or interfere with the reproduction of class, gender, and racial inequalities. Salazar focuses on the school's organizational culture as the motivation behind whether or not students seek help, and ultimately whether or not they are successful. School success is embedded in the social networks of the students and of the school agents who should be oriented towards providing students with social and institutional support. This, according to Salazar, will overcome the ideological and structural constraints on help-seeking.

In particular, Stanton-Salazar (2001) looks more specifically at how immigrant youth build, maintain, or avoid the social support networks at their disposal to explain a

student's success or failure in an academic setting. The idea of succeeding in school becomes particularly challenging when it comes to youth from low-income families. What Stanton-Salazar attempts to clarify is why these youths who are often deeply connected within social networks of their family, peers, and school agents who try to support them, still do not succeed. He sets out to describe how and why youth who have access to these networks still do not take advantage of these support networks.

Stanton-Salazar (2001) claims that constraints on help seeking and network development fall into two categories, the first being social-psychological orientations of the adolescents (e.g., feelings of distrust, fear, and anxiety). The second category is often identified as the institutional and/or organizational features that minimize opportunities for students and faculty/staff to get to know each other well enough for the student to feel comfortable.

Borrowing a term from Mark Granovetter (1985), Stanton-Salazar discusses *social embeddedness*, whereby an individual's actions are not determined by simple rational choice or the assimilation of norms but are shaped by the context of the many relationships that individual has. These actions are often instrumental for political reasons, for relational reasons, or in exchange for favors. Individuals are constantly negotiating between constraints that are on them as well as opportunities afforded to them as a result of their social networks. Individual actions become group actions and will shape sites and patterns of stratification. In addition, individual actions can shape society by creating exceptions to rules, thus reshaping the hierarchical architecture.

Similarities and differences between frameworks.

Both Darder and Stanton-Salazar illustrate that students have a home social network (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) or primary home culture (Darder, 2012) before they step into a school which primarily benefits members of a dominant culture different from their own. Darder focuses on culture and power dynamics within the schools as the mechanism that keeps some students from achieving academically. Stanton-Salazar points to social networks and confidence in school agents as ways students can either achieve or not academically. He also says that a main contributing factor to student success for bicultural students is family support, and families should be involved in the decision-making process if they want their students to succeed academically. Both Darder and Stanton-Salazar emphasize the value of the students' home culture or family as a main factor of academic success within the dominant cultural norms found in majority schools.

Native Americans and bicultural experiences.

Neither Darder (2012) nor Stanton-Salazar (2001) focus on Native American populations, but the issues and challenges presented by both authors can be applicable to Native American educational issues. Specifically, Native Americans often find themselves subject to the same bicultural challenges presented by Darder and Stanton-Salazar. Native Americans bring their primary or home culture with them to school, and often face challenging issues that make them respond in similar ways that Darder has illustrated. Similarly, family is one of the main contributing factors to student success, according to Stanton-Salazar. Family is also a source of motivational strength for Native American students (Raphael Guillory & Mimi Wolverton 2008).

A study by Stephanie J Waterman (2012), for example, looked at twenty-six Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) college graduates about the idea of “home-going” as a method of success in a college setting. The article argues that non-Native education professionals promote all students having an active campus life, fully involved with campus activities. In contrast, many Native American students leave campus on a regular basis in order to reconnect with their family and cultural settings (Waterman, 2012). White majority students staying on campus and Native students going home more often has implications for student success and engagement. While being involved with campus life and spending a lot of time on campus is viewed as a strategy for success for majority White students, home-going as a strategy for students to re-charge their familial and cultural batteries, is viewed as a strategy for success amongst Native American students (Waterman, 2012). There is a need to promote more family-oriented models of retention on campus in order to increase the odds that Native American students will graduate from college.

Raphael Guillory and Mimi Wolverson (2008) promote interventions that involve extended family and communities on campus as part of a strategy for success (Guillory & Wolverson, 2008). They claim that family is a source for motivational strength for students, and this may lead to an increase in Native persistence and retention. Family can include the immediate family that may stay home, and extended family and social networks that act as familial support at the institution that the student attends. The idea of family support as a main factor in graduation was echoed in another study by Elizabeth Fandry (2010). Student respondents claimed that family support was the greatest factor in achieving success, followed by the ability to make friends. These responses were stronger than all

other factors in the study, including having an easy transition from high school to college, being prepared for college, and using student support centers (Fandry, 2010, p. 157).

A successful retention model that has been supported empirically (Lee, Donlan, & Brown, 2011) is the Family Education Model (FEM) developed by HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002). The model recommends supporting an extended family structure in order to amplify a Native American student's sense of belonging in college. This reduces feelings of resentment from family who blame the student for being far from home and increases academic persistence. The model recommends having specialists that not only work on advising for college, but also assisting with family and community issues, further supporting the family-oriented approach. Traditional retention models do not adequately consider unique family, political status, tribal affiliation, language, customs, and traditions of Native American students. Replicating the extended family structure in college culture enhances a Native American student's sense of belonging and can lead to higher retention rates, according to Guillory and Wolverton (2008).

For the FEM model to work effectively, the intervention-based model calls for maintaining a sense of family both in college and at home (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). The percentage of school-age (ages 5-17) American Indian/Alaska Native children whose parent's highest educational attainment was a bachelor's degree or higher in 2011 was 19%, compared to 48% of their white counterparts (Aud, Hussar, Johnson, Kena, Roth, Manning, Wang, & Zhang, 2012, p. 28). This means that getting the parents involved is all the more crucial, so that parents will be able to better support their students in the college-going process, even if they themselves have yet to attend college.

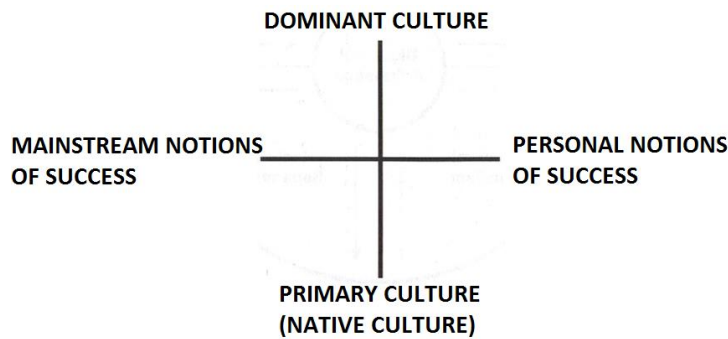
College Bridge programs are a strategy to get students interested in college, better prepare them and allow high school students to experience college before enrollment. One study shows how a bridge program developed by the University of Minnesota, Morris campus (the Gateway program) prepared students of multi-ethnic backgrounds, specifically African American and Native American, for college (Risku, 2002). There seems to be a strong association between participation in summer bridge programs and student achievement and attainment (Sawyers, 2011). Bridge programs vary in format, but most offer students an opportunity to take college level coursework.

A framework for success.

What has not been discussed is a framework that uses the same power dynamics within a bicultural environment (a school for instance) that Darder and Stanton-Salazaar speak of and apply it to notions of success and identity. For the purposes of this research, I looked primarily at Native American college students, but I would argue this applies to anyone in a bicultural space.

This framework borrows heavily from Darder's (2012) Axis Relationship between Culture and Power. Again, along the vertical axis you have dominant and primary cultures. In this case, the axis represents how closely an individual's identity will align with mainstream culture or their own primary culture. The horizontal axis represents notions of success, on one hand mainstream notions of success, tied to economic game, standardized tests, and other quantitative factors previously discussed, while personal notions of success that might not align well with mainstream notions of success will be at the other end of the spectrum.

Figure 5: Axis Relationship Between Culture and Notions of Success



Students do not reside in one of these four quadrants, they move and shift given the time, place and situation whether it be social, political or cultural orientation. For instance, a student might abandon their primary cultural identity if they know it means they need to pass a class or gain an academic advantage, while not quite relinquishing totally their culture's heritage and tradition. This is why each axis should be thought of as a spectrum. These quadrants should not be thought of as static. Students move through these quadrants based on time, place, power dynamic, and/or challenging situation. For Native people, there are also added layers of identity both in terms of culture (tribal) and geographic location (living on a Reservation or Urban area). Negotiating these differences strategically is dependent on where they are, what they are doing, and with whom.

How a student will react to certain challenging situations will be influenced by where they land in that moment within the framework of success and identity, what perceived resources and capital could be useful in these situations. Tara Yosso (2005, pg. 77) makes the claim that there is much research that assumes that culture and capital is reflective of the values, traditions and cultures of middle-class mainstream individuals, and emphasizes economic gain. She argues that for many people of color, this is not sufficient, and that culture and capital manifests itself in unique, robust, dynamic ways. Therefore,

her Community Cultural Wealth model could be useful in terms of understanding what forms of capital Native students bring to post-secondary education. According to Yosso (2005, pg. 77), there are at least 6 forms of capital that are not mutually exclusive nor static, but dynamic processes that build upon one another as part of a community cultural wealth. The six highlighted according to her framework are aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital.

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to retain hopes and dreams beyond the present circumstances, even if they do not have objective means to attain those goals. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills gained through communication experiences in more than one language, grounded in the idea that students of color come to school with multiple language and other communication skills beyond language (memorization, art, storytelling, etc.). Familial capital refers to cultural knowledges gained from family and perhaps community, which includes acknowledging the racialized, classed, and hetero-sexualized inferences that comprise mainstream notions of 'family' which might not fit the experience of many people of color. Rather, familial capital should include the knowledges gained from kinship ties, which include aunts, uncles, cousins, and people whom you might not have blood ties to, but have provided communal bonds that promote caring and coping strategies. Social capital is understood as networks of people and community resources that can provide support to navigate through certain institutions, both in terms of logistical knowledge as well as emotional and cultural support. Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions that historically have not had communities of color in mind (post-secondary institutions). And finally, resistant capital refers to the knowledges gained through oppositional behavior that

challenges inequality, a form of cultural wealth grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination while maintaining and passing many of the dimensions of community cultural wealth.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study is about Native American students' perceptions of their Native identity and their navigation of their journey through a non-Native institution of higher education. It documented how Native American students define notions of success and the resources they draw from to be successful. Quantitative methodologies may not be the most appropriate method for working with Native American populations, according to leading researchers in the field (Pavel, 1992; Tierney, 1991) as the experiences of Native student experiences in higher education are better captured using various qualitative approaches. There is no one approach to qualitative research, and often people use the term "qualitative" as an umbrella term for any type of research that is not quantitative. My approach to this research involves going beyond quantitative analysis and illustrate/analyze the subtle nuances associated with biculturalism and how it affects student experiences.

According to Root (1992) qualitative studies are the most frequently used methods to capture the experiences of diverse groups of individuals and communities. This is because qualitative methods allow for nuance and complexities that differ from the nuances and complexities that quantitative studies are capable of and add an intimacy of details that may be difficult to extract from more conventional quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As such, "The qualitative approach incorporates much more of a literary form of writing, computer text analysis, programs, and experience in conducting open-ended interviews and observations" (Creswell, 2005, p. 22).

Tribal Critical Theory

While other frameworks will be used here, Tribal Critical Theory (TribalCrit) will provide the overarching epistemology. It acknowledges inequities and oppression that are

embedded in non-Native institutions. Prior to TribalCrit, Critical Race Theory critically examined the intersections between race, law and power within the context of society and culture. TribalCrit theory (Brayboy, 2006) builds on the work of Critical Race Theorists. However, it adapts the techniques and ideas found in Critical Race Theory – such as the use of counter-story telling as a research methodology – to the specific conditions of Indigenous populations.

TribalCrit, was developed to include a specifically Indigenous lens to Critical Race Theory when it comes to issues concerning Native Americans and other indigenous populations. TribalCrit has nine tenets which are outlined below:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goals of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.

8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change (Brayboy, 2006, p. 442).

The first 5 tenets are not the focus of this study but knowing and understanding them is essential because it sets the stage for the latter tenets that are directly related to the goals and purposes of the study.

The first tenet states that European American thought, knowledge, and power structures currently dominate society in the United States, at the expense of indigenous thought, knowledge, and socio-political powers (Brayboy, 2006, p. 430). This means that there is a desire or goal to assimilate Native Americans into the dominant society. The second tenet builds on the first and recognizes that the policies of the United States concerning Native Americans are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.

The third tenet highlights the complex nature of Indigenous peoples' identities in this country, as they are not just identities that are racialized, but given our unique legal status (Federal recognition) it also takes on a legal/political identity despite rarely being treated as such by non-indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2006, p. 432). In the context of social engagement, most of the time people engage with us as a racialized group, ignoring the unique sociopolitical status, however, that same sociopolitical identity is not ignored when it comes to policy and law, laws that often benefit the non-indigenous settler colonial society. Law and policy can also be used to disenfranchise certain indigenous groups, more specifically, tribes that have ancestral ties to the United States but are not

federally recognized, and therefore, do not have access to the same federally supported resources that recognized tribes have. While this was not the focus of the study, issues of Native identity and legal status was covered in the analysis.

The fourth tenet states that indigenous peoples have certain desires for their communities (Brayboy, 2006, p. 443). The desire for autonomy means a tribes' ability to control land bases, natural resources, and boundaries. This is closely linked to the government to government relations that the tribe has with the federal government. The desire for self-determination refers to the idea that a tribe should not have to ask the federal government for permission to implement their autonomy, rather, the tribe itself should be able to choose. It also allows the tribe to define what themselves and to create what it means to be a part of that tribe or community. This is important to this study as it should include notions of success and what kinds of ways Native peoples pursue this manner of autonomy.

The fifth tenet troubles current mainstream notions of culture, knowledge, and power and offers an Indigenous lens (Brayboy, 2006, p. 434). It is a lens that is rooted to the lands in which we all now reside and have longstanding notions of what it means to navigate this space, a lens that is lacking in current western/European notions of culture, knowledge, and power. TribalCrit defines knowledge as having the ability to recognize change, adapt and move with the change. There are at least three forms of knowledge according to TribalCrit. The first, culturalknowledge, refers to an understanding of what it means to be part of a tribal nation, including the tribes' traditions, issues, and ways of being and knowing that make an individual fit into the larger community. The second, knowledge of survival, is an understanding of how and in what ways change can be

achieved and the ability and desire to change, adapt, and adjust in order to move forward both as an individual and a community. Thirdly, academic knowledge, refers to knowledge that is gained from educational institutions. Brayboy argues that cultural knowledge and academic knowledge do not need to be in conflict, rather, they complement each other in powerful ways. As it pertains to this study, this means that students need to attend to all of these forms of knowledge by not only knowing and understanding what it means to be a part of a tribe, team, and/or cohort, as well as knowledge of survival and academic knowledge. The blending of these forms of knowledge creates knowledge that is essential to survival, or to use Vizenor's term, survivance, meaning students who attend college do not just survive, they also resist, and in doing so open the door to create change within the educational system itself. If the change is positive, then this is an example of giving back via the 7 generations philosophy, as it helps the next generation of Native students navigate the system.

The sixth component of TribalCrit is recognizing that governmental and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples have been oriented toward a goal of assimilation (Brayboy, 2006, p. 436). Early treaties claimed that Native Americans would be provided "appropriate" education, the relative term "appropriate" being problematic as the meaning was up to interpretation by officials at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which often assumed education that eradicated "Indianness" and/or promoted Anglo values and ways of communicating. TribalCrit rejects full assimilation in educational institutions for Native American/American Indian students. Assimilation requires the student to replace cultural knowledge with academic knowledge, negatively influencing a student's ability to succeed in an educational setting, and within a tribal community,

according to TribalCrit. This is a critical component to this study as it illustrates the way in which Native students navigate and deal with a system designed from its inception to be assimilative at its core.

The seventh component emphasizes the importance of tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future (Brayboy, 2006, p. 437). Honoring the adaptability of groups, while recognizing the differences between people can provide a foundation from which to analyze school practice and policy concerning Native Americans and education. Indigenous ways of knowing are often framed in a way that promotes cooperation, rather than the Western educational institutions that often frame discussions of competition as what is valued, rather than cooperation, that can be interpreted as an inability to work independently and be self-sufficient. This is a crucial aspect of this study, as some of the things that were focused on had to do with support structures that could be social in some capacity, whether that be friends, family, or advisers/professors.

The eighth of TribalCrit honors stories and oral knowledge as legitimate data and ways of being, instead of focusing solely on “scientifically based” research as the only justifiable form of research (Brayboy, 2006, p. 439). Stories help make up theory and serve to orient oneself towards others and the world. They are moral tools with psychological implications that help remind people of particular ways of being. They are the foundations on which Indigenous communities are built. Compare this to the academic standards of writing, and many Indigenous students have been viewed as deficient, having been newly exposed to a different way of transmitting culture and knowledge. TribalCrit recognizes that certain ways of communicating are prioritized by colleges and universities but does

not agree that story-telling should be devalued. TribalCrit also makes a clear distinction between “hearing” a story, and simply “listening” to one. Hearing a story involves attributing value to it, as well as understanding the nuances. When a story is heard, it leads the hearer to think about the range of possibilities of what could happen and what has or may have happened previously. This is the spirit behind the methodology, using Iktomi stories as the mode of representation for the data gathered. Critical Race Theory introduced the use of counter-stories. Counter-story telling is often referred to as a research method but is not often developed in detail and can mean many things. According to Richard Delgado (1989, pg. 2412) there is a difference between writing stories and writing *about* stories or writing *about* narrative theory, specifically individuals from “outgroups”, or marginalized and oppressed groups. The author does not believe that inequalities exist due to inadequate enforcement of laws or cultural lag, although both might be true. Rather, he believes it is because of prevailing mindsets through means of which the dominant society justifies the inequality as it is. Stories are ways to destroy these mindsets (pg. 2413). Counter-stories, or stories that challenge the status quo (1989, pg. 2414), are collected and presented as data, illustrating the challenges and successes experienced by Native students in post-secondary education. TribalCrit took it a step further and introduces an approach that is more relevant to Native traditions. Iktomi stories is what I introduced here, as a mechanism to tell these stories.

Finally, TribalCrit believes there needs to be a component of action or activism, or a way of connecting theory and practice in ways that are explicit (Brayboy, 2006, p. 440). For researchers, this means that the research being conducted should make active change in the community or context they are researching by identifying and

deconstructing social inequalities. In this case, the use of counter-stories and Iktomi were used to examine the lived experiences of Native students without focusing on solely the negatives. In this sense I identified certain challenges faced by Native students but did not make that the primary focus of the study, in order to follow Eve Tuck's (2011) criticism that most research on Native populations are damage-centered. I did not want to produce stories that, one more time, made a spectacle of peoples' suffering, rather, I wanted to produce something that can transform that suffering.

Damage-Centered Narratives and Post-Structuralism

This project could have been one that attempted to give voice to an oppressed or under-represented group, in this case, Natives at a non-tribal college. However, for a post-structuralist, such an endeavor would not aid in understanding how Native identities are created through discourse. Questions for a post-structuralist research analysis of post-secondary institutions' influence on Native students would include the following: do post-secondary institutions produce identities within students, and what new identities can be produced as a product of these institutions? Do post-secondary educational institutions change identities based upon discourse, and what discourses does these institutions draw upon to provide a Native American identity that can thrive in a college setting?

The unit of analysis will be social discourses, since an individual's identity is a product of discourse, in this case, the discourse surrounding Native Americans and college. In attempting to subvert the power hierarchy of the researcher and "subject", I followed post-structuralist theorist Michel Foucault. In *The Order of Things* (1970),

Foucault critiques the structuralist research analysis. Specifically, his analysis focuses on discursive practices that assert themselves as generating identity.

In *Discipline and Punishment: the Birth of a Prison* (1977), Foucault borrows Jeremy Bentham's panopticon prison design to illustrate how the way we perceive each other and perceive ourselves generates different kinds of identities. The Panopticon is a circular prison, which has all of the cells located on the outside wall, facing towards the inside. In the center is a tower that houses a guard. From the tower, you can see into every cell and see what every prisoner is doing at all times. The tower is lit with a bright light that faces out, so the light not only helps with visibility for the guard(s) in the tower, the light actually blinds the prisoners if they look directly into the tower. This being the case, a prisoner does not know for sure if they are being watched at any particular moment, or if there is a guard in the tower at all. For the sake of playing it safe, it is in the best interest of the prisoner to assume that they are being watched at all times, since there is no way to be sure if the guard's back is turned, meaning that the prisoners are constantly on best behavior. "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 202-203). This means that any prisoner within the panopticon is constantly forced into the power dynamics of the prison, therefore, they are always self-monitoring, as there is the continuous potential to be under the "gaze" of the guards in the tower. This is what it means to be "subjected", or made into a "subject", as the power dynamics of the prison mixed with the potential "gaze" shapes the behaviors of the prisoners. Likewise, Native students at non-tribal postsecondary institutions are aware that they are under the "gaze" from other students, faculty, staff, and each other.

Foucault uses this example to illustrate how identities are formed, as we as individuals are constantly under the “gaze” not necessarily by guards, but by each other. And we are aware, to varying degrees, what signifiers we carry with us, whether they be good or bad. Are we being a good inmate, for instance, or a bad one? Do we have the signifiers that our peers expect us to have, or do we need to change our behavior to fit the mold? This is what it means to self-monitor our behaviors, and this is being “subjected”, in the same way that inmates in the panopticon regulate their behaviors. Discourse allows us to further understand what signifiers are considered to be good by some people, and what signifiers would be considered bad. The same signifier can be good or bad based upon who considers it such. This means that our identities become fragmented, and we perform differently based upon how we think we are being perceived in a given moment.

Foucault considers discursive claims in terms of their history, rather than to try to validate these practices as true or untrue. His attempts at creating an “archaeology” of knowledge turned later into a “genealogy”, borrowing from Nietzsche, and began to illustrate how knowledge claims are inherently linked to social and political power. The things that we talk about, and the claims that are made in the academy are so closely linked to political and social power, that for Foucault, whether they are real or true is irrelevant to his agenda, as he believes that the way that we talk about things, discursive practices, generates realities and has real effects on the lives of the subjects. Foucault would call this a process of sustaining a “regime of truth,” as explained by Stuart Hall (1997):

Thus, it may or may not be true that single parenting inevitably leads to delinquency and crime. But if everyone believes it to be so, and punishes single

parents accordingly, this will have real consequences for both parents and children and will become ‘true’ in terms of its real effects, even if in some absolute sense it has never been conclusively proven (p. 76).

If, for instance, there is a body of knowledge that claims that Native Americans, statistically speaking, do not succeed in a college environment, it becomes true for Native Americans *in this discursive practice*. For Foucault, discourse is not simply the *way* we talk about things, it is *how* we talk about things as well as how it influences and constructs our behaviors. This is especially true for Native Americans given the history of education and the boarding school system. Historically, Native Americans were forced to attend a school to become more “civilized” and relinquish their cultural identity. Contemporary Native Americans deal with similar issues while attending non-tribal postsecondary institutions, all of which are located off of reservations and typically do not promote indigenous culture, history, language, and knowledges. Therefore, a research project about Native Americans and post-secondary education should also be an attempt to change the way in which we talk about Native Americans in college.

This study, by way of being in TribalCrit, resists the binary between the ideas that stories are out there waiting to be documented and descriptive stories and constructivist. This is especially important as it pertains to research on Indigenous communities. Eve Tuck, in “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities” (2011) urges for researchers to consider the damage done by research that focuses on the pain and suffering of marginalized groups. In doing so, marginalized groups are stereotyped as being depleted and ruined. While highlighting shared challenges faced by Native students are included, there will also be a shift towards a “desire-based” framework. As Tuck describes “desire-

based” research frameworks are “...concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (p. 416), which will be important to consider when analyzing stories about Native student success in post-secondary education. While I admit, when talking about communities that have their own challenges, it is easy and necessary to point out these challenges, but when researchers begin to tell stories that overemphasize or dramatize the pain and suffering by a specific community, it can prove to be more damaging than good. The act of refusal is an act of resistance against the settler colonial gaze, one that takes advantage of a community by a researcher who is attempting to “do a study” for their own benefit.

By my read, Foucault would point at Eve Tuck’s notion of “damage-centered” research and highlight the fact that those forms of research (re)create the damaged subjects by way of research being the discourse that amplifies the deficit model. This is exactly what I did not want to do, I highlighted the challenges suffered, the strategies used to overcome those challenges, and the strengths of the participants.

Darder and Stanton-Salazar

From there, the researcher used Darder’s and Stanton-Salazar’s frameworks to identify what support systems students seek out based on their level of bicultural identity. The researcher focused on the relationship between levels of biculturalism and the student’s access of various support systems looking for resonances and dissonances. During this process, Chapman’s (2007) definition of “goodness” was be considered, looking for participants’ capacities to work together and create successes. While challenges shared amongst Native students was explicitly illustrated, successes and triumphs were also illustrated as to not fall back into the “damage-centered” research that

Eve Tuck suggests researchers avoid partaking in, and clarify what resources were used to achieve this “success”. This helped identify what are common areas of influential support, while at the same time identifying common challenges shared by Native students based upon their level of biculturalism. This could be a coding-like strategy, however I do not espouse the underlying theory that there is a reality inherent in the data waiting to be revealed, rather, I looked for consistencies in the stories that would be helpful for students, practitioners, and educators to think about as it pertains to differing notions of “success” and student support.

These Iktomi stories focused on the following issues:

1. Native student negotiation of identity and biculturalism
2. Student resistance to processes of assimilation
3. Student use of support systems (tribal, familial, social, and institutional)

Storytelling and Narrative Inquiry

In *Mapping a Landscape of Narrative Inquiry*, Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek illustrate specifically what it means to do narrative inquiry. In critiquing positivist and post-positivist research designs, for a narrative inquirer, altering the phenomena under study is not necessarily a problem, whereas a positivist approach would seek to avoid this. A positivist would clarify the nature of an external reality, that is fixed and describable. “Whereas post-positivists seek a description of a reality that stands outside human experience, the narrative inquirer seeks a knowledge of human experience that remains within the stream of human lives” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 44). This means that post-positivists seek to describe a phenomenon as it sits, not taking into account the context upon which that phenomena came to be. This is where the narrative inquirer steps

in, taking into account the fact that the phenomena came to be as a product of history and context that also needs to be recognized. Some traditions will even fictionalize their case studies, as their end goal is not necessarily to document accurately what happened with each case study, rather, the “fictionalized” case study is to be used as a tool to help people think about possibilities and unforeseen challenges

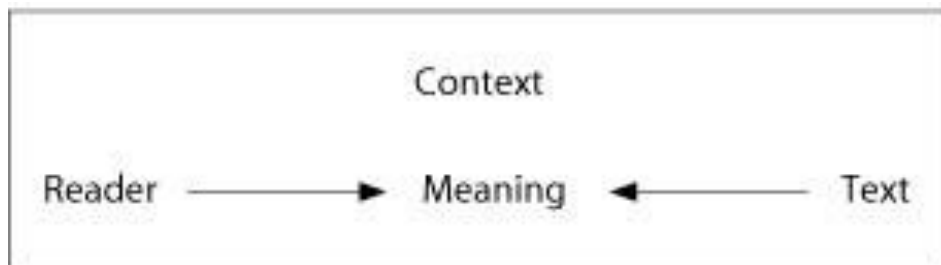
Within TribalCrit, tenet 7 asserts that tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples. Tenet 8 asserts that stories are not separate from theory and are therefore legitimate forms of data. Indigenous philosophy and traditions will be drawn upon here and stories will be used to remind people of more promising ways of being in the world. Eva Garrouette and Kathleen Westcott (2013) introduce new ways of engaging narratives in *The Story Is a Living Being, Companionship with Stories in Anishinaabeg Studies*. Like Rosenblatt’s (2005) Reader Response Theory, Garrouette and Westcott argue that engaging in narratives in a way that allows the reader or listener to generate their own meanings from the story or narrative will allow the story itself to take on a life of its own. Instead of becoming occupied with hidden meanings and morals, they suggest that a narrative should be open to interpretation. As such, engaging stories in these ways allows the stories to work co-creatively with the reader or listener. The purpose of engaging in narratives in this way is not to accurately portray one real event. Rather, it is a way to describe possible meanings. This research approach highlights the consequences of the research being generated, not necessarily the accuracy of re-presenting an event. For Native Americans in schools, narrative analysis can help uncover things that have yet to be thought about.

Reader Response Theory

Louise Rosenblatt (2005) is often credited for what is now known as “Reader Response Theory”, in her book *Literature as Exploration*. The theory highlights the idea that meaning of a particular literature is formed at a particular moment, and is formed by the text itself, the reader and all of their emotions and backgrounds. This allows flexibility in terms of what kinds of meanings are generated from a reading at any given time. This leaves the door open to the meaning of literature, or in this case, stories, to be continuously shaped and re-evaluated based upon time, experience, and emotions of the reader(s). By this rationale, having one single fixed or concrete “morale” of the story is impossible, as each reader will take whatever experiences they have, whatever current contexts upon which they face, and apply the story and whatever meanings are possible, to their current situation.

Debrah Appleman (2015) created this diagram (below) that “...illustrates the principles of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reader response” (p. 35-36). The diagram below shows that meaning is generated under an umbrella of context and is influence both by the text and by the reader themselves.

Figure 6: Transactional Theory of Reader Response According to Appleman



This closely aligns with the oral tradition that I grew up with as well as Garrouette and Wescotts' (2013) ideas of a story having a life of its own. The difference here, is that there is a jump between hearing the story and reading the story in a book or article. The analysis process is the same, you take what experiences you have had, add onto the moment you read the literature at hand (or hear the story), and come up with your own conclusions based on the context (historically, culturally, linguistically, economically, whatever).

Iktomi and Storytelling

As an Oglala Lakota, I grew up on Iktomi stories. My mother went out of her way to also buy children's books by an author named Paul Goble. In Goble's books, Iktomi took human form, although he has taken many forms, traditionally. Robert Bunge (1984) compares and contrasts European stories to Iktomi stories. The trickster Iktomi is immortal, just as deceit and treachery are immortal. Because he is immortal, his stories continue, and Iktomi often represents an example of what not to do, but not always, and for the purposes of this dissertation, probably not as much here. He is capable to taking many forms, therefore, even after he finds himself in trouble with one community, he may easily be accepted by another, until again, he breaks all taboos and finds himself in trouble again. This is different from more dichotomous characters of good or evil. While Iktomi often seems to share traits with more evil or villainous characters, he also exhibits traits that should be valued, for instance the story of Iya, the giant cannibal, and how Ikto fools him, keeping Iya from consuming a village (Bunge, 1984, 49-50).

In chapter 3 of *An American Urphilosophie* (1984), Robert Bunge describes six epistemologies for the Lakotas. The first is "ordinary knowledge." The second he describes as "Indian Empiricism and Pragmatism" and he provides a detailed account of

the pragmatic value of certain forms of knowledge. The third kind of knowledge is *Wicowoyake*, or True Stories. This is historical knowledge, or knowledge that makes claims of historical fact. Examples would include accounts of famines, or attacks by neighboring tribes, and so forth. Creation stories would fall under this category. These stories are different (according to Bunge) from *Ohunkankan* stories, or stories told in the evenings only, and that are typically full of giants, monsters, and Iktomi (often). There are values implicit within these stories, but they are not necessarily regarded as historical narratives. It is important to understand Lakota epistemologies as they draw knowledge from multiple locations, using pragmatic values, fact, and narrative forms (mostly oral, but I would argue that written narratives are encompassed here) to make my next claim. What I am proposing is that this narrative analysis should be considered a form of Iktomi story and should be read as such. I am using the idea of Iktomi stories in a very broad sense. Iktomi has the capacity to take many forms and Iktomi lives within everyone. To think of an individual as completely good or evil is mistaken, in my view. By that rationale, everyone has the capacity to make mistakes *or* critique the works of others. Furthermore, Iktomi stories have the capacity to change. While other stories may have the moral explicitly stated at the end, Iktomi stories typically have an implicit moral message, that vary depending on who is listening, or reading it, to refer to Rosenblatt as well as Garrotte and Westcott. Maybe the story is about what to expect when you arrive at a predominantly white institution. Maybe the story is about being more sensitive to the needs of a new Native American freshman in the class you are teaching. Maybe the story is about not always seeking the easy way out. The morals drawn from an Iktomi story are dependent upon who you are and where you are in life. The moral, like the individual, is

contextually located in space and time. Iktomi is the form of narrative used here, and hopefully there are lessons to be learned by these stories that are not so explicitly stated, but still offer value.

Iktomi is actually a published author. Looking at the cover of American Needs Indians!, it states that the author is Iktomi himself. Iktomi, a fictional character in Native American lore (and children's books) wrote a book that was published in 1937. The first words of the book are as follows:

“As neither Iktomi nor a human could be exactly right and too certain of ‘anything or anybody’ in Indian or Government matters, be aware that this is only a conscientious collection of samples of the ‘whole truth’ assembled with his honest conclusions and logical suppositions by a prehistoric nut, whose original brain is being replaced by fossilization” (Iktomi, 1937, p. 1).

It is possible that someone named Iktomi wrote and published this book. It is also possible that this is merely an alias. I have heard that it is the former, but the fact is that there is a precedent for Iktomi being an author. I will be using Iktomi as a way to set the cultural and contextual stage for the narrative to take place. The third person narrator will provide the analysis and bring the narratives back to previous literatures.

An Iktomi story methodology would include composite narratives, a mashup of different indigenous students' stories. One can argue that parts of this could be “fictionalized” but every aspect of the narrative will be based upon the true lived experience of the student's lives. Garrouette and Westcott (2013) argue that the stories live in the lives of students, but are not reducible to the individual lives, as such, sticking closely to the real facts of the students' stories will be important. They are not my stories, rather, they are

stories that live in the world through people (the participants, and the readers/listeners of these stories).

These stories should invite educators to think differently about how they are supporting Native students. The purpose is not to describe things in the final fashion, nor is it to disassociate the researcher from the research for a “more objective view” of what is happening, rather, it is to transform experience for the students attending postsecondary education, and also for practitioners and policy makers who work with said students now so they all can prepare for challenges of the future. It should also invite them to engage in more complex, supportive, non-stereotypical relationships with indigenous students, and should ring true for the indigenous students engaging with the stories as well, providing insight as to how to reach out to support systems while attending predominantly colonial institutions. These stories should also open up discussions as to how differing value systems might influence notions of “success” and whether or not these institutions are providing all students with the resources and experiences necessary to achieve this.

Site Selection

The primary site for data collection was the University of Oregon campus and student participants. Site selection was based on the following criteria: (a) a majority serving post-secondary institution with a viable Native American student population (b) a post-secondary institution interested in enhancing support for Native students as revealed through this study, (c) a post-secondary institution with a support infrastructure for Native American students, (d) a post-secondary institution that will allow accessibility to Native students. As a post-secondary institution, the University of Oregon was chosen because of the variety of educational experiences offered to Native students, along with an existing

support structure that will help facilitate data collection through the use of snowball sampling. A “safe” and “comfortable” location for participants will be identified that allows for student confidentiality and comfort.

The site was also chosen as it has institutional support structures in place to help support under-represented students attending. In the University of Oregon’s missions statement, they claim “the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community”. This implies that the University of Oregon has a vested interest in supporting Native (as well as other under-represented groups). As such, there are support structures at the University of Oregon designed specifically to support those very groups, the Center for Multicultural Access in Education (CMAE) is one of those support structures. Under the umbrella of the Division of Equity and Diversity, CMAE is designed specifically to support those under-represented students and have advisors such as a Native Retention Specialist that students can go to in order to not only receive academic advising, but cultural and/or familial support if necessary.

It wasn’t until an Upward Bound program began in 1965 that the number of African American students attending the University of Oregon grew (Harmon, 2015, p. 2), as did the demand to support those students. The following year, after having little to no guidance from other African Americans, the Black Student Union (BSU) was formed (Harmon 2015). On April 8th of 1968, the president of BSU Johnny Holloway, issued a set of grievances (Harmon, 2015) to the University of Oregon President Arthur Flemming:

If racism, especially institutionalized racism, cannot be eradicated by institution changes, if the University community is not willing to implement changes, it then becomes the responsibility of the Black students, who are the victims of this racial oppression, to purge the campus of racism, but whatever means necessary” (Harmon, 2015).

Study Participants

This study was designed to focus on an in-depth understanding of a small number of participants (25). Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (a) must have identified as a Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native student, (b) must have been registered as a student during the 2015-2016 academic year. Given that little research has been done in the area Native American student success, because of the relatively low numbers of Native American students enrolled in higher education, I anticipated that a challenge would be identifying “information rich” cases. Due to this challenge, I utilized purposive sampling (or selective sampling) to assist in finding participants whom I believed would provide the most useful information to address the research purpose and questions. Patton (1990) describes 16 different purposeful sampling strategies, including typical case sampling, extreme or deviant case sampling, maximum variation sampling, snowball sampling, and homogenous sampling. In this study, participants were selected through snow ball sampling. Snowball sampling identifies possible participants from people who know people who might be good examples for the study (Patton, 1990). I began by contacting gatekeepers, the individuals who serve as contact persons at the University and provide assistance in negotiating access to the research setting (Glesne, 1999). In addition, I held info-sessions regarding this research project.

Study participants have the right to make an informed choice about their involvement in the study; to accomplish this, I provided an informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, the approximate amount of time the study will take, their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and other terms of consent. The consent form was provided to participants prior to the interview so that they had adequate time to read it and to formulate questions. After verbally reviewing the consent form with the participants, I asked if they need clarification of any points presented before I began the first interview. I discussed with them any questions or concerns.

Participant's right to privacy will be protected and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Identities will be concealed through the use of pseudonyms. In addition, any post-secondary administrators will also be anonymously identified. It is here that I hoped to build rapport and trust with the students by transparently presenting my research and by acknowledging their roles as co-creators of the research to be produced. Students interested and willing to participate were asked to voluntarily sign the Informed Consent Document from the Institutional Research Board.

Data Collection and Management

Students were invited via email from the Center for Multicultural Academic Success and the Presidents Office's Tribal Liaison to participate in the research. Furthermore, the researcher used existing social networks and presented three informational sessions during Native American Student Union meetings as ways to recruit participants to the research.

Twenty-five students were interviewed one-on-one using a semi-structured protocol. These initial interviews were intended to elicit narratives about identity

negotiation, resistance and processes of assimilation, and use of support systems. The researcher and participants met at a predetermined time and location, and the participants were recorded via video or audio recording (depending upon comfort or choice by the participant) for the duration of their interview. Only the researcher will have access to the audio/video unless the committee chair is needed for guidance in rare circumstances. Interview protocol can be seen in Appendix II.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data through the lenses of Darder and Stanton-Salazar's frameworks in different capacities. Brayboy's TribalCrit theory legitimized looking at the data in this way and presenting the data analysis process through the usage of Iktomi stories. The arc of each narrative follows the same chronological order. The order is similar to the chronological order of the questions. During the interviews, participants were asked to introduce themselves, then they were asked questions concerning their Native identity and how their identities influenced their life, both within and outside of an educational context. Students were then asked questions concerning their definitions of "success" or what were the components thereof. Participants were then asked questions concerning their paths to and through college, focusing on what resources they sought and what supports worked (focusing and highlighting not only existing institutional support structures, but familial, social, and tribal support systems as well). Participants were then asked if they were receiving the resources and experiences necessary to achieve their academic goals, and life dreams and aspirations.

With the arc of each story following the chronological order of the questions, the data was then looked at for common and recurring themes. To make a single narrative

work, there also had to be consistency between interviews so that the narrative flowed in a way to seem like it was a single person. If the narrative flows as a single person and not as a blatant composite, it will be more useful as a tool to think about possibilities of real students.

The next step was to look for themes under the umbrella of “notions of success”, “Native Identities”, and “Support Structures.” If these processes could come together in a way that could be presented as an individual (that is, does not become complicated in terms of identity and experience) then they became the narratives listed below.

Figure 7: Narratives, Themes, and Rationales for Themes

Theme	Examples from the data	Rational for Theme	Narrative
<p>Notions of Success and Giving Back</p> <p><u>Example Question:</u> <i>For you personally, what does that mean to you, what is your definition of success, or do you have one?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In a one-word definition: success for me is a provider...I was raised like, my grandparents they went through the social mobility uh classes, they went from poor to middle class and so when they were poor Native Americans, they had to go out and provide whatever way they could. Whatever if it was like fishing for food, hunting/gathering, you know. Very seasonal Indians, that’s what we always, how we say it. So I was raised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the major over-arching themes of this research “7 Generations” is a way that the researcher would like to think about “notions of giving back” as it encompasses an inter-generational aspect of “giving back”, which includes making decisions based upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimbol

	<p>with those values and traditions and, I'd say like through our economy change we have kind of gone away a little bit from that because now like my grandparents can buy, like afford to buy meat at the store and stuff like that, so it's kind of like, its just like a...a treat to have deer meat, a treat to have salmon and trout and stuff like that. Um, so for me now what it means "success" is providing, and just getting a good job, um, be respectful, like, I don't want to/I dunno how to put it correctly into words, but it's like don't be what a Indian stereotype is.</p>	<p>the effects of the next three generations to come, the effects of the current generation, and if the decisions and actions made still honor and respect those generations that came before you.</p>	
<p>Support Structures</p> <p><u>Example Question:</u> <i>What resources (if any) do you tap into in order to reach your educational goals (or do you tap into any supports)?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Institutional Supports: "...yes and no. I think, well, the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence CMAE is really helpful resource for just minority students in general, but those resources are very limited also and I didn't know about that until last year." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the purposes of this research was to look at what resources (existing institutional supports, social supports, familial supports, or tribal supports) and if those 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familial: “My momma. My sweet, sweet momma. She *laughs* there’s this post on facebook yesterday, super relevant, it’s like “angry: calls mom, happy: calls mom, stressed: calls mom” like literally that is my life. I’m like- anything happens in my day I’m like “MOM! I need to tell you!” and especially like challenge. It’s a little bit hard because my mom is a strong Native American woman... • Social: ...I had some friends that went here I had like...eight or nine from my class plus some other older kids I knew. So like, I remember going to the dorms was an easy transition, I met, I was in Bean, so like...I was in Bean and everybody in my hall, both floors the girls and the boys like I’m still friends with like every single one of them like to this day. And we still hang out like to this day like we had, we made a really good 	<p>support systems work.</p>	
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	<p>community in our dorms...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal: “The biggest challenge has just been financial. Just making sure that I can, you know, pay rent, and pay financial aid, my financial aid’s been cut a couple times. And then due to my tribal scholarships, it will get cut again, but my tribe is really supportive but this term, I got cut by like a thousand dollars and they gave me a \$500 housing grant. So that I could pay rent and be comfortable.” 		
<p>The Complexities of Native Identities</p> <p><u>Example Questions:</u> <i>Is being Native American a significant part of your identity? Does it influence your day-to-day decisions? Do you feel like your identity has to change</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal significance: “Yeah for sure! I think so. I was raised Native, my mom’s Native and then my white father split. So I was just raised Native.” • Influence decisions: “Yeah. I do, because if I didn’t get connected with NASU and the Longhouse and the rest of the community, it would have been really tough for me out here...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the purposes of this research is to see if student’s Native identity influenced what support structures they reached out to. • Every student reported varying levels of challenges based upon their Native identity within an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolfe

<p><i>depending on your context, or is it something you just carry with you wherever you go?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity based on context: “Hmm...that’s a difficult question. Um. I guess...something that’s been...something that I think I’ve finally been able to verbalize is that like no matter where I go I get so tired of being pressured to prove myself as like a real Indian or something? Which I...I choose not to do, like I so not interested in trying to prove to somebody that I am worthy or real or...whatever. But I still feel like it’s necessary to justify my existence.” 	<p>educational context.</p>	
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The students were chosen opportunistically to highlight different relationships between students’ levels of biculturalism and their engagement with various support systems. Thus, the data analysis of these semi-structured interviews will consist of the following: (a) interviews and transcriptions of interviews from audio and/or video tape, (b) re-transcription of raw data identifying key elements of the participant’s story, (c) participant accounts are “restored” by organizing the key codes into a sequence and identifying themes.

“Kimbol”, for instance, is not a singular participant, rather, he is a composite of various participants. The narrative is based on the interviews conducted by the researcher

and firsthand experiences had by the researcher with said participants. The use of italics indicates that these are quotes from the data (interviews). The mode of representation will be third person narrative as an Iktomi story. A more traditional story wouldn't have as much guidance, allowing the listener/reader to generate their own conclusions in a way that would be beneficial to that individual. By that I mean, someone listening to a more traditional oral Iktomi story might pull conclusions that are directly relatable to challenges they might be facing in their life that differs from someone else hearing the same story but dealing with other challenges. This being a research paper, there needed to be a little more focus as well as analysis, therefore, themes were chosen based upon frequency, relativity, and were guided by the frameworks illustrated in chapter 3.

I conducted the interviews and I transcribed the data. I looked at my flowchart of themes that were based upon frequency. I then used the key words that I found in interviews to narrow down the themes and what interviews to use in the process. In traditional Iktomi stories, the emphasis is on Iktomi and you learn from Iktomi, specifically from a Lakota standpoint, you watch out for what Iktomi does and you try not to replicate his social faux pas. In these narratives, the reader is learning from the composite narrative, both in terms of their challenges and their triumphs. Iktomi then becomes a facilitator of sorts. These situations are not only seen through the eyes of Iktomi, he also provides context and for these composite narratives.

Mode of Representation

Analysis of the data came in the form of narrative analysis via Iktomi stories, that is, there will be a narrative in third person and that narrator will provide analysis. While Iktomi stories are often used to help the listener come up with their own morals, for the

purposes of writing a graduate studies dissertation, some analysis will be provided. The narratives will serve to be used as an exercise to not only interpret what is going on from the researcher's or Iktomi's standpoint, but readers will be able to come up with their own conclusions on other issues the reader might be facing and serve as a tool to help think about potential issues Native students might face in postsecondary education. This mode of representation was chosen as it reflects Native practitioners', students' and the researcher's background and culture. Furthermore, it is a compatible way of processing experiences for Native cultures who relied on oral tradition, or alternative forms of data.

Significance of the Study in Practice and Policy

While this study was focused on a very small population of students, the challenges and strategies may align with other under-represented groups in education. The hope is that the research will contribute to a body of work that will allow educators and education policy makers to think differently when it comes to practice and policy for under-represented students as well as mainstream students who have differing needs. The study was directed at faculty, scholars, administrators, as well as Native American education coordinators and Native communities. The overarching goal being that educators will understand and realize that Native students, communities, and tribes have differing opinions and aspirations as to what students will gain at a non-tribal postsecondary institution outside of the degree itself. Per Brayboy's ninth tenet of TribalCrit, this study will have a component of action or activism, or a way of connecting theory and practice in ways that are explicit. This will be twofold, on the one hand it will have an impact on practice for professors, advisors, practitioners, policy makers, and others who will be working directly with not only Native students, but the student

population as a whole. On the other hand, this study should have an impact on how people approach research and what methodologies are deemed acceptable within the academy, specifically as it pertains to storytelling. Therefore, this study should shift and shape not only practice and policy, but the manner in which we practice research and the way we treat different forms of “data”. Storytelling, as a legit form of data, according to TribalCrit, should influence the way we think about policy, practice, and research.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Before telling these stories, it would be helpful have a road map of how Iktomi stories have come to be and were developed for this research. Following in the oral traditions that I recall growing up, these stories would not have a road map. Rather, the stories would allow the reader/listener to come up with their own conclusions about their own status of current affairs. In this case, as it pertains to how well colleges are supporting Native students, what more they can do, and provide a hypothesis as to what challenges may arise in the future and how they might attack these challenges. Therefore, this dissertation is a step away from that oral tradition, but it is a small step, and these stories should serve as a good tool for thinking differently about supporting Native American students in higher education.

I don't want to oversell this, and stories aren't magic, but they can do things that other forms of research cannot. They bring the stories' powers to bear and produce healing in the way Delgado (1989) talks about counter-stories working against the prevailing mindsets of the dominant groups, mindsets that justify inequalities. The way these dominant groups continue to hold onto these prevailing mindsets ensures the dominance of the settler colonialists, hence "settler futurity", or as Andrew Baldwin called it "permanent virtuality" of the settler colonialist (2012, p. 173). When settler colonialism and issues of indigeneity are presented as problems of the past, they stay there (in the past) and are not seen as problems of the present or future. When indigenous issues are not seen as issues of the present or future, they enhance settler colonialist's future by allowing the mindset that the dominant group will remain the norm and in doing so will exclude indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and philosophies from

being relevant to the present and future, hence, replacement. In order to not fall into the same trap as settler futurity, I argue that indigenous futurity is a goal, but not at the expense of others, as Eve Tuck (2013) explains "...our commitments are to what might be called an Indigenous futurity, which does not foreclose the inhabitation of Indigenous land by non-Indigenous peoples, but does foreclose settler colonialism and settler epistemologies. That is to say that Indigenous futurity does not require the erasure of now-settlers in the ways that settler futurity requires of Indigenous peoples" (p. 80).

This introduction serves to set context for Iktomi's role in the characters' lives, as well as the analysis process. Iktomi will set the stage as the observer, analyst and will provide encouragement, guidance, and opinions on students' situations.

The first narrative will be about "Kimbol," who is a tribal member from the Northwest who reported that he felt he was "misdiagnosed" with a learning difference. In his narrative, he shares how he used this misdiagnosis as fuel for his academic success, his life goals and career aspirations, and for helping others who also fell under this category. The major theme in this narrative is the notion of seven generations, or, thinking three generations prior, thinking about the current generation, and then the three generations yet to come, as it pertains to your actions, both short and long term. This theme of "seven generations" is a major one throughout the narratives, but Kimbol's narrative introduces the concept in detail.

"Wolfe" is a California tribal member who was disenrolled from her tribe. She was also a non-resident paying out of state tuition (about twice the in-state tuition). She reported that finances were a big issue for her, an issue that affects many students, Native and non-Native alike. Her narrative introduces the legal and cultural complexities of

Native identity. This student decided not to complete her degree immediately, which is a problem a lot of statistical analysis of Native students seems to indicate. Wolfe also experienced challenges at the university concerning how she looks and claiming to be “Native”.

“Jane” is a story that focuses on the “muddiness” of support systems at universities. Not only was Jane coming in to the university with some challenges that had to be negotiated with the help of family, friends, and existing support structures, some of those “supports” turned into challenges. This will help illustrate the “muddiness” or difficulty discerning between, different support systems which include social supports, cultural supports, familial supports, tribal supports, and existing institutional supports.

This is not a traditional case-study approach to research, rather, this story-telling approach will help educators think differently about possibilities and potentialities as it pertains to their current and future students. by asking themselves “what would happen if this narrative is happening in our schools/communities right now?” They are exercises in thinking about what they are doing and what they could be doing.

An Introduction to Iktomi

“Iktomi was walking along (every story about Iktomi starts this way). Iktomi was walking along” (Goble, 1996, p. 1). He had to be back at a camp for high schoolers who might be attending college. At that moment, the students and the counselors were in the “Longhouse.” A Longhouse is a traditional Northwestern indigenous tribal building. This particular Longhouse happened to be located at a community college and functioned as a cultural resource center for Native students attending the school. When he walked in, he

noticed all of the students walked aimlessly through the building in silence. He saw his friend JD, standing on a chair watching the students walk around.

“Sweep the tipi!!!” Always muscular and tall, JD’s presence was even more intimidating as he towered over everyone, screaming orders from his high perch. Iktomi followed his command and started walking around with an imaginary broom. All of the students were smiling and sweeping the already clean wooden floors.

At the time, Iktomi was the Native American recruiter for the University of Oregon, and was acting as a counselor for a summer bridge program designed to recruit and prepare Native students for college. Iktomi had spent his whole life around Natives. He had spent most of his life on the Plains, but then moved to the west coast and started working as a “Native Recruiter” at a University. The people at the University were impressed by Iktomi’s knowledge of Native peoples. He started working with the Northwestern tribes more and hanging out with their people. He even married a woman from the Northwestern tribes. So Iktomi had a very thorough knowledge of tribal customs and cultures. But this game, something more contemporary, was new to him. As he walked around with his “broom” he heard a student yell.

“Iktomi doesn’t know what he is doing!” Iktomi knew JD was going to yell something. But what, he did not know. What would Iktomi be expected to do?

“Owl dance!!!”

Was Iktomi supposed to owl dance with someone? He turned and saw Stephy chatting in the corner, not really paying attention. Stephy would later become the Native American Retention Specialist, a position Iktomi also held at the University, and had left in order to pursue his doctoral degree. “Owl dance with me!”

“What?” Confusion swept across her face as Iktomi pulled her out onto the floor.

“I guess YOU were supposed to ask ME huh?” Traditionally, it is the girl who asks the guy to dance. But here, Iktomi was desperate to not lose and he didn’t mind breaking the rules to do so.

“Haha, yeah. All of the sudden you were just like ‘Owl dance with me!’ What the heck!” They danced in a circle while other students paired up as well. There were fewer guys than girls, and some of the girls couldn’t find a partner to dance with. They were out of the game.

“*Sweep the tipi!!!*” Stephy and Iktomi parted ways and he began to sweep the tipi again. Students passed by with big smiles on their faces, anticipating the next command. What were the rules? Iktomi had no idea.

“*Put out the fire!!!*” Iktomi stopped sweeping. Students rushed in all directions, half panicked, trying to find partners. The first group that Iktomi saw, a group of three, quickly decided who did what. One student dropped down on one knee, and the others fanned their hands over her head, as if they were fanning a fire. Not knowing what else to do, Iktomi dropped to one knee and hoped others would join him. After a moment, another girl who could not find a group rushed to him, and Iktomi realized another student behind him had already started fanning as well. As Iktomi looked around, spotted one student kneeling and only one other student fanning her. The other students called out their names.

“You guys only have two!” They both stood up knowing they were out of the game.

“Sweep the tipi!!!” Iktomi stood up and swept again. He was reminded of the purpose of this exercise. It wasn’t just a game, it was about team-building. The students acted like a tribe, no one was really pitted against one another, so long as they could form groups. Some of them knew the rules of “Sweep-the-Tipi”. Iktomi hardly knew any of the rules, and so he was relying on others to help him understand the game. These students were not familiar with the territory that is college. They knew that there were rules, but what those rules looked like in practice was a mystery. They didn’t know the subtle ins and outs that students whose parents may have gone to college knew. They may have heard from their families or people that they look up to that this is something that they need to do, but they may not know how.

“Canoe paddle!!!” A hand grabbed the back of Iktomi’s shirt and yanked him in their direction. When he looked to see who it was, he saw a student had him in one hand and motioned with the other for her friends to get close.

“Come here, come here! One, two, three, four, five!” Five of them formed a small line. She turned back to Iktomi and shoved him forward. “Okay, Ikto, GO!”

“What? Go where?” Iktomi (aka “Ikto”) looked at others around him, others who are still scrambled to make a group of five.

“Act like you are in a canoe! Start paddling!” With a paddle made purely of air and spirit, Ikto walked around paddling, and the five of them moved around the longhouse in their imaginary canoe. Ikto half wondered what would happen next, half expected the others to help him. But as he had already seen, not everyone would make it, and all he could do was give it his best shot. Best shot isn’t necessarily enough. Even

your best shot in a canoe isn't enough when you are by yourself. You will only go in circles.

Iktomi and the success of others.

Iktomi had developed a reputation for being outgoing and able to talk to the Native high schoolers on a level that many counselors had not been able to do before. He did that part of his job well and found enjoyment in it.

“How we doing!?” he said, in his “Longhouse” voice. All of his presentations started this way. He gauged the responses from students before posing a series of questions: “How many of you love high school? Raise your hands. Okay. How many of you like it? How many are indifferent? Where are all of the counselors?” The final question always made people a little nervous. “I need the counselors to close their eyes.” This was Iktomi’s way of tricking the counselors into keeping anonymity. “Okay, by show of hands, how many people HATE high school?” Each question showed varying degrees of hands raised and enthusiasm. But these questions allowed Iktomi to get a pulse of who was in the room. “That was ME. I hated high school!”

The beginning of his educational career is a story not many students were expecting to hear from a counselor at a college recruitment event. But he would tell the story. It is one he assumed resonated with students who had the same view about education as he did: it really wasn't for him.

Iktomi’s view had been grounded in real experiences. He often felt isolated at school. Granted, it was Iktomi, and he brought a lot of trouble onto himself. Especially when he decided to attend high school, Iktomi always got into trouble. He had to attend

three separate high schools. By the time he was a Junior, he had decided he would graduate and stop doing that whole “school” thing. It clearly wasn’t for him.

He would tell prospective college students this, and he would stop there and pose the question: why did someone like Iktomi even go to college? Responses from the high schoolers varied in shape and form, but they all had some hint of a positive outcome. “Make a better life for yourself? Prove everyone wrong? Make a better life for your kids? Challenge the system? Make a better future for yourself and your community?”

Iktomi would smile and would think these were all wonderful answers. These answers let Iktomi know that the students had notions of success that had to do with making yourself a better person, levels of empowering your community, your family, your friends. These notions of success had to do with challenging colonialism, the dominant educational system, preserving Native (indigenous) cultures while at the same time supporting and preparing the next generation for challenges to come. But that’s not what happened to him. Iktomi didn’t buy into these notions, at least when he first started college. “Success” for him meant gaining funds to pay for his cars and toys.

Iktomi used to skip school. A lot. He would skip school and play pool at a local pool hall and bowling alley. Iktomi also liked cars. He loved to race his car and would spend most nights racing in the streets with the locals. He would race until he was so tired he couldn’t focus during the day. The manager of the pool hall he frequented also liked racing his car, and they talked quite a bit about cars, pool, and life. The manager took a liking to Iktomi and hired him to work at the pool hall. Iktomi had no intention of “doing well” in school, as teachers had tagged him as somewhat of a clown and troublemaker.

Problem was, the pool hall he worked at happened to be located at the local University. Iktomi thought he could get by on his charm and hard work, but the manager came to Ikto one day and told him that the job was supposed to be for the students attending the college. So, if he wasn't a student at the college the following year, he would not have a job there. That was the real reason Iktomi went to college, he wanted to keep his job so he could pay for car parts. He went to college for reasons his family, friends, boss, and co-workers probably didn't fully understand.

This was the story Ikto told. "Here is a worst-case scenario. Don't be me." He often deployed the same strategy when speaking with current college students as well. Iktomi's entry to college was rough. He was not prepared, and it took him a while to find a home outside of the pool hall, the very place he went to skip school in the first place. Iktomi became very familiar with the phrase "academic probation." He did a lot of non-academic related activities and was rarely interested in school outside of a few specific topics and subjects.

Soon after graduating college, Iktomi realized he didn't have a job. He couldn't work at the bowling alley anymore. He knew that a Native guy that worked at a neighboring institution would be leaving soon. He applied and got the job. When he arrived at the University of Oregon (UO) it was expected that Iktomi would support and guide Native students through the admissions process, course registration, financial aid, mental and emotional health, writing, math, graduate school applications, resumes, etc. All things he stumbled through and was barely capable of doing himself while in college.

It was the greatest trick he had ever pulled off. Or at least that is what he liked to believe. Bridge of the Gods Summer Academy (BOGSA) and working with the Native

high schoolers made Iktomi think differently about this space, and the Native youth he met. Iktomi took pride in being a trickster. He had fooled so many “educated” people into thinking he was a scholar, an intelligent strategist, a philosopher. When he worked as a counselor at his first BOGSA camp, he met students younger than him who he felt were stronger, smarter, and had so much more potential than he did at their age. Iktomi, being the kind of guy who seemed to figure out how to get around things before going through them, had developed a skill that high school students typically didn’t have when it came to attending college: navigating the system itself. Seeing how smart and strong these young people were, Iktomi felt obligated to share as much of his knowledge and experiences (for better or worse) as he could, sharing how he dealt with obstacles, while also showing young people what they probably shouldn’t do. It was those young Native students who had forever changed Iktomi the trickster. He actually gave a damn now. In a weird way, he was buying in to the whole notion that he was there to help, and he was legitimately trying to help others besides himself. This was the new Iktomi, the one who wanted to see others succeed in the same system he learned to navigate.

Inter-generational respect and “giving back”.

The story of Iktomi and “Kimbol” will be the first story here. While other stories and other themes will be introduced, the story of Iktomi and Kimbol introduces the importance of inter-generational respect among Native students and the idea of “giving back” being closely tied to notions of success. The notion of “giving back” being the marker of success and/or it being explicitly illustrated in the study participants’ professional aspirations took various forms in the narratives that will be explored throughout this chapter.

Iktomi had heard of two versions of the concept of “seven generations”. It is most often referred to within the context of environmental sustainability and refers to making decisions based upon the effects it will have on the seventh generation yet to come. “In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come. It’s our job to see that the people coming ahead, the generations still unborn, have a world no worse than ours—and hopefully, better (Arden & Wall, 1990). This is the most common version of the philosophy I have come across.

The notion of seven generations was presented to Iktomi slightly differently. It is this version that stuck with him, and he thought it was more useful, as it included a larger spectrum of peoples. What was lacking from the first, more well-known, definition is respect for elders and ancestors. In other words, the traditional definition ignores thinking in both directions generationally: three generations prior (your great grandparents), the current generation, and three generations after (great grandchildren). The alternate definition, the one Iktomi knew, meant that what one does in life not only affects generations to come, but also seeks to honor and respect past legacies. “Each generation was responsible to teach, learn, and protect the three generations that had come before it, its own, and the next three. In an article on the online newspaper “Indian Country Today,” Wilkens (2015) shared a similar definition of the concept: “After more than twenty years of following this trend, it is clear that much can be learned from nations that respect their ancestors, themselves, and those to come. Such nations exemplify the true meaning of the Seven Generations by maintaining their integrity as peoples” (p. 1). In this way, we maintained our communities for millennia” (p. 1). To operate in the first

definition, that is, only think 7 generations down means omitting and forgetting the sacrifices dealt with and experiences gained from our ancestors. “Then we live in a world where we owe nothing to our predecessors, where we have only a tangential connection to our present-day relations, and where we have but a vague notion of the ‘future generations’” (Wilkins, 2015, p. 1).

The first narrative, “Kimbol”, will focus explicitly on the inter-generational aspect of “giving back.” While other themes will be present (resiliency, deficit-driven philosophical practices in teaching, and others), Kimbol’s ideas of what it means to be respectful in an inter-generational aspect was closely examined as it illustrates how wide the scope of being “respectful” can be (beyond the current generation). For Kimbol, it wasn’t enough to be respectful to one’s peers or neighbors or even one’s elders (also examined here). It also meant remembering the atrocities suffered and challenges overcome by one’s ancestors, as well as preparing the future generations for challenges that have yet to come to fruition.

Seven Generations and Giving Back (Kimbol’s Story)

Iktomi was walking along. The rain came down, not hard, but enough to make him pick up his pace. He was heading towards the Many Nations Longhouse at the UO, a cultural center on campus that was a semi-traditional northwestern indigenous structure. He got underneath the overhang, walked up to the door and pulled. It made the same loud “click” that it always did before making way to a long creak. The buzz had already been in full effect, people talked and laughed. Large, cracked beams made of wood reached for the ceiling. Benches built into the walls ran along the edges of the Longhouse. Sitting on a bench with his laptop plugged into an outlet, streaming the Portland Trailblazers

basketball game, was Kimbol. Kimbol obviously worked out, or at least played a lot of sports. He wore a white Blazers jersey, and was awkwardly socially distant from everyone else, but also didn't seem to care. Neither did the four-year-old who ran up to him when he saw there was a screen playing basketball.

“What are you doing?” the young boy asked, a long thick braid went down his back. The boy's dad came up to him and tried to usher the child away.

“You could at least say ‘hi’ first or shake his hand” the father said.

Kimbol didn't even flinch. He shook the boy's hand and at the same time looked at the father. “He's fine.”

Kimbol and Iktomi never verbally said “hello” but they always acknowledged each other's presence. A handshake in the Longhouse was a given with Kimbol, or at least a nod if you were far away.

Iktomi thought the interaction with the kiddo was amusing. He waited until there was a lull in the moment before he approached Kimbol: “How are you, man?”

Iktomi knew what his response was going to be before he gave it. A smile, a nod, and a pause, before saying things would be okay or good. “...things are good.”

Life challenges and resiliency.

It was hard to gauge what “things are good” meant for guys like Kimbol. It was as if Kimbol played the same game Iktomi did, claiming things were “okay” could mean “barely manageable.” Iktomi knew this game well—life in school was for the most part manageable when compared to how things could be like back home. Kimbol grew up on an Oregon reservation, and like Ikto, had already dealt with a lot of life challenges. For example, Kimbol mentioned not being around his parents, being raised by his

grandparents, and even occasionally ending up in foster homes: *...my biological parents were never in my life, my grandparents raised me from birth... I grew up real poor, in and out of foster homes, violence throughout, I've seen the whole nine yards...* Yet, despite these challenges, Kimbol made it a point to let Iktomi know that he didn't feel sorry for himself and others shouldn't feel that way about him either. In fact, he considered his upbringing as not being atypical of growing up Native in the U.S. *I don't want to get all pity party and sad but (laughs) but I grew up in all that man, just like a typical Native lifestyle I guess...* Not surprisingly, Kimbol also struggled in school and had a difficult time adjusting to high school.

I was going to high school off the Rez . . . the funny thing is I was never like a good student, I never really liked school, I skipped school and failed my freshman year...I didn't go to class and I really didn't do anything I was just getting in trouble I mean not with the law but just, you know, being a kid and getting into trouble...honestly, I didn't have plans on going to college.

Making the claim that things were “good” was a game Iktomi had played before when he was in college and would check in with his academic counselors. Kimbol's early life struggles were tough, so his claim that things were “good” could mean things at school were good compared to those early struggles he had on the reservation. When it came to schoolwork, if life struggles or family issues approached a threshold wherein school would take a back seat, it could seem like an easy option for a young Native with his views on life and culture. When a grandparent passed away, the priority quickly and unquestionably became family. School will be there when the student is ready, when they get back, when they are done dealing with the family struggles. However, students may return to school

only to find out that they missed the deadline to drop classes or that they were already on academic probation, or their scholarship ran out. It was true that the school was still physically still there, but it is not there for them in the same capacity it once was.

In Kimbol's case, he had actually put off school to help his sister raise her children. *My sister just had kids and so like I was obligated to help her because my parents were still off doing their own thing. And so, I helped my sister raise her kids...* At this time, Kimbol stayed with his family at the expense of progressing in his academics, to help support his nieces and nephews. For Iktomi, it was these types of experiences that counselors should know about Native students. Instead of simply asking how classes were going or what classes the students' needs, a simple "how are things outside of school going for you" would be a useful way to understand what other factors influence Native students' academic successes and how to better support them.

Giving back to the community.

In Iktomi's experiences with Native students, the idea of "giving back to the community" was something he had seen in a lot of Native students. Not all Native students thought so, but he had seen so many that claimed they wanted to give back in some way, through cultural, historical, and/or language revitalization, to supporting the next generation of Native peoples, supporting each other, and honoring historical legacies.

For many of those students who want to honor and respect their ancestors and/or support the next generation, the current generation is also very important, specifically when it comes to family. So, of course, putting school aside to handle community or familial issues is often a priority for these students. The university has been around since

1876, it's not moving, and there is an assumption that Iktomi had seen many students make: the school will accept them upon their return. But this wouldn't be the case if they did not drop their classes on time or communicate with their advisors.

As Iktomi saw it, there were several moving parts to this idea of "giving back," as some students attempt to explicitly help their tribe via language revitalization, healthcare, legal issues, federal recognition, or a combination thereof. But there is a community that now resides at the university that also needs attention. It's a community that Kimbol felt obliged to support.

When Iktomi asked what were some major components of success, Kimbol reported supporting others was a major component of success. *So, success of others is success to me. How many people I help is...yeah, that's how I define success.* Kimbol was graduating with his Masters in Special Education. Iktomi had known Kimbol for some time.

Kimbol had transferred from a local community college. Before he had made his decision to come to the U of O. A friend and colleague had asked Ikto to have lunch with Kimbol and discuss his post-secondary options. During their conversation, Iktomi noticed that Kimbol valued having a Longhouse on campus and also valued the presence of an elder who he could go to seek advice and share in the Longhouse community

I was raised in a Longhouse...as a kid you are always supposed to be doing things like taking out the trash or doing whatever needs to be done and sometimes, you know, these guys (other students) don't do anything until [the steward of the longhouse] tells them to do something.

For Kimbol, the Longhouse was more than just the person who cleaned up or turned off the lights at night, he was an elder who had contributed to the community across several generations of Native students.

And I don't appreciate that because...he's done his time, you know. He's worked for his tribe he's done stuff there, he's been here at U of O, you know, almost the whole time I've been alive and he's here, you know, lifting stuff or taking out trash or doing something and that's you know, why I spend a lot of time with (The Longhouse Steward) because a lot of these kids...you know they don't understand that. He's not going to be here forever.

He confided in Ikto that he did not wish to stand out as being “more Native” than others but was quick to highlight how his culture and his ancestors’ legacies are being erased in a Native setting within a non-Native institution, and in some cases by other Natives, in this case, the manner in which elders are treated. Kimbol didn’t want to overstep boundaries by pushing other Natives aside, but also, he felt like the institution, even Native spaces, were silencing traditions he felt were important.

...the way I think of it and the way it has always been explained to me...my people, you know, died for me to be able to, for us to live for our culture to live and so I don't take that lightly.

Kimbol’s grandfather attended Native boarding schools where speaking indigenous languages was forbidden. To illustrate the importance of this issue, Kimbol further illustrated the weight of knowing and understanding his ancestors’ histories and experiences:

When our troops die for our freedoms, same thing in that kind of context for me...my people died for me to live and for my culture to live and so, you know it's important to be able to speak your language especially in this day in age and know where your people come from and know your culture and know your ceremonies and those are things that are important to me.

On the one hand, Kimbol wished to respect those who came before him and respect those elders who are still with us. And on the other hand, he wished to support the next generation. Iktomi understood that Kimbol made an effort to honor his elders and ancestors. His discussions with Kimbol led to his early educational experiences being tracked into programs for students with “learning differences” or “special education” and being put on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), meaning his teachers and counselors saw him as someone who needed extra support due to his inability to learn like other students. As Kimbol spoke to Iktomi, he took many pauses, but then spoke quickly about his experiences and thoughts on his own educational experiences. *I was on an IEP in high school, I struggled.* Kimbol reported that he didn't feel as if he saw and understood things in the same way others did. *I didn't think like everybody else, and still don't.*

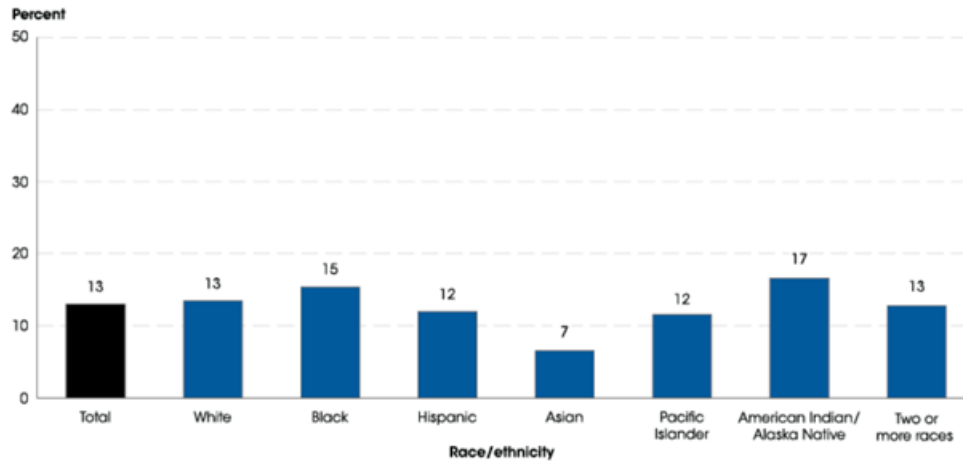
Kimbol reported that he felt like he stumbled through most of his assignments and projects. Those times where he did seek help, he felt as if he was a burden to his teachers and counselors. *...like I was a pain in the butt, like they didn't want to deal with me...* From a career aspirational standpoint, these negative experiences in school became a driving force behind his motivations to help others who experienced similar challenges. *I knew that I thought like these kids in special education...if I could learn to navigate this*

whole system here at the college...I could help these kids. In retrospect, he also reported that he blames “the system” itself. For Kimbol, helping meant it was a two-way street. He could “help” by supporting students with learning differences to simply assimilate fully into the educational system’s view of “intelligence”. Kimbol told Iktomi that helping students with learning differences assimilate was not his goal, rather, it was his goal to show them that it was okay to be who they were, but also adapt to a society that had other expectations of them. For Kimbol, this was two-fold. On the one hand, he wanted to help students who, like him, felt like they were being a burden because of their learning difference. On the other hand, he wanted to be able to bring his own Native culture into the class room as well.

Iktomi saw Kimbol work with two specific groups of students during his time as a student at the University. Kimbol would actively participate in Native programs and help out younger Native students whenever possible, helping out with powwow, working with students who had trouble with class or homework, Kimbol would actively support others. Kimbol volunteered in after school programs for students in special education. He also made it a point to tell students that it wasn’t just okay for them to be there and just “get by”, they should be proud to be there, and they were capable of changing the educational system to not only allow others who did not fit the norm to have a place in that system (education). Using Darder’s “Sphere of Biculturalism (2012, p.52) it could be argued that these actions make Kimbol a cultural negotiator. A cultural negotiator is an individual who retains their own culture and simultaneously uses their primary culture to change or help the dominate culture. It wasn’t enough to just “get by” in school or to fully

assimilate into the dominate culture, Kimbol believed the student should also change the school for the benefit of others who might be marginalized by “the system”.

Figure 8: Percentage of Children and Youth Ages 3-21 Served Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) By Race/Ethnicity: School Year 2014-15



In many cases, the idea of an individual’s primary culture is not as simple as “primary” versus “dominant.” Often, a person’s primary culture is multi-faceted. In this case, primary culture goes beyond just being Native, it means being aware that there is a dominant view of what it means to be “smart” and how to navigate the system while retaining one’s own way of thinking and processing information. But he is strategic with his assertions of his primary culture in a dominate cultural environment. Iktomi felt his own experiences with education were very similar. Iktomi did not feel as if he was academically smart, but he knew how to negotiate, navigate, and find innovative ways of solving problems. Sometimes this involved just “getting by” with a passing grade. Other times, it involved excelling in ways that professors hadn’t seen before, through arguing or storytelling or writing pieces that weren’t necessarily part of the dominant narrative. These skills ran against the dominant paradigm of conformity, which required him to get

good grades and test scores. It also meant conforming to the rules and standards of which support those ends, hence assimilation.

Kimbol explicitly valued his Native culture, the idea that students can think in different ways, and the notion of achieving at a postsecondary educational level. While Kimbol's experiences could be interpreted as being narrow in scope, that is, he was hoping to help Natives and those with learning differences, all participants in the study reported wanting to give back in some way, whether that be helping SPED students, or helping their own Reservation or urban Native community with education, law, language, social services, there was, across the boards, reports of students wishing to give back in their best capacity. To be invested in Kimbol (and others) is to be invested in a wide range of communities and people. As such, an investment in Kimbol is an investment on a multi-generational and multi-cultural scope: acknowledging the atrocities suffered by his ancestors, respecting and aiding the elders in his community, supporting the future generations, and changing the current educational system to better support a wider spectrum of students.

His experiences in education were simultaneously a challenge and the motivation behind his pursuit to get his Masters in SPED. His biological parents had been out of the picture for most of his life, his grandparents never went to college, and out of high school, he had already had a rough experience with family and school. So, the step to college a big one, not just for Kimbol, but for his family as a whole. *I had some friends that were going to the community college just for fun. You know?*

“For fun?” Iktomi didn't understand at first.

Yeah, yeah, they were just like 'oh yeah go out there, there's lots of hot girls' you know.

“Ohhh, okay.” Now Iktomi understood completely! Iktomi had gotten in a lot of trouble following those “hot girls” around.

Yeah, yeah. Cuz we didn't know what we wanted to do or anything like that...so we were like 'let's try this college thing out' so most of us went and were like 'pshhh I can't do this' you know, we screwed around, wasted money. This wasn't far off from Iktomi's experiences when he first arrived at college. Iktomi was only holding onto school as a mechanism to hold onto his job at the pool hall. Iktomi felt his experiences were similar to Kimbol in that way, their aims weren't necessarily to give back, nor was there a long-term career strategy in mind. They just kind of went to have fun, and maybe make some money (in Iktomi's case).

Making the turn.

It wasn't until Kimbol connected with a community member whose culture and ideas matched with his that he started taking a different, more culturally specific approach, to education. He only connected with that person after he had been approached by members of the school's student government who had asked if he wished help with the Native aspect of the student government. He was asked to take part in the Longhouse affairs, where he met the Native Advisor of the time. Kimbol would later admit that he had been drinking and getting high too much and would sometimes sleep through his classes. However, Monday nights at the Longhouse, the Advisor invited him to participate in their “drumming circle”.

Kimbol was told he could not drink and participate in the drumming circle, and there were evenings when he would be invited to participate and he had to respectfully decline due to having consumed alcohol beforehand. *...he was super welcoming to me, invited me down to drum circles on Monday nights, and so that started kind of getting me caught...* What Kimbol meant by “caught” was the fact that he had been drinking and partying. *...because all I was doing was partying, um. Drinking a lot, like all the time. Sleep through my classes, getting high all the time, like no direction.* Kimbol had found that one community person who was the turning point in his educational career. Throughout Iktomi’s conversations with Native students, this was often the case for students who were struggling. It was typically one or two key people who helped students make that significant turn in their educational careers.

In Kimbol’s case, this one advisor gave him “stability” as Kimbol reported. The advisor would tell him he could not drum and drink at the same time for cultural reasons. For Kimbol, he said that this simple rule made sense to him, based upon his previous Native ceremonial experiences where alcohol was excluded from the practice. *...he wouldn’t ask ‘did you drink’ but he would be like ‘hey, you want to come sit on the drum’ I’m like... ‘I can’t’ like, you know, cuz I drank you know...* The interaction was so profound, that Kimbol says he stopped partying altogether. *I was like 19 so I stopped drinking for the most part, you know what I mean?* Kimbol explained that the advisor and his code of ethics really gave Kimbol direction, and suddenly he did not want to drink all of the time. *...cuz that’s where I came from where everyone did that’...but that was I feel like when things started to change in a positive way for me. It was a foundation...so that’s kind of how that all started.*

Stanton-Salaar (2001) explored the intricacies of under-represented students and how their help-seeking (or not help-seeking) can influence academic success. For Kimbol, he had never sought a counselor. Rather, he had been asked to introduce himself to a counselor for the purposes of taking part in student government. What he found was a mentor who helped guide him in a way that was not necessarily academic, but cultural. Iktomi knew that this counselor did not just act as a culturally supportive response, it allowed Kimbol to take a step further into the help-seeking process, while at the same time developing his network of support systems. It could be argued that his friends acted as a social support of a specific kind, as he could go to them in moments of distress. However, Kimbol openly admits that those relationships perhaps did more harm than good when it came to academic excellence.

Aspects (functions) of relationships that foster social integration include the capacity to instill trust, confidence, affective attachment, and loyalty (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 14). Kimbol's friends may have fulfilled this aspect of social integration, but may have fallen short in other aspect that positively influences academic success, such as inculcating "...specific goals, standards of excellence, aspirations, values, norms and mores...", something the counselor at Drumming Circle provided. The counselor also conferred "...a particular status and identity" that was more culturally appropriate.

Giving back through education.

Kimbol told Iktomi that after transferring to the University of Oregon, he thought he had wanted to be a history teacher. In the same way he stumbled upon a Native mentor while attending Community College, Kimbol stumbled upon a Native Advisor within the College of Education who also began to guide him

towards completing the requirements for his bachelor's degree, and applying to Graduate School, where he was admitted into SPED. While his confidence remained high, Kimbol reported that he continued to struggle with certain academic "skills" even after he had started his graduate program. This included a moment when Kimbol felt the need to assert himself and his unique way of learning, another example of his capacity to be a "Cultural Negotiator" (Darder, 2012), not only attempting to adapt to the dominant culture, but changing it based upon his own primary culture, which in this case included a learning difference. He had approached a fellow SPED student and asked her how to take notes. *I was like "I dunno, how do you take notes? Like I know how to take in general, but how do you do it most efficient?"* So, the other student began to help Kimbol take notes for class, and another student saw what was happening and approached Kimbol and the student who was helping him. *...she was like "oh my gosh...you come to graduate school and have to learn how to take notes?" and I was just like...UGH. It pissed me off...* Kimbol said it felt like a dagger and made him feel like he didn't belong, similar to what he had felt growing up and even in his undergraduate experiences. He could have backed down and hindered his "help-seeking" capacity, but in this instance, he asserted his presence in a graduate program, not only for himself but for others. *I was like "you know what, everybody learns in different ways" that's what I said to her and I just kind of let it go...* For Kimbol, this moment not only re-affirmed his own presence in graduate school, it re-affirmed the idea that there are a lot of ways to think about things, and different strategies that can be used to navigate graduate school. It is not only his academic goals to graduate that are at

stake, his life goals to help students deal with similar instances in schools, further aiding in the intergenerational support system are also at stake.

Kimbol reported relying on key people that he had known either through family or culturally (people who understood the subtle nuances of his own culture and background). The majority were Native faculty/staff. Kimbol had attempted to use some of the existing institutional support structures, but those attempts were short lived. *I felt the writing center could have been much better, the writing center was janky man...you had to wait in line and you only had five minutes with the person...five to fifteen minutes.* Kimbol found the most help from other students or faculty members he knew himself, personally. These types of relationships happened almost accidentally. Sometimes, like in the writing center or with counselors when he was a SPED student, he felt like a burden, and did not seek them out often. Others, who took into account his background, his culture, and other factors outside of school that might directly influence his academic success, he found those supports to not only be helpful, but be worth investing time in help-seeking practices again. For practitioners, Iktomi felt that this was a helpful guide to helping the whole student. It is one thing to help a student pick classes and produce an academic plan to graduate. While this was a very important strategy for Iktomi, he realized it didn't take into account all of the other aspects of life that influence academic success. Sometimes a counselor could take an opportunity to ask students what was going on outside of school, just like counselors who had helped Kimbol be successful did.

Kimbol found the necessary tools to not only graduate with his Master's in SPED, he felt he had also attained the tools necessary to help other students who might not fit the mold of what their schools expect from them.

...my life goal is to help as many people as possible and going through this program, now I have a license that will allow me to go do that. And this program did, as much as I griped about the program, the whole way through...I do have the tools to go do this now.

The “tools” Kimbol was referring to weren’t just experience (which involved being in the field during his graduate career), but there was also the licensure to do exactly what he wanted to do: be a teacher in SPED. Iktomi actually had Kimbol in his own class when Kimbol was about to go into Graduate school. It was the first time Kimbol actually got to go into a K-12 classroom and volunteer.

“What about your undergrad experience?”, Iktomi asked. “Do you think THAT provided you with the resources and experiences necessary to-“

No. Kimbol’s response was without hesitation. *...I felt like that was just a stepping stone, or that was just a umm...naw. I felt like if I would have stopped there, I wouldn’t have been able to have got to do what I want to do now.* His analysis of how the institution has supported him is two-fold, on the one hand, he feels as if his undergraduate experience had not enabled him to attain his life goals and aspirations. On the other hand, at the same institution, his graduate experience not only allowed him the experiences to guide him through to his career goals. From Iktomi’s standpoint, the experience was very important, but the license to actually get to do what he had set out to do from the moment he chose to become a SPED teacher is what mattered to Kimbol, as Kimbol had already had the experiences needed to support and fight for students with learning disabilities, and an enhanced capacity to support Native students who felt

disenfranchised by schools had he not had the training he received in his Special Education graduate program.

In Iktomi's eyes, it took Kimbol a little while to mature as a scholar and as an individual. That maturity could have taken shape during his undergraduate experience and carried into his graduate level career. But for Kimbol, the important matter is that he can give back. He can move forward, not only with his experiences, but with his actual degree. Iktomi often questioned what Natives wanted out of college aside from the degree itself, and throughout his discussions with students, the idea of "giving back" was always a part of the conversation. In Kimbol's case, it was through education. And while he wants to give back to his own Native community, honor his ancestors, and support his family and friends, his career goals lead him down the path of ensuring future generations are supported as well. This is the philosophy behind 7 generations, honoring the past, supporting the present, and ensuring the future generations.

Informally, Iktomi asked what Kimbol had in store next, as Kimbol was graduating with his Masters in Special Education. He had already landed a job with an indigenous population working with students with learning differences. Kimbol's face lit up when he talked about it. Missing from his narrative was how much money he would be making. He didn't care about the money. He didn't really care about the location (it happened to be far from his school and where he grew up). He just didn't care. What mattered to him was helping students who had to deal with similar challenges that he had face in his youth, whether that was Native students or SPED students, or even others, it didn't matter to Kimbol. He wanted to help students who were struggling. He had a

special interest in Native students and SPED students and made it his ultimate life and career goal.

While he didn't explicitly explain the philosophy behind 7 generations, he was living it. It guided his responses to his elders and ancestors, while at the same time, his career goals included helping the next generations of students. He was thinking of his past generations, worked with the current generations, and the thought of future generations guided his actions and decisions as it pertained to his educational, career, and personal goals. Now, in his new role, he would be honoring all 7 generations, remembering the past, acknowledging the present, and taking an active role in preparing the future generations for the challenges to come. And in Iktomi's mind, this was one of the main reasons Natives went to and fought through college in the first place...

Identity, Health, and Finances (Wolfe's Narrative)

Iktomi was walking along. His speed was high on foot, as parking meters whiffed by his right arm, plants to the left, and the cement sidewalk down the center. It was a walk he made without thinking anymore, through the front doors of the old, vine-ridden building, past all the sports trophy cases inside, through the double doors and into the madness that was the crowded floor of MacArthur "Mac" Court. It was a historic building where the Oregon Ducks once played basketball. There was no basketball to be played here this weekend, it was Mother's Day weekend, which meant NASU put on their Powwow. The center of the basketball court was filled with dancers in their regalia and a few outliers wearing street clothes. Iktomi figured to someone who had never seen a powwow before, the floor would look flooded with dancers moving to the same beat, but in wild random directions. It wasn't random. For each individual dancer, it was an

expression of themselves and the style of dance they chose. The style of dance was also reflected in their regalia. You could tell who did what dance based on what regalia they had on. The men wearing traditional dancing regalia maintained the same steady, strong steps. The women's traditional dancers had dresses with fringe that would sway back and forth. The grass dancers (men) with their fringe, got low to the ground, while the women who had jingle dresses (dresses covered in rolled tin "jingles") would stand high on their toes and hop to the beat. The jingle dress dancers pretty much added an extra half beat, as their jingles would come down and clash together between drum beats. Fancy dancers ran wildly through the mix, both men and women. Men with two bustles strapped to their back, a feather or two protruding off the top of what looked like a mohawk. It was a head piece was called a "roach." The women fancy dancers had shawls and fringe they would twirl in circles. Most people gave the fancy dancers a lot of room on the dancefloor.

On the periphery, along the right courtside and in the bleachers, were families, friends, and community members. On the left side of the court were the drums and drummers. The buzz was strong here. Iktomi didn't have to look hard to find people he knew. He stood for a moment and looked around. Eye contact would be made and either a nod or a wave would be sent his way. Iktomi always nodded back in response, unless he needed to talk to someone, in which case he would make his way towards that person.

The UO Powwow was arguably one of the largest student-coordinated events the campus had each year. People came from all over the Northwest and beyond to this event. Drummers, dancers, students, families, community members, and UO faculty and staff all had this on their calendars every year, for Mother's Day weekend. Iktomi didn't kick it at too many Powwows anymore, but this was almost a must. It let him know what

was going on between the University, the students, the Native communities, families, allies, and those just curious about Native culture. It was Mother's Day weekend where Iktomi could truly get a pulse on what was going on with the Natives in the area.

"Hey Ikto!". A woman's voice rang out amidst the rumble of the Powwow. Iktomi turned and saw Wolfe walking quickly around him. She wore a green sweatshirt that said "NASU" in yellow colors. The colors matched her blonde hair and green eyes. She openly admitted she was "white-passing" but was a NASU co-director and took charge of many aspects of the role, including Powwow. "I have something for you."

"Oh? New car? BMW M5?"

She rolled her eyes. "Better!" She went to the NASU table, where several of the students were seated, ready to handle any issues that came up during powwow. It also served as check-in, and had several other functions Iktomi didn't really understand, so he stayed out of the way. Wolfe pulled out a box and started rummaging through it. Iktomi saw her pull out a few shirts before, finally, a sporty sweatshirt. It was red and black. On the front was a small NASU logo, and on the back was a larger Medicine Wheel surrounded by four eagle feathers that made a circle around it. The Medicine Wheel was a circle with a cross in the middle, each quarter of the wheel had a distinct color, red, black, white, and yellow. Iktomi had been told it not only honored the four directions, but the four races of peoples (although it's meaning could vary slightly depending on which tribe you asked). Iktomi was a little confused at first. "You said you wanted one like way back!"

"I did?" Iktomi had to think for a minute. He vaguely remembered teasing that he really wanted one of them "nice, sporty sweatshirts". Joking or not was obviously

irrelevant to Wolfe, who just smiled and tossed it at him. “Oh my gosh, you didn’t have to do this!”

“I said I would!” She then sat down at the NASU table where she was quickly taken up by someone who had a question.

Iktomi marveled at his sweatshirt, and patted her on the shoulder briefly, trying not to interrupt the person asking questions. She glanced at him just long enough for him to mouth out “thank you” and let her turn her attention back to the newcomer.

Iktomi had known Wolfe for several years now. She was an active member of NASU and was pretty involved in the community. She worked at a local coffee shop as a barista, and often made Iktomi his morning iced mochas.

An introduction to Wolfe.

At this point in time, Iktomi was a graduate student, who still helped out with recruitment activities. He asked Wolfe to help with an upcoming event, and to get an idea of how to introduce her, asked what types of things people should know about her. She said that she was a descendent from a California tribe, and had gone to school there prior to attending UO. *I also work at a coffee shop. So, I encounter a bunch of people, a bunch of different characters and it’s probably my favorite thing ever.* It came out in how she treated everyone. She loved meeting new people, learning about their histories, and understanding where they came from. This included challenges they had suffered. *...we all come from somewhere...to like be able to meet new people and just compare it with like, who I used to be and who I am now....* Listening to her talk, Iktomi knew she meant what she said, just based on how she treated him, but also her interactions with customers and others in NASU.

Iktomi asked how things were going on. This was Iktomi's way, he would often ask how students were doing outside of office hours. It allowed him insight as to what was going on in the students' lives that might positively or negatively influence academic excellence. Iktomi never called it this, but this was part of the Family Education Model (FEM) (HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002). Iktomi wasn't just asking how the student was doing academically, he was asking what kinds of things were going on in the student's life that may influence academic progress, such as family, economic, and social challenges. Often Ikto felt more like an older brother, rather than a counselor or a graduate student. In this way, Iktomi knew he could help in a larger capacity than just helping students choose classes and create academic graduation plans, he could help with challenges they were facing outside of the classroom that directly influenced academic success.

Existing institutional support structures.

He asked Wolfe again when she had a moment away from the NASU powwow table. *Um...* she looked around, gauging how far away people were. *Things are fine, school is fine.*

Spider sense tingling (I mean this IS Iktomi), he was expecting a more confident answer from her as she was typically unfazed by challenges. She often laughed, literally laughed, in the face of diversity. And yet here, there was a trace of hesitation. "Just 'fine'?"

I mean yeah. I just had a thing recently, I tried to meet a speaker and didn't feel welcome. Iktomi thought about what she could have been talking about. He had a good sense of when and where the NASU students went on campus to see speakers. He asked

if it was a specific scholar that had visited campus recently. *Yeah, I went in to meet her, and the uh director or coordinator or whatever of the space told us...* she gathered her thoughts for a moment. Until that moment, the speed at which she spoke had been accelerating. After thinking about how she wanted to explain the situation, she went full throttle.

This was one of her first interactions with this particular center, one dedicated to supporting under-represented students. The center was having a closed caucus group for women of color to meet with the speaker after she had given her presentation to a larger audience. Wolfe reported that she and two friends (one who identified as a white male) arrived fifteen minutes before the meeting was to start. The center's director came up to the group, looked specifically at Wolfe and her male friend and told them that this was a closed group for women of color *...and like stood there waiting for us to leave.* With a rapid pace, she explained to Wolfe how she did not care to explain to the director of the space that she wanted to be a part of this, as she put it *...regardless of how you are choosing to profile me.* She voiced her disdain for the coordinator of the space to assume her identity based on her features. *...from that moment I was like 'I am not coming back here'.* Wolfe tried to think of how to help. If Wolfe were to analyze this moment using Darder's (2012) Sphere of Biculturalism (p. 52), it could be argued that Wolfe was a cultural separatist, or someone who completely rejects the dominant culture and retains their primary. This is a difficult situation, as the space in which Wolfe was being rejected was designed specifically to support and retain students like her, hence, it was the dominant culture. Instead of challenging the coordinator of the space and asserting her

Native identity, Wolfe rejected the space altogether, and committed herself to not returning.

“I am sorry that happened.” She laughed to Iktomi’s response, but Iktomi was trying to be serious. “And I think your reaction is completely reasonable. And...that’s not the first time I’ve heard someone say that about that space...yeah, I can’t defend him on that one.”

Wolfe explained further that that one interaction had a lasting impact on her going to the space at all, which she doesn’t anymore. *Yeah. I dunno. It’s weird, too, because then he does still occasionally see’s me around, but I know he doesn’t remember that (incident) at all, and I think he probably still thinks I’m white, is the other thing. It’s weird.*

The stereotype of the Native American reaches beyond the traditional stereotype of brown people living in tipis and being uneducated. White passing Natives find their own challenges navigating through systems sometimes built to support them. In this case, it was assumed that Wolfe was not Native, therefore, was excluded from the opportunity to speak with an indigenous scholar whom she had a genuine interest in. Wolfe, a person who had proven herself as a someone more than capable of navigating the academic waters, found challenges in areas that weren’t necessarily the class, but still impeded on academic progress via not making social and professional support networks. Iktomi felt awkward because he knew the person Wolfe was talking about and felt that his response was an outlier on their part, but the interaction still had a negative impact on her educational experiences, because as she told Iktomi, she was less inclined to visit the center at all.

Natives who “pass” as White.

Iktomi himself used to think he knew a Native when he saw one. He thought he was the greatest looking Indian ever. He had even stated before: “Indians aren’t REAL Indians nowadays. I’m the last real Indian.” (Goble p. 5).

After going to school in the Northwest and meeting Natives who were white passing, he maintained his skepticism of people who claimed to be Native and didn’t present themselves in a manner he thought aligned with what he considered “Native”, and in his mind, rightly so! He ran across light skinned Natives that eventually ended up not being Native at all! He had even heard elders that worked for the school talk about people who had made their careers off of false Native identities. One of Iktomi’s mentors, an elder, went so far as to call the tribe of a person who claimed to be Native whom Ikto’s mentor didn’t think was. He asked them if they knew the person in question, a person who had built their career off this identity. Iktomi recalls the elder saying that the tribe never heard of that person, nor that last name, and no one knew who they could possibly be “related” to. This was a tribe that kept very close attention to documents concerning enrollment and ancestry. So Iktomi came to the University knowing that there were people who would go to great lengths to claim a false identity. In 1992, Adrian Piper published an article called “Passing for White, Passing for Black” wherein she wrestles with the notion of having African ancestry, but having lighter skin, hence, passing as “white”. The article laid out different ways in which she was accepted/rejected by white/black communities for being or not being white/black.

So, the white passing students made him take a closer look. And the closer Iktomi looked, the more he realized there were actually REALER Indians than himself! These

were Indians that didn't live in tipis, didn't hunt buffalo, didn't wear headdresses...but they had their own languages and long-standing customs. Some of them ventured out into the oceans in canoes, canoes built to travel long distances! Something Iktomi's ancestors didn't do. Iktomi saw the way they treated the plants, the animals, the Earth, and each other. He saw similarities, but there were definite differences as well. They cooked their foods differently. Even between close neighbors, Iktomi started hearing the subtle differences in the songs that the different tribes sang, the way their languages differed, even if it was only slightly.

After being accepted into many different ceremonies and tribal events, Iktomi finally got some insight as to what that actually looks like and is experienced as. Even Natives who didn't pass as white still felt the need to prove themselves within a Native context. In Wolfe's scenario, the problem of "proving yourself" only exacerbated itself. Natives and non-Natives alike can pass judgment on how "Native" you are based upon your skin tone, without any previous knowledge of the person's history, language, cultural knowledge, community involvement, and other things that went with being "Native". What got Iktomi was when the students were excited to explain their heritages to him. Their lineages, their cultures, many of them spoke their languages more fluently than Iktomi spoke Lakota. All of the sudden Iktomi felt like he was no longer "Super Indian". He had a lot of learning to do. Foucault (1977) might highlight the fact that Wolfe became subjected because of how the idea of what is Native and what is not Native was talked about in the various communities in which Wolfe resided. *I didn't think of myself as biracial until I moved away from that community.* It wasn't until after Wolfe had moved away to go to college had she had to struggle with challenges of being

biracial. *And then all of the sudden I realized people look at me and they don't think I'm Native and uhh...it's weird because you grow up feeling marginalized, and people are looking at you like 'why?'* Having grown up in her Native community, she reported that it was easier for her to get around as a Native, as everyone already knew her. When she moved away, things got more complicated. Wolfe stating she realized people looked at her differently meant that she felt “the gaze” (to use Foucault’s terminology) shift in a way in which she did not feel as if she was viewed as a Native anymore, as if she was aware that there was a shift change in the guard tower of the panopticon; all of the sudden her identity as a Native became more questionable.

Shortly after arriving on campus, Wolfe began attending the NASU weekly meetings, in an attempt to remind herself that she did belong in this space. *I mean it is in a lot of ways about social support, but it's also about 'you've earned your spot here'.* Iktomi then asked her where she sought out her support, if it was advising or family or friends. *I definitely don't go to Academic Advising, I learned to do everything by myself, um, because that's never been very fruitful for me. Honestly, the Longhouse...I feel like I can kind of study there.* She reported that it was basically the longhouse or her own family that she relied on the most. *But other than that, I don't feel like I get a ton of support, only because I don't go to CMAE and I don't go, I don't do stuff with the MCC really. Yeah.*

“Do you feel welcome here?”

Not on campus.

“Not on campus?”

Not the broader campus. She mentioned that she could be in some cases white-passing but felt tensions from all ends of the pigmentocracy spectrum. She reported there was a level of tension from people who wanted to run into her (Iktomi assumed this meant it was because she was a person who would speak up on behalf of under-represented people) to being “too stand-off-ish”. ...*there was always a level of tension when it came to dealing with people in the larger campus context. And it feels really hostile and I feel like I can't, like there's things I can't say in certain spaces, um.*

“Why? Would they be politically charged or...”

Yeah, politically charged stuff is really weird...if I am too, I guess, radical about things, you know, it depends on who it is they would take it different. And, asserting my identity is really, I dunno, difficult I guess.

Wolfe in different capacities had attempted to assert her Native identity, there were other times that it didn't seem like the best move. What got Iktomi was that he wasn't expecting as much pushback from other Natives as she claimed she had had to deal with, a problem compounded by the color of her skin. This makes Darder's model a little more difficult to interpret, as there are layers of identity at play here. It could be assumed that Wolfe is only trying to negotiate her primary Native culture within the dominate culture that is the University, but these issues are more complex than that. She also has to assert her primary Native identity within the dominate notions of what it means to be Native in the first place, part of that discussion has to involve the way she looks to Natives and non-Natives alike.

Pigmentocracy and Wolfe.

Wolfe confided in Iktomi about a time when a friend of hers, who was also Native, said something that stuck with her ever since the incident. Wolfe was in class, and the class topic happened to be the notion of “Mestizo”. Wolfe told Iktomi what her friend had said to the class and her own responses to the comments.

... ”you know it’s so interesting that like Mestizo there’s a word for like a Native identity that centers somebody’s whiteness where like here in the states we don’t have that it’s either you’re Native or you’re not” and she’s like “OR you unless you’re Wolfe, you don’t center your whiteness” and like pointed at me across the room. I cocked my head... like “excuse me, bitch?” but mostly like “what are you talking about” right?

As far as Iktomi knew, “Mestizo” was a term used primarily in Latin American to refer to someone of mixed race, specifically Spanish and Indigenous descent. Iktomi asked Wolfe what the student meant by “centering whiteness” and Wolfe admitted she was not entirely sure herself. It wasn’t so much that the student called her “white”, it was that the student was defining her identity for her in a very public space. It was yet another instance where her Native identity was being challenged or defined for her, much like getting asked to leave the cultural center.

The comments rocked Wolfe so hard she forgot what the initial question for the class was, let alone the topic of the conversation. Wolfe explained that she felt the people beside her were *...like “ooh they just called you out”*, but she did not want to call out this person who was her friend. Wolfe also knew a handful of people in the class. *So, I was just sitting there like fuming about the situation...all these things that I should say about*

how my identity was misrepresented and stolen from me, whitewashed, and how in that moment I was being colonized, right? Wolfe wanted to tell everyone about how “messed up” the situation was, but at the same time, this other person who made this public claim about her identity was not only another Native student, it was her friend.

Iktomi blurted out a laugh, and then tried to wave it off as if to say “I am sorry”. Unfazed, Wolfe described to Iktomi how she thought the professor would intervene or address what was said. Instead, he answered the question about Mestija, and completely ignored the fact that Wolfe’s identity was inaccurately defined for her in this moment. The discourse about what it is to be Native or to be mixed-race, was being defined for, and thrust upon, Wolfe in a public space, a space explicitly discussing issues of mixed-racial identities.

And I started to say something and instead they were like “it’s okay to accept your whiteness” and I was like “fucking NO! It’s okay, that’s the problem!” Wolfe told Iktomi that she was not mad that she was called “white” in front of people, it was more that she told her friend in confidence about her identity and they were both trying to understand their own mixed-race identities. The people in the room told her that it was “okay to be white” to which she responded *...yeah I know that*. Wolfe had been put in a position to explain the large-scale complexities of her identity, but it was thrust upon her by someone she trusted and confided in. Wolfe then told the entire class: *I’m just asking that in the future you don’t use mine or anybody else’s identities for your own purposes...that’s up for me to decide to tell people when and how...whether you use to accurately or misrepresent it*. Iktomi had not witnessed this moment when it happened, but just hearing Wolfe explain the situation, Iktomi could almost feel the tension in the

room. After making her last statement, Wolfe said she looked around and saw a lot of people nodding in agreement, but the tension remained. At this point in the story, Wolfe blurted out laughing yet again. *I just saw them nodding, but not like looking at anybody!*

Iktomi tried to explain that this was probably a lesson many of the people in the class needed to see live to understand not to enforce or define someone else's identity for them, an already tricky thing to do with people who only identify as one race. Wolfe identified as multiple races and passed as non-Native. In this moment it could be argued that Wolfe was acting as a cultural negotiator, according to Darder's Sphere of Biculturalism (Darder, 2012, pg. 52), as she was not only retaining her mixed identity within the classroom, she was transforming the classroom experience for others who might follow in her footsteps. Even for the professor in the room, whom Iktomi wondered if they could have handled the situation in a way that was more supportive of Wolfe and other students whose identities might be challenged by other people in the room.

It was pretty intense, the thing that really sucked is that then like...there was so much going around and around and around in my head that I wanted to like tell the whole class... she also didn't want to shame her friend, even though she felt her friend had done just that (shame her) in a very public place. ...but I couldn't even pay attention the rest of class. It happened in like the beginning and I was sitting there, my heart was beating and I was like sweating and I was so pissed. She admitted she just wanted to leave, but felt a weird obligation to stay, because if she left, she felt as if people would see this action as being mad that she was called "white", which did not come close to encompassing the scope as to how she felt her identity had been violated. You never know

how those situations are going to go, so I like sat there through the rest of the class, but it was like I got nothing out of it other than just feuding.

“...do you have a lot of those kinds of incidents or do you feel like this was just kind of an outlier or...” Iktomi had trouble finding his words for a moment, and then posed the question. “...do you have those moments where you are like ‘I should say something’ but then you are just like ‘no, this isn’t the spot’?”

I’ve done both.

“You’ve done both?”

She has on multiple occasions asserted herself, attempting to shed light on her unique and mixed identity. *...like I become so big in that moment, like not like I feel egotistical or something, but that I just become like this specter in the room, to people it’s not comfortable for them and...* she equated it to becoming the “angry brown woman although she admits she is not brown. *I essentially become that in their eyes.*

“So, when that happens, and you do assert yourself, how do you feel the professors react to that, are they like interested, do they pull back themselves, or is it a mix?”

She reported a mix of reactions, some professors would make an attempt to add to her comment, stating certain authors would make similar claims, furthering the conversation. Others would nod and move on. Things seemed to go either way for her. And those times where she would try to say something she felt was continuing a false narrative, the results of voicing those views were also a mixed bag.

Disenrollment and legal tribal identity.

Iktomi had seen tribal enrollment cause serious issues with families and communities. Tribes that the federal government recognized as entities having ancestral ties to this land who still operated in ways that took care of their tribal members received certain supports based on this recognition. As such, tribes identified and kept track of who their tribal members were. Often, tribal members would have to “prove” that they met whatever the tribes’ criteria were for being a member. Each tribe can determine their own criteria.

Some people may be enrolled with a tribe and find out they are no longer a member. This can be due to several reasons, ranging from the requirements changing, to not being “involved” with the tribal community (“involvement” can range from living on the reservation to voting on tribal issues, working for the tribe, etc.), to political reasons. Often tribes will claim it is necessary to retain traditional cultures and values. However, if the tribe happens to be generating revenue that is then given to enrolled tribal members, some argue that disenrollment is a way for the remaining enrolled members of the tribe to receive a larger “slice of the pie” as it pertains to the revenue made by the tribe. This is a form of tribal discourse, as the tribe literally defines what it means to be a member of said tribe, and in a sense, what it means to be Native.

Wolfe told Iktomi that her family had been disenrolled from her tribe. She was ten years old. *I just feel like I have struggled a lot in the past like disenrollment for a really long time...* Now a college student, culturally she felt the same, but the idea of not being enrolled in her tribe stayed in her thoughts. *I had like identity issues, I felt like I didn't belong. Like we were kicked out by our own family. You know, so if we were disenrolled*

by our own family, why are we wrong? She had felt the financial pressures of being out of state. Tuition was twice as much for out of state than it was for resident students. She chose UO for very specific reasons and was being pushed out due to lack of financial support.

Success and health issues for Wolfe.

So, I feel like success um...the first thing that comes to mind is like happiness and I feel like having people to share that happiness with and to share that feeling with, to me that is success. She told Iktomi that she did not feel that success was not necessarily tied to economic gain. *I don't feel like success is monetary in any way, shape or form. Because you can be rich as can be and still like not have that happiness.* This could be someone who was simply trying to make it sound like they were bigger and more honorable than they were. Or Wolfe knew that respecting elders and the idea of “giving back” were ideals prevalent in Native American culture, and she wished to express it to Iktomi. But he didn't think so, not based on how she acted around other people he saw. It wasn't just her, it was the way the people reacted around her. Her happiness was contagious.

Part of her definition of success may have stemmed from her recent realization that she was facing a rather life-threatening personal challenge. It came out when Iktomi asked her about her own personal goals. “...you mentioned that you were setting, like, little goals? So, what are some goals, some other goals and aspirations that you have for yourself?”

For me. Um. Well I want, well with just me personally, or with my job?

“Either. And both!”

Um, well for me personally, some internal goals, I have been really wanting to work on like self-worth and self-value. And so, I made a promise to myself that like, I am going to tell myself 'you're beautiful, you are worth it' like all these things, I dunno I was struggling with that for a while for whatever reason.

Iktomi was surprised by her response. "You???"

Yeah, I know! You know you just get down on yourself sometimes...found out that I have lupus, which is like an incurable auto-immune disease... She went on to explain that this specific disease attacks the immune system in a way that her immune system cannot tell the difference between healthy cells and those that could potentially be attacking her body. As a result, her immune system attacks everything, including her healthy cells, making her kidneys work overtime. ...the first couple days I found out about it I was a mess, I was a wreck, I was crying and just UG like my mom being a thousand miles away.... She claimed her mom was a main source of guidance, counseling, and support. The attack on her immune system may have been attacking her kidneys as well, forcing her to drastically change her diet. Furthermore, prescription costs had to come out of pocket. Even as she told Iktomi her story, she had a smile on her face, and she laughed at her own reactions to the situation ...I was a wreck... like every emotion you could feel I was like 'no one is ever gonna love me, they are not gonna want to deal with this' to like 'Oh I am gonna die!' Like all these things... She laughed again. ...and you know you literally feel all of these emotions and I have successfully been able to like control those and like put them towards good energies instead.

As a result, she took on a change in philosophy that re-directed how she viewed the world. *I just decided I wanted to work on like my mindset and being positive... seeing*

that things could always be worse...it's not curable, but I can definitely, like work to get through it and live a full healthy life. In the face of adversity, she smiled. Instead of taking the angry, depressed, and helpless road, she decided to focus on the positives in her life and make that her approach to everyday situations. *I just have been working on internally facing that battle and waking up every morning and choosing not to let it get the best of me, I don't want to be a victim.*

“Giving back” for Wolfe.

Iktomi often saw her in the presence of smiles and laughter. It was rare to see otherwise. *I have just been really paying it forward with like my attitude and my actions. Um, which I feel like is definitely successful in my book.* While she openly admitted her “diet” hasn’t changed as drastically as she feels it should have, she also was excited to promote and support those in her same situation. May being “Lupus Awareness Month” she had already gathered stickers and promotional swag for Lupus, a not well-known disease that hits close to her heart. It is something she is proud of others, at the same time reflecting on the growth she has experienced herself. *Yeah, Lupus Awareness Month! ...I am just gonna go take my medication, just gonna go give blood tomorrow which is fine, it ain't no thang!* While she was not necessarily giving back through her career or academic related goals anymore, she was definitely finding ways of giving back in her own way, based upon the challenges she had suffered herself.

Wolfe and academic supports.

Iktomi attempted to support Wolfe in the best way that he could. He often asked her questions that revolved around what supports she had sought out to handle varying

challenges she had to deal with. “So then, do you think the University is providing you with the resources and experiences to achieve your life goals?”

Her response was one that highlighted the fact that she thought there were enough resources, but she didn't tap into them in the way that would have been useful. *I feel like the University had a lot of outlets and a bunch of like resources, I just didn't personally like, apply them.* This was something Iktomi heard a lot of, students who knew supports existed but weren't sure where or how to tap into them. *I dunno if it was because I didn't know how or because I was super overwhelmed...* She even admitted planning to see Iktomi but didn't actually go through with it. *...I remember there was one time when I WAS going to come talk to you, I remember, and I was like “aww this” like life happened and I was like “ehhh” and freaked out...* She did agree that those supports existed, and even highlighted a Native professor she connected with during her time. In the end, she reported that Oregon did have a positive impact on her life, but she was unable to finish. *I definitely felt like, if anything, Oregon like pushed me to want to do more things in life. Um. I just couldn't afford it...I wish I could, I love school, I really do! I love learning.* Despite the fact that she was doing well in her classes, the financial burden between not being protected under the Aboriginal Rights Initiative and having to pay for her medical bills, school became a non-option. *I was just so confused because I graduated with a 4.6, my SAT scores were average...I have friends graduating with like 3.2s and they have full rides so I'm like “what am I doing wrong, where did I go wrong?”* She then told Iktomi that she maybe didn't talk to the right people.

“So, when you ARE having like, a challenge, where do you typically go? Do you go to your family or do you rely on friends, or...”

My momma. My sweet, sweet momma...she's my absolute best friend and my aunt too...I feel like for support I turn to family. Always. 10/10 every case. She laughed at her own response again. Wolfe reported that because she couldn't pay her tuition. I worked so hard in high school so that I would have an easier time in college and I'm like "this is bologna!" especially coming from out of state, like are you kidding? It was so expensive.

Hearing this, Iktomi tried to help her out, with his knowledge of how residency works. "Well, so you have been working, right? So how long...may I ask how long you've been working?"

Just working uhhhh a year and a half? Yeah, a year and a half, I went to Lane for a couple terms just to stay in school because that's how you keep the loan down is you stay in school. They pump it up another hundred dollars when you are out of school, learned that one real quick...

"You should be a resident?"

Oh, I am one. And now I'm moving to Washington. She laughed again. It's all...yeah. Well cuz I still had like fourteen grand on my account that I would just, like, pay so I don't go into collections every month. Between not going into collections and not being able to defer any of her payments anymore, she reported that she felt like she couldn't take out another loan.

"So, do you have...I know you are going through a transition with your job, do you still have goals to go back to school? Or are you just kind of done?"

I had this fight with my aunt. Wolfe reported the fight began with her admitting that she felt she was done, and she was going to focus on accepting the opportunity presented to her as being an owner of one of the barista chains that she worked for....went

home for my little niece's birthday party and had to talk to my aunt she was like telling me I need to go back to school... Wolfe reported she and her aunt had a back and forth. Her aunt claimed that education was important, and Wolfe agreed but couldn't afford it. Wolfe and her aunt eventually came to terms with what each of them was saying, and Wolfe admitted her aunt had her best interest in mind. *...my aunty like teaches on the Reservation she like teaches culture, so I think that's why she like is like "don't give up!" like "that stuff is so important"*. Wolfe reported that her aunt felt that way because Wolfe didn't want to become a teacher herself, she wanted to become a speech pathologist and this influenced the friction. But Wolfe also stated she did not want to give up on school. *I don't really want to give up that part of it either...maybe try to like do a little bit of both somehow. But I have to go back to school for that, so. Eventually.* Wolfe laughed again.

Iktomi's recruitment days kicked in for a moment. "Eventually! Alright."

If loans weren't a thing I would... For Iktomi, he asked himself if he could have done more for Wolfe. She clearly loved school and loved the people. But factors outside of school, specifically factors pertaining to her identity, influenced classroom experiences, as well as created financial barriers that became too much. In terms of her help seeking behaviors, she reported that she knew of resources on campus, but did not know where they were or whom to talk to. Even though she knew Iktomi, she rarely talked about her issues until the problem had become too large. Social supports were in place (peers and family) but in the realm of paying for college, the supports were not versed enough to help her in a way that allowed her to complete her degree.

Iktomi knew Wolfe well and knew that, in terms of quantitative data, Wolfe might represent a failure of sorts, that is, failure to retain a student or failure of the student to

graduate, promoting what Eve Tuck would call a damage-centered narrative. However, when Iktomi looked at Wolfe, he didn't see failure. Yes, he wished he had been a little more assertive in his efforts to assist Wolfe, but she even admitted she almost went to see him about her financial situation and then didn't.

Even as she talked about her difficulties and challenges, she still had a smile on her face. She still had a positive outlook on life and wanted to share that positivity with everyone around her, whether that was at powwow or with her friends or co-workers or family, it didn't matter. She wanted to see other people smile, and for her, that was success, and that was the way she gave back. This was the strength of Wolfe, the capacity to be resilient in the face of many challenges.

Just because Wolfe hadn't finished her undergraduate degree does not mean that she had given up on education, quite the opposite, she relished the idea of going back, moving forward, and learning more! But for the time being, she had made her decision to pursue the career opportunity that had been presented to her, one that allowed her to do something else that she loved, while at the same time making money instead of accruing debt. She still was deeply involved with her family and communities back home, despite moving further north and pursuing her career and life goals there. She still promoted Lupus awareness, and still carried with her the same spunk and positive energy that she always did. This was not "failure", in Iktomi's eyes. This was a person who chose to use the challenging experiences as fuel to face challenges of the future, while at the same time, not letting go of her culture nor her views of the importance of education.

Supports, Help-Seeking, and Challenges (Jane's Narrative)

Iktomi was walking along. He opened the door to the brick building where he worked, flashed by the elevators, nodded at a few people he knew, before he entered his office and sat down. His 11:00 meeting had been cancelled and so he brought up his calendar to see if he could get a jump on whatever was going to happen after lunch. While his computer booted up, he checked my phone. A text read “will you be my dad for the day?” It took a moment for Iktomi to think. “Jane” was attending IntroDucktion, the UO version of orientation. She was probably at Mac Court. Iktomi realized that the indigenous community Jane grew up in probably had less people living in it than there were students inside Mac Court at that moment.

Iktomi left the office and headed towards her. The sun was shining, which was typical of Eugene, Oregon in the summers. The green grasses were covered with folding chairs and signs for the soon-to-be freshmen. It smelled like spring. It felt good to be outside, feeling the wind and the sun. Iktomi spotted Jane's group sitting down getting ready for lunch. When she saw Iktomi, she stood up and headed for him immediately.

Iktomi looked for their “leader” or coordinator or whoever was taking control of their day. And when he found no one, he asked Jane, “Can you like...leave your group, or are you sort of stuck here?”

Brown hair, brown skin, brown eyes. She gave Iktomi her version of an annoyed look. Unless you knew her, her annoyed look didn't look very annoyed. But Iktomi knew exactly what was on her mind. “I think we are supposed to stay together.” Jane was not one who showed a lot of emotion. It wasn't that she was emotionless or angry. She simply didn't express it her emotions physically.

“Just walk with me. If your group moves or something I will find out where you are supposed to be.” Clearly breaking the rules, Iktomi had a knack for getting out of trouble. He led her away from her group and they headed over to the building where the Business School resided, a building with a large atrium inside with benches and tables. They found reasons to talk while they walked, asked about family, the trip down and so forth. Small talk, mostly. They entered the sunlit atrium and were lucky to find an empty bench along the edge. There was quite a bit of foot traffic. “How are you doing?”

Her face didn't shift. She didn't frown, she didn't cry, she didn't smile. She stared at the floor. Unflinching, she told Iktomi “I am really freaking out right now”.

“Like what? Too many people?”

“Yeah, way too many.”

Iktomi wasn't sure what to say in that moment, so they sat in silence while the rumble of random people washed over them. Iktomi searched his brain for something to say, something that would push her away from the anxiety he knew she felt. “Look at all these people. Look at this guy with his briefcase.” A tall guy with a fedora and a briefcase flashed by. “In a sea of people wearing backpacks, this guy chose a briefcase?”

She chuckled.

“What was he thinking? What is he thinking now, I mean he must know, right? What is going through his mind right now? And this girl over here! Her and her big ass mocha.”

She laughed harder.

“Why do you need that much coffee, is she worried she is going to fall asleep? She is going to get to class and realize her drink takes up half her desk. And what if she

spills, that would be a disaster! And this dude, he looks confident, right? Man, his girlfriend probably broke up with him last night and now he's a wreck. And look at him! He seems like he has his shit together, right?"

She laughed again. And after a moment she said something Iktomi didn't anticipate. "Everybody has something..."

"Everybody! Everyone has anxieties, everyone has blood flowing through their veins, everyone has to eat and drink and breathe. No one here is worth stressing over, everyone is on the same level as you right now." It was a point Iktomi wasn't trying to make when he started talking, but made sense given the context. In a sea of people wearing backpacks, everyone was worried they would get caught carrying a briefcase.

They didn't talk much longer. Iktomi needed to make sure she caught back up with her orientation group, so that she could fulfill the orientation requirements, but also legitimately make full usage of the institution's existing support structures such as Academic Advising, Financial Aid, Cultural Centers, tutoring, etc. In the moment, Iktomi understood maybe she needed something a little unorthodox to let her know that she was supported with life as well. Students come to school with challenges beyond writing, math, and language proficiencies. Sometimes the challenges faced by students that don't seem to be directly related to academic success are factors in whether or not a student succeeds or is pushed out.

An introduction to Jane.

A couple of days had gone by since Jane's incident. At a University event, Jane had been approached by someone she knew who was also attending the event. This person made unwanted sexual advances toward Jane when she was alone and away from

the general public. In the days that followed, family, friends, and University supports all became deeply involved in the incident. It was her first year at the University.

She arrived to Iktomi's office. Her presence was the same as always; barely noticeable. She slid through the door and sat in the nearest chair. "Are you busy?"

"Uh...no?" The true answer was that Iktomi didn't know, but for her, he made an exception. After checking his calendar, he confirmed this. "No, not right now, what's going on?" Most of Iktomi's students entered his office this way. The check-in desk was several steps beyond Iktomi's office door. Most of the time, students would pop their heads into the doorway and see if Ikto was with another student. During staff meetings and monthly reports, Iktomi consistently had the "least amount of students visited" because most of his students never checked in at all, therefore, were not tracked as having visited the office. This worked for the FEM model, as Iktomi was flexible enough to talk about personal issues at length but hurt his monthly reviews because a major aspect of his job also involved having 15 minute "in-and-out" advising appointments where he simply had to tell students what classes they needed to graduate.

Putting a time limit on students, in Iktomi's opinion, sent a signal that they were only important for 15 minutes or however long the duration of the conversation would be. Iktomi knew this visit might take some time. Despite her true misgivings and tensions, she didn't communicate them physically. She was meeting with a Dean on the same floor Iktomi worked.

"How are you feeling?"

"Nervous." They talked briefly before Iktomi told her he could take her to the office where she would meet with the Dean. It was a short walk, just down the hall, but

Iktomi tried to make the walk last as long as possible, as he tried to think of things to say or supports he could give. He really felt lost...

When they reached the office, the Dean was behind her desk. Also sat in the office was another Native, female colleague Iktomi had known previously. Iktomi was a little taken back at the fact that, until this point, he had only helped in a very miniscule way. He looked at all of their faces and knew the answer before he even posed the question. "Um. Do I need to be here, can I help here?"

"No." Jane looked him in his eyes and smiled. It was a smile that told Iktomi that he had done everything he could thus far. She was being polite. They all were. And yet, Iktomi felt weirdly frustrated, as he knew he was unable to help in the capacity he was accustomed to.

Larger and larger challenges for Jane.

As a child, Jane knew she had wanted to go to school. *I uh, saw the older kids, my older siblings going to school and I'd watch them out the window and I longed to go with them.* It was a sentiment that she carried with her throughout her K-12 experience. *...the older I get the, more significant I realize that moment was, because I had a longing and a desire to be in school.* Previous conversations allowed Iktomi to understand that Jane had to make several leaps just to get to the UO. Beyond the people she already knew in Eugene, Iktomi wasn't sure why she had her heart set on the UO. *I dunno what told me Oregon, people have asked me that like "why Oregon?" and I'm like "Really, I could not tell you" I don't know what it was that was like...something clicked. Somehow, somewhere...* Jane had not only been admitted to other schools in her state, she had received scholarships for those institutions. But she had her heart set on UO.

“Did you visit campus?”

No! Well I did for the orientation, but before that, nope!

“But by then, you were admitted! Oh my gosh, okay so wait a minute. When did you actually make the move, was it for like IntroDucktion, or was it uhh...week of welcome or?”

Yeah it was week of welcome I moved here. Jane had not visited campus before she made her decision to attend UO. She attended IntroDucktion, which was UO’s orientation. That was her first visit to campus. She then moved to Eugene, Oregon on her second visit, which was “week of welcome”, the week before classes, where everyone moves to Eugene and prepares for the first week of school. I went to Introducttion...and I came down here and I didn’t know what to do, so...”

“But why? If I may ask.” Iktomi chuckled.

Jane laughed at his question. *I ask myself that, too! Because I could of...I dunno I guess it’s that going through different scenarios, like what if I were there instead of here. I dunno!*

“But you are here.”

Yeah. I don’t really regret my decision.

Iktomi asked her who she went to for help. She pointed at a lot of her family members and friends, not necessarily people who were already institutional support structures, such as advisors and professors.

Parents helped me a lot. Well it was mostly like “you have to fill out these applications because you are not going to NOT go to college” She laughed at her own

response. *I am glad they did that though or else I don't really know what else I would be doing.*

Iktomi understood this situation from his own experiences. "Right, right. I had a similar experience". Iktomi's mom basically told him if he didn't fill out admissions applications, he was getting "kicked out the tipi!"

I had some people working at the UO... Jane pointed and laughed at Iktomi. Iktomi also laughed when he remembered this moment. *...push my application in after it got put on hold.* Iktomi realized he had contacted the counselor of her admissions application when she was put on a waitlist due to an incomplete file. He had also handed the residency officer her proof of tribal enrollment, meaning she would be charged as a resident, despite being a resident of Washington, per the Aboriginal Rights Initiative. She was reminding Iktomi that he was the one who pushed her application through.

"Earlier it sounded to me like you kind of stretched your elbows out a little bit when it came to seeking out help and advice and stuff. Um. How did that look like, what do you think... I don't mean to use the cliché but, 'got out of your shell'? Like were there challenges that you faced that you were like 'oh okay like now I can do this' or was it just something that you-

Yeah. Um. Well the uh, sexual harassment case my senior year-not my senior year, my FRESHMAN year. Iktomi recalled this moment well, as he had tried to support Jane in his best capacity. *...I think that kind of, it kind of forced me to come out of my shell and like be okay with receiving help from like other people.* For Jane, it also involved supports that were outside the realm of traditional educational support

structures. *Like lawyers, like I didn't really...they kind of just told me what to do when I had to do it? So, I think that kind of...really took me out of my shell.*

Sexual assault and another student's input.

According to the Department of Justice (2004), "American Indians" were twice as likely to experience sexual assault than any other race, about 5 per 1,000 people for Natives and 2 per 1,000 for all other races (p. 14). Iktomi had previously talked to another student who confided in him that she was sexually assaulted. This other student was a graduate student, and Iktomi had simply asked what had persuaded her to attend the UO and what her life goals and aspirations were. *I was raised in the community of 3,500 people. And um, I was taught to listen to my elders, I was taught that everyone has valuable input...* As a child, the graduate student reported that she was told that good people do bad things.

The graduate student went on to explain that in her community, it was a big deal to go to school, not necessarily why it was important to go to school, it was simply important to go to school. Through going to school, the graduate student said that she had wanted to preserve indigenous land and culture.

However, her childhood was wrought with experiences of sexual abuse. When she was 2 years old, an older step-sibling had been molesting her. At ages 6 and 10, two separate teachers at her school also molested. *...and the justice system didn't hold those people responsible.* By the time she was entering high school she was pregnant with her first child. *...so those inappropriate sexual experiences had these impacts that lead to me getting pregnant, you know, not understanding safe sexual boundaries.* Despite these challenges, including having a child before her freshman year in high school, she had

received a lot of supports from people at her school and around the community in general. When looking at what supports she had in school and around her community, it could be argued that she received both support and was presented major challenges from institutional and familial support structures alike. On the one hand, many people in the school encouraged her to continue her studies and represent her community at various regional educational conferences. Within that same group of supports were individuals who had sexually assaulted her. *...there was good people and bad people, but I was raised to believe that good people do bad things. And not um...not that people had bad intentions...*

The notion of toxic masculinity.

Connell claims that “hegemonic masculinity” is the dominant notion of masculinity, and this dominant notion is built upon the ideals of domination of women, and intermale dominance (1987), and is shaped to a large extent by the stigmatization of homosexuality (Frank, 1987). Terry A. Kuppers (2005) explored men in prison, specifically a phenomenon called “toxic masculinity” which “...involves the need to aggressively compete and dominate others and encompasses the most problematic proclivities in men. These same male proclivities foster resistance to psychotherapy” (p. 713). The involvement of the need to compete and dominate others is something Iktomi had spent a long time doing. Whether that was through fighting, through racing cars, through beating others in sport, it didn’t matter. As long as Iktomi was the winner, it somehow legitimized his “macho-ness”. Furthermore, as Kupper’s study suggested, Iktomi didn’t want to ask for help either, as that was a sign of weakness. Kupper’s study was focused on men in the prison system refusing psychotherapy. Iktomi knew from his

own experiences that seeking help from academic advisors or professors, fell under the same line: it was a sign of weakness. Iktomi didn't need to ask for help, and even in those few moments in which he did, he felt weak, felt less than a man, and felt as if he was a burden to the advisor or professor he was seeking help from. This directly relates to Stanton-Salazaar's help finding, similarly with inmates who do not seek psychotherapy, there are male students who see seeking help as a sign of weakness. Iktomi had felt this was also the case with some men and seeking help in postsecondary education.

It also involved education, as being "educated" didn't really mean you were more of a man, or at least that is what Iktomi thought of "masculinity" at the time. Now he knew these behaviors lead to premature death, diseases, lack of education and lower socioeconomic status, hence the phrase "toxic masculinity", it literally kills men. And education is not seen as fulfilling this "being male" agenda.

Iktomi had attended a ceremony put on by a Native Doctorate, an opening for a museum exhibit. He was there in support of a friend. His friend had left him, and Iktomi had found himself sat at a table with three elder women of the same tribe as the person putting on the exhibit. He listened in on their conversation. The first elder asked what time the tour started, and the second said to find the Native Doctorate who put on the event, to which the third elderly woman responded.

"Don't ask him, he has his PH.D, he doesn't know what he is talking about". Iktomi sat in silence, not wanting to admit that he, himself at the time, was in a doctoral program. It was indicative that it wasn't just Native masculinity at risk here, it was Native identity in general, that was in jeopardy, when it came to getting educated from from a

non-tribal source. Iktomi saw this as a residual skepticism by Native people in general, a skepticism that was exaggerated amongst the men of the community.

Between 1976 and 2006, college and university enrollment of male and female American Indians/ Alaska Natives grew at different rates. In 1976, there was near parity in the number of American Indian/Alaska Native males and females enrolled in degree-granting colleges and universities (38,500 and 37,600, respectively). By 1978, the number of American Indian/Alaska Native females enrolled in colleges and universities exceeded the number of American Indian/Alaska Native males enrolled. In 2006, 111,000 American Indian/Alaska Native females (61 percent) and 71,200 males (39 percent) were enrolled in colleges and universities, a difference of 21 percentage points. Only among Blacks was there a gender gap larger than that among American Indians/Alaska Natives: 30 percentage points separated the percentages of enrollment for Black females (65 percent) and males (35 percent) in 2006” (National Center for Educational Statistics).

A study from the University of California at Los Angeles’ Center for Civil Rights Remedies that claimed they found that Native students are disciplined about two times as much as their white counterparts, despite being less than 3% of the total student population (Losen, Hodsden, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015, p. 4). In Iktomi’s experiences, many men on the Reservations find that there is a level of “macho” that needs to be fulfilled in order to fit in. Kimbol reported similar notions of what it meant to be “Native”.

*If you had a problem it was like you had to fight or you say you're sorry.
Chuckles And it was hard for me, too, because when I was younger it was
like when I was on the Rez I was raised on the Rez, then moved...then they
started calling me like a town Indian, and my own cousins and family
members would kind of pick on me to see if I was tough or how I was so I
was like...I had to amplify being tougher or more of a macho man on the
Rez then when I come out here...I'll have an altercation or something with
a white guy and I find myself going back to like...just what I know.*

Iktomi understood when Kimbol said he needed to remind himself when he was “on the Rez” and when he was in the city. A post-secondary institution that is non-tribally affiliated not only means that he has to present himself differently for the purposes of being successful in school, but also has to abide by different laws and social norms, norms that he did not grow up with.

Toxic masculinity does not only hurt the males partaking in these types of activities, it also negatively influences the lives of the people around them. Inherent in Connell's (2009) definition has to do with the dominance over women. This can open the door for various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and murder.

Andrea Smith (2003, pg. 70) stated “the history of sexual violence and genocide among Native women illustrates how gender violence functions as a tool for racism and colonialism among women of color.” American Indian/Alaska Native women continue to be highlighted as the group of women who have the highest rates of rape and sexual

assault victimization amongst all other racial and ethnic groups (Perry, 2004; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998).

Different support structures and Jane.

When it came to academic support, Iktomi liked to think about what different kinds of supports there were for Native students in 4 categories: tribal supports, familial supports, social supports, and existing institutional supports. Tribal supports could include financial scholarships, an advisor from the tribe, books, programs to support students with college endeavors, and others. Familial supports were people within that person's family that could be supportive or helpful as it pertained to the college-going process. Social supports included the students' social networks and how the people within the students' social circles may be helpful. And finally, there were existing support structures, or structures housed within the school designed to support students, structures such as academic advising, financial aid office, tutoring, office hours for professors, and so forth.

It was easy to think about these support structures when they were broken up into categories, but when it came to actual experiences of Native students, often the boundaries between these different support structures became less clear, and more "muddy", as Iktomi liked to think about it. This "muddiness" was part of how students sought and/or received support. For instance, she had known Iktomi before he became a retention specialist and counselor. Therefore, he was partially a familial/social support, and partially an existing institutional support structure. And she had chosen the UofO before Iktomi even came into the equation as an institutional support. *I wanted to be a teacher. And I really liked the Sapsik'wala program.* The program she was referring to

was a teacher program at the UO designed specifically to support Native students and future teachers in Native communities. *And I had family down here. It just seemed like a great town and great University, and so that is what put me here.*

“Did you look at other schools?”

Yes. I actually got a full ride to the University of Washington. Throughout her admissions process, and even into her first year at college, she reported that she did not rely on people she didn't already know. *I don't think I actually talked to anybody I didn't know, I kind of went to more familiar people than I knew, just because...they were the ones I was most comfortable with.*

While most other students would call their parents, talk to their friends, ask their tribe for something, and/or use the advising offices and professors and other supports already at the institution, Jane's challenges required support from other networks as well. And the “muddiness” with Jane's support systems weren't just supports that crossed the lines between tribal, social, familial, and institutional. They crossed the lines of what was supportive and what created challenges.

The person who had made unwanted sexual advances towards Jane was a person whom she had already known before attending the University, a person who helped support her. The experience wasn't just a traumatic moment, it set the stage for the rest of her college career. Iktomi asked her if the experience took away from her focus on academic studies. *...sometimes it literally did take me away, like class and uhh study time so... Even after the incident began to resolve itself, Jane struggled with her confidence and her ability to progress academically. ...he was also one of the people who helped me get into the University, like he wrote me recommendation letters...so I began questioning*

whether or not I should have been there in the first place. She told Iktomi that she was battling with all of this during classes, increasing her level of self-doubt.

When Iktomi asked her if the University was supplying her with the resources and experiences necessary to achieve her life goals, she responded with an “eh” response, “eh” meaning she didn’t want to say yes, but she didn’t want to say no either. *It’s hard for me to like...I don’t want to give the University that many props.*

“I was hearing that a little bit in your response previously, like the University has a Longhouse but..”

Well, without the Native people, it wouldn’t be anything.

“And a lot of those people, frankly are supporting you...not because it’s their job.”

Yeah.

Iktomi backed off of his previous statement for a moment. “Some of them (the people supporting Jane) it IS their job. Um. (Native American Retention Specialist), for instance, that’s her job now.”

But she did it before she was there. Jane eluded to the fact that the current Native Retention Specialist, whose primary function at the University was to retain and support Native students, was already supporting students before she officially stepped into the position. *It all comes back to the people I know.* She reiterated the fact that she was relying mostly on people she knew, her social and familial supports, whether they were also existing institutional supports was almost irrelevant. Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (2001) wrote about the importance of “*confianza*”, or “trust” (p. 26) as it influenced help-seeking behaviors. There needs to be a level of trust associated with the place in which

the student is seeking help from in order to further motivate the student to seek the help in the first place. In Jane's case, she had relied primarily on people who she already had developed trust in, and could therefore, make herself vulnerable to (per Stanton-Salazar's notion of "confianza"), in admitting she might need extra support. Her family, friends and people she knew determined Jane's "network orientation" (p. 24), as Stanton-Salazar would put it, as those were the social supports she had created before college, and who she relied upon to get through college.

As it pertained to the actual existing institutional supports, she showed a similar level of non-commitment to a "yes" or "no" answer. *It's like...sure maybe? But I also knew some of these people before I came into the University. And sometimes even before they started working for the University so it's like "kind of"? I mean it does, but it doesn't.*

"...so given your experiences, what resources do you think would have helped you that don't exist at UO right now?"

Well having had the sexual harassment case, I think better therapists? Because when I did go, finally, it was kind of...not the greatest experience.

"Was that at the Health Center?"

Yeah just because I think they were all non-Native...they just didn't really understand the entire situation because it was a very complex situation to begin with. Just because we had known him forever. Iktomi was surprised that her help-seeking behaviors carried throughout her college experience, despite experiencing what Stanton-Salazar (2001) would call a "distress pattern", or dynamics that could result in the individual actually avoiding entering certain situations, in this case, educational settings.

Iktomi asked how there might be differences in what it meant to have a Native counselor versus a non-Native counselor.

Yeah, so that was my one thing where at the end of everything I was like “you know what? I can get resume advice from the Career Center, I can so very easily take THAT and go to a Native professor and collaborate on that”. But it’s impossible to take something as private and hard as mental health, get it from someone else, and then try to integrate it into your life experience. So that was super hard.

Iktomi thought that maybe what Jane was saying was that mental health counseling was so specific and subtly nuanced in the case of Native women in higher education, that having a generic mental health counselor was not enough. It wasn’t enough to have a mental health counselor AND a Native professor working in tandem, but not communicating with each other. “...if I was hearing your right...they weren’t all that helpful. Were there other people in your life that you feel like maybe did some of that for you? What THEY (the counseling center) should have been doing?”

Oh yeah...yeah family and friends. Which also, I guess could double as some people who worked at the University, too.

“...if I am hearing you right, it wasn’t like ‘I’m going to go back to advising cuz there’s where...’” Iktomi trailed off and tried to find better words to describe what he thought could be going on. “...like it was more like you knew people first, and THEN...”

Yeah.

“How do you feel about graduation?”

I really want to graduate. Iktomi and Jane both chuckled, as if that was a given. I am at the point where I am just like really excited for it, I didn't think it was going to happen. But I am just ready to be done.

“So...do you feel like you can see the finish line from here or, is it still like ‘I gotta get the paper done, and I gotta do this and I gotta do that’ or...”

Well both. I gotta just go through all of these motions because I am so close and...yeah. I have it planned, like I have everything planned out to graduate. Iktomi thought things were moving smoothly towards Jane graduating, but she brought the conversation back around to issues she was still facing. ...I am struggling...I hate to blame it, but I think with the sexual harassment case and all the different things I've had to do for the last few years... She described the litigations, the lawyers calling her trying to prepare her for what she should say the next time she was in court, her family calling and texting her constantly, long after the actual event took place. ...every time I thought it was done, it would come back and so now, I'm still like sitting here and nothing is happening and I am anticipating something happening. She chuckled at the thought.

“Like you are waiting to make the move?”

Yeah! Like I am waiting...waiting for something to happen. So it's hard to...hard to focus now. Like “what's going to happen next” I mean I get a call, I get an email, something is going to happen...it's like I am in my freshman year trying to learn how to just be a student. Even though I'm in my senior year in college like in a few months I'm graduating. So it's weird.

A conversation about “success” with Jane.

After Jane had told Iktomi all of the processes she went through given her experiences her freshman year to almost finishing, the conversation turned to a discussion of notions of success, more specifically, people that Jane looked up to as being quite “successful” in their own right. *Mary Kathryn Nagle...She is amazing! She does so many cool things, like she’s a lawyer, activist, she’s still...super artistic, and what-not, she is just awesome.*

In that moment, Iktomi flashed back to when Jane first arrived at UO for orientation, and he highlighted the people walking around the atrium and the kinds of anxieties they all may have had. “And I bet you, people like that still have the same kinds of anxieties.”

Yeah!

“Like they are just like ‘aw crap, like I dunno if I could do that’, well what about all that stuff you just did?” Jane laughed at his response. Iktomi told her he didn’t like doing that himself, looking at the things he had previously accomplished and pushing himself outside of his comfort zone. “...it’s necessary to like drive you to take that next step.”

It’s also a part of growing, too. Jane seemed to agree that being pushed outside of your comfort zone was necessary to grow as an individual. She was graduating and had planned to attend the ceremony with her family and friends.

The graduate student Iktomi had spoken to earlier, had also graduated and was anticipating getting a second Master’s degree the upcoming year. In both cases, the students reported utilizing family, friends, and people they knew already moreso than the

existing institutional support structures. For Iktomi, having those support structures was necessary to support all students, but there were unique cases with Native peoples, specifically as it pertained to women and varying degrees of sexual violence, that the very resources on campus designed to support them were, at times, insufficient.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Growing up, I heard a lot of story tellers. Iktomi's stories were one example of many. Even as a child, I knew that the point of these stories wasn't necessarily to come to conclusion x, that is, the morale of the stories wasn't necessarily going to be the same for everyone. As such, the listener acted as the analyzer for their own lives. While one person might get a certain "morale" that fits into their life at that particular time, another person listening to the same story at the same time might be dealing with other things in their life wherein the story actually supplied them with a different morale or form of guidance.

This dissertation was built upon this spirit, the notion that the listener/reader could draw their own conclusions based upon the status of their own situations. As this is meant to be read by educators, teachers, practitioners, and policy makers, my hope is that these stories will be read in the same fashion. How are our schools supporting or not supporting students? What barriers might come to fruition that we have not yet experienced or talked about? What policies are in place that do not take into account Native Americans' unique legal status in this country? How can we support the students represented by these narratives, should they walk through our doors tomorrow? What sorts of supports do we have in place as an institution? What supports do we have as a community? Are students getting what they want out of college aside from the degree itself?

While the previous questions are questions I hope practitioners can ask one-another to generate conversation and open up the discussion to possible situations that may arise. I feel obligated as the person who conducted the interviews to provide my own analysis to act as a guide for others who may have difficulty beginning conversations around what is happening with their own students.

The original research questions for this project are as follows (1) How do Native American students define success in post-secondary education? (2) How do Native students perceive their presence at the University? (3) What are the primary sources of supports sought by Native American students in a predominantly non-Native institution (existing institutional support structures, familial supports, social supports, tribal supports, others)? Below are some final thoughts on each of these questions.

Notions of Success

One of the over-arching themes to this study had to do with notions of “success” and whether non-tribal institutions took into account differing notions of success when providing services to students. Every single participant reported that they hoped to “give back” in some way. This notion of “giving back” took many forms, from becoming a teacher, to working with youth, to culture and/or language revitalization, to making the people around them feel better about their lives etc. Not a single participant mentioned that they wanted to “escape” their history or past or familial issues and focus on themselves.

There might be a few reasons for the lack of this narrative (escaping) from participants, and I know the narrative exists because I have met people outside this project who had this goal, people who had lives that they wished to relinquish in order to find monetary gains, or personal relief from struggles at home. None of my participants reported this story, or this goal. It is possible that those students who did not necessarily wish to “give back” in some way would also be less likely to participate in a study such as this. I would argue, this research is also my way of “giving back”, and those individuals who are not interested in this notion may very well be disinclined to

participate. It is also possible that the participants who did agree to help me with this project knew that part of many indigenous values involve some form of “giving back” whether that means respecting elders, supporting one another, looking out for children, etc. By that rationale, participants may have expressed their indigenous identity through this philosophy, or at least made it a focus of the conversation. This is a limitation of this study, specifically, it is a limitation of the sample. I would argue that the sample produced was a very large portion of a very small population of students on campus, therefore, the sample is representative of the students of this institution.

Native Identity, Strength, and Resilience

To understand how Native students perceived their presence at the University, I asked them simple questions about their identity (name, tribe, gender pronouns, etc.) before asking if they thought being Native American was a major component of their overall identity (that is, does being Native influence your actions, thoughts, social networks etc.). The vast majority not only stated that being Native was a large part of their overall identity, it was a large component of their University experience as well.

While these experiences are not necessarily the experiences of all Native students, nor are they unique to only Native students, since these narratives can be compiled and told in a fashion that was generated from the data, I would argue, that these narratives are part of the larger narrative of what it means to be a Native American attending a non-tribal postsecondary institution. Therefore, the experiences illustrated in these narratives could be useful to other non-tribal institutions. Even if these narratives do not 100% illustrate the exact challenges that other institutions will face, reading these narratives and

talking about other potentialities would better serve educators and policy makers to be more versatile in their own efforts to better support students.

All three of these narratives not only showed the challenges and unique situations that Native students have faced, they also showed the strength and resiliency within each narrative, strengths that all of the participants in this study carried and continue to carry to this day. Kimbol is currently teaching with students. Being a composite character, the participants that helped compose the character “Kimbol” are currently teaching or have been recently admitted into graduate school for teacher licensure/similar graduate studies program. Wolfe’s narrative illustrated the complexities of Native identity, from cultural to legal, and the challenges Native students face in a college setting based upon these notions of what it means to be “Native”. Wolfe was eventually pushed out of the University system but is still contributing to her own communities and cultures in different ways, with the idea of returning to school. Wolfe, being a composite character, every participant who made up the narrative of Wolfe either successfully received their degree or had concrete plans to return and finish off their studies. Jane, who had to rely on multiple support structures in overcoming the challenges coming to and getting through college, graduated this year. As a composite character, all but one participant that helped make up the narrative of Jane graduated, and the last participant was ready to enroll and finish her final classes over summer and fall. Some of them were entering new graduate programs, while one participant was finishing off her first year in a professional role at the University, helping other Native students.

In my attempts to show the challenges that Native students face within an educational system, I made a point to highlight the resiliency and strengths that Native

students have, strengths that should be brought forth as mechanisms to aid in supporting Native students facing challenges. These narratives should be used as tools to think about how to support students, whatever institution a practitioner or policy maker might be working with. These stories can be an exercise in understanding what practices and policies might be working well or what could be improved upon, in an attempt to better prepare and serve future Native youth who will be entering into, and graduating from, non-tribal institutions.

Supporting Native students has to be an on-going conversation, given there are 567 federally recognized tribes, and 300+ groups who are not federally recognized but claim to have ancestral ties to the United States, all of whom have their own histories, languages, cultures, epistemologies, ontologies, and practices. Diversity is inherent in Native identity, therefore, the more educational practitioners talk about their experiences supporting students, the more equipped practitioners will be when confronted with new unforeseen challenges, not just with Native students, but with the overall student population.

Native Students and Support Services

To answer the final question pertaining to what support systems Native students seek out to be successful in postsecondary education, I asked the participants to describe their path to and through college. What forms of help were available to them, which ones did they choose, and did those supports work well for the students? Family and social support structures were the main indicators of student academic success in this study. Participants reported relying more on existing social and familial networks than relying solely on the existing institutional support structures in place. A level of trust needs to be

instilled within communities to allow students to seek out the necessary support structures to be successful in postsecondary education.

While working in recruitment, I was told that retention was not my job. While working in retention, I was told recruitment was not my job. This was referred to as “passing on the baton”, that is, recruitment recruits students and when they arrive, the baton is passed onto retention services. While this model might work for other populations, this method of recruiting/retaining Native students is not only insufficient, it can be interpreted as rude or unempathetic in Native communities. For a recruiter to travel to a tribal community and claim that the youth of the community will be successful at an institution of higher education without knowing the person who will be supporting them (retention services) throughout their postsecondary educational career is to provide a false hope by the recruiter, an assumption that no matter what challenges faced by their children, a community’s children will be successful in postsecondary education, in the hands of people they do not know and have never met.

It is unreasonable to claim that institutions should set up familial support structures. Familial supports are supports that happen organically and based upon necessity. While I make the claim that familial supports should be more accessible to Native students in postsecondary education, I caution against taking the notion of family and running with it, as if to say “all we need to do is be mothers, fathers, uncles, and aunties to these Native students!” No, quite the contrary, you should be careful and sincere in your capacity to support Native students. This does not mean that you cannot help facilitate familial ties to organically come together, and that is my recommendation for most non-tribal colleges. Support systems that can, over time, create a familial

atmosphere within the institution, should be a priority if the institution is dedicated to the idea of supporting its indigenous students.

At the UO, for instance, there are separate Native Recruiter and Retention Specialist positions. Those positions have worked with varying degrees of proximity, sometimes working very closely together, other times being told that recruitment is not the Retention Specialist's job and sometimes vice-versa. This goes against the Family Education Model (FEM), as both should have the flexibility to work closely together and make ties to the communities in ways that allow the families to build trust with the institution. Furthermore, both of these positions have seen high turn-over rates, also working against the FEM model, as the people in the positions need time to learn and grow with the tribal communities that the institution has relations with. Therefore, support for Native faculty/staff support positions is necessary in order to maintain consistency within the University when it comes to supporting Native students. Cultural centers and events that promote Native cultures and histories are helpful, but if the staff is constantly changing, then the ties that the communities have to the University have to be rebuilt every time someone leaves. There needs to be incentive for the people working at the University to stay committed to their position, both as a University member, and a member of outside tribal communities.

The UO happens to be an institution that already has some of these support structures in place, there is a Many Nations Longhouse, there is a Multicultural Center, a Native American Student Union, a Native Recruiter, a Native Retention Specialist, a Tribal Liaison and Assistant to the President of the University, there is a Native American Studies minor, supported by Native faculty and staff across the campus. Not all

institutions have this level of support for Native students. I would imagine those institutions that do not have this much support are simultaneously the ones finding challenges in making institutional changes to better support Native and other under-represented students.

For those supporters of Native students who do not know where to start, I would beg you to look at Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of Freedom." Freire's argument is that a teacher should never stop being the student, that is, the teacher should always be open to learning. "There is no teaching without learning" (Freire, 2001, p. 9). I would argue postsecondary educational practitioners and policy makers should adopt a similar stance. Be open to learning, be open to listening, and hear the stories of your students, of the communities you work with, and understand that sometimes the institution you work for, your department, your colleagues, might have some areas of improvement to focus on, based upon the lived experiences of your students.

Familial and social support systems should be able to flourish, regardless of ethnic backgrounds. As it pertains to Native American students and communities, this is a crucial support structure, and there should be levels of availability for students to access these types of potential supports. Retention Specialists, Recruiters, Cultural Centers, there are all great tools to help with creating an environment upon which familial and social ties can be strengthened, but at the end of the day, it comes down to people. Almost regardless of if they are Native or not, someone within the institution who cares on a familial level is crucial to Native academic success. This starts with pre-existing social/familial ties. If those ties do not exist, then understanding and supporting the students/staff already at your institution is the next critical step. What are lacking in terms

of the social/familial support of Native students/faculty/staff at the institution? What supports are there, and how well are they working? What can be improved upon?

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Questions pertaining to bicultural identity

- Please describe yourself for me.
- What does being Native American in the 21st century mean to you? Is being Native American a significant part of your identity? (Clarification questions: How often do you think about it? How often does it inform your decisions you make in your daily life?)
- Does your identity change depending on the context (community, family, school/university, work, etc.)?
- Is being Native American a significant part of your university experience? (Clarification: With who you associate with, the classes you take, the networks you've formed, etc.?)
- How would you define success? Does this definition hold true for Native Americans in the 21st century?
- What are your life goals and aspirations? How will you know when you've reached success?
- Why is it different/same for Native Americans as it is for White Americans?

Questions pertaining to post-secondary education

- Tell me about your journey to the University of Oregon. What led you here?
- Is the university providing you with the resources and experiences to achieve your life goals and aspirations? Is the university providing you with the resources and experiences to achieve your educational goals and aspirations?

- What resources (if any) do you tap into in order to reach your educational goals?
(Clarifications: Do you tap more into your community, family, or university resources?)
- What university resources (that don't exist now) would help you better achieve your goals? (Clarification: or can any be changed/modified to help you better meet your goals?)

Wrap up questions

Is there anything you'd like to add to this that I might have not asked but I should have?

Any questions for me?

APPENDIX B

Letter from the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence

Good Afternoon!

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Chance White Eyes, a PH.D Candidate in the Critical and Socio Cultural Studies in Education program, and Stephanie Tabibian, Native American Retention Specialist in the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence. The purpose of this research study is to find out more about students who self-identify as Native (American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nations/Native Hawaiian) at the University of Oregon so that we may better support them. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a UO student who may also identify as Native. We hope that you take the time to participate. ***This is a chance for you to share what has helped you be successful at the University, what challenges you have faced, and an opportunity to give feedback so that we can create a more supportive environment for Native students in the future.***

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to be interviewed by Chance at your convenience. The interview will be 1-2 hours long. There has yet to be determined if there will be a follow up interview in case there needs to be clarification or elaboration on a topic. There is no cost to you for participating in this survey and the survey results will be kept confidential. ***If you complete the interview, you will have the opportunity to enter your email address for a chance to win one of two \$60 gift certificates for the UO Bookstore. Two gift certificates will be drawn upon the conclusion of this project in spring or summer of 2017.***

Your identity will not be linked to your interview in any way aside from the interviewer. However, if any information were obtained in connection with this study that

could be identified with you, it would remain confidential. Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with the University of Oregon. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you are interested in taking this research project, please proceed to the following link where you can read and sign the informed consent agreement, then please respond to this email or get in contact with Chance White Eyes at chancew@uoregon.edu to help out with a project that could affect future experiences of Native students.

Thank you for your time and please let us know if you have any questions.

APPENDIX C

Letter from the Tribal Liason

Good Afternoon!

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Chance White Eyes, a PH.D Candidate in the Critical and Socio Cultural Studies in Education program, and Jason Younker, Tribal Liason to the President of the University. The purpose of this research study is to find out more about students who self identify as Native (American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nations/Native Hawaiian) at the University of Oregon so that we may better support them. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a UO student who may also identify as Native. We hope that you take the time to participate. ***This is a chance for you to share what has helped you be successful at the University, what challenges you have faced, and an opportunity to give feedback so that we can create a more supportive environment for Native students in the future.***

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to be interviewed by Chance at your convenience. The interview will be 1-2 hours long. There has yet to be determined if there will be a follow up interview in case there needs to be clarification or elaboration on a topic. There is no cost to you for participating in this survey and the survey results will be kept confidential. ***If you complete the interview, you will have the opportunity to enter your email address for a chance to win one of two \$60 gift certificates for the UO Bookstore. Two gift certificates will be drawn upon the conclusion of this project in spring or summer of 2017.***

Your identity will not be linked to your interview in any way aside from the interviewer. However, if any information were obtained in connection with this study that could be identified with you, it would remain confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with the University of Oregon. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you are interested in taking this research project, please proceed to the following link where you can read and sign the informed consent agreement, then please respond to this email or get in contact with Chance White Eyes at chancew@uoregon.edu to help out with a project that could affect future experiences of Native students.

Thank you for your time, and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

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