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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

College Motivation and Preparation of Culturally Engaged Native American Youth

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

in

Teaching and Learning

by

Elena Ann Hood

Committee in Charge:

>   Mica Pollock, Chair
>   Ross Frank
>   Makeba Jones

2019

The Dissertation of Elena Ann Hood is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2019

Dedication

For my daughter, Erica.

For my mom, Flora.

For my grandma, Edith.

Epigraph

"Every society needs educated people, but the primary responsibility of educated people is to bring wisdom back into the community and make it available to others so that the lives they are leading make sense."

Vine Deloria Jr.

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Acknowledgements

My first acknowledgement has to go to my daughter, Erica. She motivates me to work hard, to honor commitments and maintain perspective. I promised that no matter what, she would always be my first priority, above work and above school and I'm so thankful that I kept that promise. (Even if meant some things might take a little longer to finish or to turn in.) Maybe not until she's working her way through her own dissertation will she understand how much I have appreciated her patience and her quiet support and how much I loved the way she would sleep on the couch while I worked at the kitchen table late into the night, just to be near me.

I also want to thank my mom, Flora. There's simply no way I would've been able to complete this process without her support. She was there to babysit Erica when I had to stay late for class or spend a weekend morning in a writing session. She was there when I needed to talk about my research and my experiences as a Native graduate students with someone who understood the nuances, challenges, and ways of thinking and being as a Native scholar without explanation. She's always been in my corner, and I in hers. She's been my role model, the person I want to emulate, forever – from the days we walked under Sather Gate at Berkeley, me in Kindergarten, she, the first in our family to go to a four-year university to a shared commitment to higher education and a love for our community. She has forged many pathways in our family and I am forever grateful for her influence and impact on my experience in this process.

It has been my privilege to work with many Native American students and families in a variety of educational settings, including those who allowed me to include their voice in this current research. I am thankful to them for allowing me to be a part of their educational experience and for sharing their insights with me. Every opportunity I get to address Native students, individually or as a group, I am compelled to remind them that as Native people we are stronger than others, because we endure systemic racism in schools, smarter because we've become experts in multiple languages and multiple worlds, and more resilient because we overcome with our values and ways of being intact despite centuries of colonialism and genocidal government policies. For these reasons, I acknowledge all of the Native American students making a way through these institutions and thank them for the inspiration. I also acknowledge and thank the staff members in our communities who work with our Native youth. Their work is meaningful, important, and necessary.

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thankful for her patience, sense of humor and thoughtfulness. There is no one else I

would rather have taken this journey with at my side.

Vita

<u>EDUCATION</u>
University of California San Diego
Ed.D., June 2019
Program: Teaching and Learning
Dissertation: College Motivation and Preparation of Culturally Engaged Native American Youth

Harvard Graduate School of Education
Ed.M., June 2001
Concentration: Administration, Planning and Social Policy

University of California, Berkeley
B.A., Native American Studies, May 1999
EOP/AA Summer Bridge participant, Summer 1994
Education Abroad Program participant (Bologna, Italy), 1996-1997

<u>PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE</u>
University of California, San Diego
Director, Intertribal Resource Center, 2016-present

Chámmakilawish, The Pechanga School (Pechanga Tribal Government)
Program Manager, 2007-2016

California State University, San Marcos
Early Outreach Coordinator, 2002-2007

National University
Online Instructor, 2006

Palomar College
Adjunct Faculty Instructor, 2001-2005

University of California, Riverside
Regional Admissions Representative (Bay Area), 1999-2000

California Indian Legal Services
Administrative Assistant, 1998

American Indian Child Resource Center
Education Coordinator, 1997-2000

<u>SELECTED PRESENTATIONS</u>

Tribal TANF Institute
Historical Trauma, 2018
Youth Services, 2018

National Indian Education Association National Conference
Engaging Native American Youth, Encouraging Active Learners, 2018
Special Education – Rights and Responsibilities for Native American Families, 2016
Creating a College Going Environment, 2015

UC San Diego
Pathways in Indian Education, Summer Bridge, 2018
Language/Culture/Education in Native American Communities, Comm. Junior Seminar, 2017
Cultural Congruence in Schools, EDS 140, 2014, 2015, 2016
Boarding School to Tribal School: Exploring Issues in Indian Education, EDS 125, 2016, 2017, 2018

Pechanga College Fair
College Prep Timeline, 2016

UC Riverside
Introduction to the University of California, College Motivation Day, 2000

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
UNITY National Conference
Co-chair, Local Planning Committee

Dream the Impossible Native Youth Conference
Committee Member

Circles of Care
Advisory Council

National Indian Education Association
Member

Young Native Scholars
Volunteer Instructor/Education Coordinator, 2003-2006

Tribal TANF Back-to-School Event
Keynote Speaker, 2011

AISA (American Indian Student Alliance – Cal State San Marcos)

Staff Advisor, 2001-2006

Inter-tribal Student Council (UC Berkeley)
Member/Chairperson, 1994-1999

Abstract of the Dissertation

College Motivation and Preparation of Culturally Engaged Native American Youth

by

Elena Ann Hood

Doctor of Education in Teaching and Learning

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Mica Pollock, Chair

Abstract. Access to higher education can help tribal communities maintain political sovereignty, protect traditional knowledge and languages, and help close economic and social gaps (Adelman, et al., 2013, Brayboy, et al., 2012). Statistics indicate that too few Native Americans participate in post-secondary institutions and considerable research has gone into exploring this challenge (Barnhardt, 1994, Bosse, et al., 2011, Guillory, et al., 2008, Lee, et al., 2010, Pavel, 1999). Native American communities have implemented strategies to support their students; including academic support, traditional teachings and providing safe spaces with positive role models during non-school hours. Although programs vary in primary purpose for

working with youth, they are commonly grounded in a cultural enrichment approach that honors Native American knowledge, tradition, history, and pedagogy. Using a combination of Brayboy's (2006) Tribal Critical Race Theory and Huffman's (2001) Transculturation Theory, this study examined the pre-college experiences of Native American youth who have participated in a cultural enrichment program. This study sought to better understand and address barriers limiting access to higher education.

During individual interviews, youth articulated many issues that impacted their pre-college experiences. Some issues were rooted in the schools themselves, including: problematic curriculum, misrepresentation and stereotypes, and persistently negative interactions with administration and staff. Given the opportunity to expound on all of the experiences that affected students' attitudes toward and preparation for post-secondary education, youth also expressed challenges outside of school. For example, students talked about how the impact of reservation, community and home life and the complexity of Native identity influence their pre-college experiences and attitudes.

Findings indicated that students engaged in cultural enrichment programs shared a critical lens through which they evaluated their pre-college experiences. Findings also indicated that although students were generally motivated to pursue opportunities in higher education, many were left with inadequate information and guidance about college preparation and the application process. This study presents the needs and challenges of pre-college Native American students in their own voice

and seeks to provide insight on creating culturally appropriate, meaningful college

preparation for those working with Native youth.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Native American students are generally the most underrepresented cultural

groups in most colleges and universities. As Table 1 shows, for example, Native

American students are the least represented ethnicity in the University of California

enrollment (Beaty & Chiste, 1986; HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003; Pavel, 1999).

Native American face challenges that can set them apart from other underrepresented

groups, as well. Even before beginning their college journey, Native students confront

particular institutional and social challenges that threaten to thwart academic success;

for example, Native American students are disproportionally represented in special

education programs where they are denied opportunities to take college preparatory

classes (Adelman, Taylor, & Nelson, 2013; Barnhardt, 1994; Wright, 1985).

Table 1: UC Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
African American	6,667	6,810	6,934	7,228	7,410
American Indian	1,211	1,282	1,233	1,250	1,196
Chicano/Latino	34,979	37,345	40,074	43,208	44,657
Asian	68,327	69,070	69,540	70,541	70,244
White	53,421	50,958	49,503	48,799	47,691
Unknown	8,388	6,600	5,701	5,056	5,284
International	8,204	11,133	15,023	18,730	22,384
Total	181,197	183,198	188,008	194,812	198,866

There are students who persevere in spite of these challenges. Students who

persevere find support from various sources and have acquired the skills necessary to

successfully transition from high school to college and through to graduation. For

example, as Contreras (2016) has found, certain intervention programs and other community support systems have served an important role to "raise student achievement in school as well as to provide guidance to students" (p. 500). Contreras adds that "for underrepresented minority youth in particular, such efforts have served to compensate for the unequal opportunities to learn that disadvantaged students encounter in the public education system throughout the United States or a lack of internal support within the school context" (pp. 500-501).

Current middle and high school students are navigating their own challenges in secondary schools. The experiences encountered by these students can establish a trajectory that leads either towards or away from academic success and pursuit of a college education. There is much to be learned from students on the brink of college. Further, many of these students participate in culturally framed enrichment programs in their communities that are often in a position to support student development. This study was designed to better understand the practices of pre-college Native American students and specifically, those experiencing pre-college life within the context of a Native centered enrichment program.

Although research on the pre-college practices of Native American youth exists (Lee, Donlan & Brown, 2010, McCarty & Lee, 2015) as Keene (2016) points out, "the current literature on Native students and the college application process is thin" (p. 76). The overarching goal of this study was to contribute to the research in Indian Education by focusing on the pre-college practices, those activities and experiences that lead (or do not lead) to the college application process of Native

American youth. This research has the potential to contribute to support systems for Native American students, indicate existing strengths and needed improvements in Native American-focused academic and enrichment programs (and schools serving Native American students), and ultimately, if even incrementally, to increase the numbers of Native American students in higher education. As indicated by Table 1, low numbers of Native students represented in higher education, specifically at the University of California, presents an ongoing institutional struggle; especially for an institution that values diversity.

First, a note about the terminology used to discuss Native American people and issues in this study. I will be using the terms Native American, Native, American Indian, Indian and Indigenous interchangeably. As a Native person, in addition to my specific tribal affiliations, I identify with all of these terms and find they are commonly accepted throughout Indian Country. Additionally, I will make reference to Urban Indians. In this proposed research, the term Urban Indian primarily refers to American Indian persons living off-reservation in Southern California, including surrounding suburban areas. However, the term may also apply to Native persons from reservations that are close to urban centers, such that as much of their experiences in school and other daily interactions occur off-reservation as they do on a reservation. The term Urban Indians refers to a diverse range of Native peoples and experiences, but still distinguishes the experiences of Native American people in the Southern California region from other, more remote, reservation communities often represented in research.

This study was conducted in a region of Southern California where there are a number of local pre-college and cultural enrichment programs that serve American Indian students and families. Many local reservations maintain an education center and several local schools utilize Title IX Indian Education resources. These education programs serve reservation and Urban Indian communities by providing tutoring, cultural learning classes and enrichment opportunities.

Experiences in Higher Education

Native American communities, both Urban and reservation, benefit greatly when their students pursue a college education. On an individual level, a college education means that Native students will be positioned to gain entry into better employment options (Pavel, 1999), but the benefits of a college degree also extend beyond the individual and beyond economics. In fact, many see access to higher education as essential for the cultural, social, economic and political survival of Native American tribes and communities (Brayboy, et al., 2012). The pre-college programs that serve these populations understand the urgent need to make a way for Indian students to be successful in a college or university environment. Through their daily and routine practices, they demonstrate a commitment to supporting academic achievement –and often a culturally relevant approach to education.

In fact, culturally relevant practice has been the focus of much research, on K-16 education. Research in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Belgarde, Mitchell & Arquero, 2002, Ladson-Billings, 1995, Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, Paris & Alim, 2014), or variations thereof, focus on teachers' understanding of their students' diverse

cultural backgrounds. Teachers versed in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy value their

students' diversity and teach with a mindfulness that connects school to students' lived

experience. Moreover, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that perspectives and

educational approaches that value, link to, and support students to learn about their

own historic or contemporary "cultural" communities benefit minority students in

mainstream educational settings (Brayboy, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll,

Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). For example, Brayboy and Castagno (2009) found

that education models that were community and culturally centered were best for

meeting the educational needs of Indigenous pre-college youth. In their study, they

identified culturally responsive schooling, described as a bridge between home and

school cultures, as a best practice for the education of Native youth. However, they

also stressed the "importance of contextualizing or localizing curriculum and

pedagogy so that it bears some connections and resemblance to the knowledge and

learning of the local community" (p. 47) and is not a perpetuation of stereotypes. The

study situates research on precollege experiences while enrolled in programs that aim

to create these types of connections to local communities in their approach.

Other research suggests that American Indian students commonly experience a

cultural discontinuity between home and school (Reyhner, 1992; Swisher & Deyhle,

1989), especially when they transition into a college or university setting (Weaver,

2015). In contrast, Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, and Newland (2011) assert that in addition

to culturally centered educational practices, personal connections forged between

Native students and supportive adults can also contribute to academic success. This

study also considers how these significant relationships are forged, and furthermore, how they relate to students' success.

Some research suggests that the stark underrepresentation of Native students can be ascribed, at least in part, to students' own precollege attributes, such as a general failure to meet college admissions requirements (Pavel, 1999). Laying blame on the students themselves echoes the messaging that students and families often receive in school. Additional research corroborates Pavel's findings indicating a strong connection between pre-college preparation and success in college (Bosse, et al., 2011). Clearly, there are myriad reasons for academic failure, but for many Native American students and their families, the messages received from school teachers and administrators –like some research as well -- ultimately place fault on the students themselves or the family's lack of support, or involvement, or concern. However, Pavel clarifies that a "personal-deficit approach does not adequately address the overall complexity of issues that conspire to undermine attempts by American Indians to gain access to postsecondary institutions (p. 242). One aim of this study thus was to counter deficit models for understanding and addressing the academic preparation of Native American students as "problems" solely located inside students and families, and instead to seek out both negative and positive experiences involving others in systems, particularly while students were enrolled in programs actively attempting to address Native American college preparation and motivation.

Compared to other areas of educational research, there is a relatively limited body of research pertaining to American Indian students pursuing higher education.

Additionally, as Reyhner and Dodd (1995) point out, "there is a limited amount of research on successful American Indian students." One limitation of contemporary research on Indian students in higher education is the focus on the experiences of students already in colleges and universities. Again, there has been important work contributing to the understanding of Native American students experiences in a K12 setting (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Gilliard & Moore, 2007; McCarty & Lee, 2015); however, less attention is specifically focused on the necessary preparation for entering higher education. There are indications that Native American students have the highest rates of high school dropout and are least likely of all students to be prepared for college (Weaver, 2015); this illustrates that there are many issues in Indian education and a need for much more research into the lives and practices of Native high school students. This study, however, aims to contribute to the developing body of research specifically focused on the pre-college activities of Native American students.

Additionally, much of the current research focuses on specific tribes or reservations and does not address the experiences of intertribal communities or Urban Indian students. For example, one study of 135 high school students included 103 Navajo students, 24 Hopi and only 8 from other, unidentified tribes (Gilbert, 2000). This is a common sampling in that much research focuses on a particular tribe or reservation based populations. This study aims to expand the current body of research by including the experiences of Urban Indian students in an intertribal community instead of primarily focusing on a particular tribe or reservation.

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Research Objectives

Given that American Indian tribes and communities can be adversely affected by the dearth of Native students attaining a college education, a study of pre-college practices examining what factors and experiences do and do not relate to successful outcomes may benefit students and tribal communities and lead to increased participation of Native students in higher education. There is a growing body of research that tells us about the practices and psychology of Native students in colleges and universities (Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, & Newland, 2011; Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Gilbert, 2000; Huffman, 2001, 2010, 2013; Pavel, 1999; Weaver, 2015). As indicated previously, most of these studies examine either a particular tribe or institution with a high concentration of students from a particular tribe or reservation. However, 78% of the American Indian population in the United States live off-reservation and a majority of these people live in urban areas, as is the case in Southern California (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). Therefore, it is important to include these communities in the research in Indian education.

The field of Indian Education or "Indigenous" Education includes important research that discusses many of the factors that are addressed in the current study. For example, Arenas, Reyes & Wyman (2007), discuss how the intentional inclusion of Native American pedagogy in the classroom helps to alleviate some of the tensions between Indigenous Education and Western Education. McCarty and Lee (2015) describe how the role of language and culture revitalization for Native American youth can support success in school and lead to what they refer to as "Educational

Sovereignty." In this dissertation, I want to connect the current literature to the concept of "pre-college practices" that not only support student learning but also prepare Native American students to pursue opportunities in higher education. In this dissertation, "pre-college practices" refer to the activities of Native American high school students that students themselves deem as affecting their precollege pathway, whether or not those activities overtly relate to successfully qualifying for admission and completing the application process for access to an institution of higher education. I have paid particular attention to the research on college success for Native American students and considered how these factors might also be applicable to college-bound students. Some of these factors, according to researchers, include academic preparation (i.e. college-prep/honors classes, test prep), cultural connectedness (i.e. participation in cultural activities), sense of belonging (i.e. participation in school activities), and relationship building (i.e. what types of relationships support student success) (Adelman, Taylor, & Nelson, 2013; Barnhardt, 1994; Beaty & Chiste, 1986; Huffman, 2001).

In this dissertation, a "Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment program" refers to a formally organized program designed specifically to serve Native American youth. Programs address different needs in the community (academic tutoring, pow wow dance, college motivation, for example) but are uniformly grounded in the common commitment to supporting Native American youth development by emphasizing tribal traditions, customs and values. These programs are coordinated by dedicated individuals and a staff who are almost always

representative of the communities they serve, or at least share an intertribal connection. Programs such as these are typically developed to address a perceived critical or unmet need in the community.

This study was designed to address the following research questions:

- What experiences do Native American students connected to culturally engaged programming talk about as important to their goals in higher education?
- Which precollege experiences do these students/families identify as critical to successful preparation in order to apply and enroll at a college or university?
- How, according to both students and adults, do adults in a Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment program talk about and support student success?

Based on my previous experience working with Native pre-college programs, I was anticipating a strong sense of community would be a major underpinning of these programs. Urban Indian centers bring together a diversity of Native American families with different tribal backgrounds and traditions who have had to learn to build community in the face of serious social barriers. Some research indicates that identity issues related to the disconnect from traditional homelands and extended family have a significant effect on Urban Indian experiences (Krouse, 1999). Community building, as expected in these cultural enrichment programs, may serve to mitigate this disconnect and additionally, support Native youth identity development.

Furthermore, one aspect of community-building may rely on recounting historically shared experiences. Additional research describes how the history of Indian education and American policy related to Indian people has negative consequences for many American Indian communities (Yuan, Bartigis, & Demers, 2014). Termination and relocation policies have adversely affected Native

communities as they continued to migrate into urban areas (ibid.). Historically, education has been used as an assimilationist tool aimed at dismantling Native cultures, often violently (Lomawaima, 1999; Reyhner & Eder, 2015). Another impetus behind this research was the desire to explore how, and whether, Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment programs in urban centers build upon this sense of history and community to provide a place where Native students can be academically successful.

Socio-cultural and Historic Context

As they begin their college journey, Native American students have likely already confronted institutional and social challenges that threatened to thwart academic success—and potentially, protective factors as well. This research focused on students who have participated in cultural enrichment programs and have therefore traversed the intersection between cultural and institutional learning along their educational path. This study was designed to examine the pre-college practices of Native American youth by asking what experiences they, their families, and supporters identify as potentially or actually critical for success in secondary school leading to matriculation into college or university. Here we will explore some of the contextual factors, including history, policy and culture that pertain to the population of my research.

Native-centered, Culturally Engaged Enrichment Programs. The commonality among all of the enrichment programs included in this research is the commitment to providing services designed specifically to meet a need for the youth

in our Native American communities. These programs were all generated from within the tribal communities they serve and address a variety of issues including academic tutoring, mentoring, college motivation and cultural education. All of the programs are multi-faceted, meaning they may attend to academic, social, or political issues, or all of the above. Even programs that are very specific in nature, for example, a community program that teaches powwow dance, also address academic issues by promoting educational opportunities or providing time and space for homework. Every program, to varying degrees, promotes education, academic achievement and pursuing a college degree. A more detailed explanation of the variety of programs is provided in Chapter 4.

The students who participate in these programs represent different tribes and in some cases, may even be coming from out of state. However, the strongest representation is from local Southern California tribes, where the current research took place. Not all of the students who participate in these programs are necessarily literally college bound. However, program leaders indicate that many past participants have gone on to graduate from college, some have earned advanced degrees and several have returned to work for the same program as mentors or teachers. Most students, according to one program director, return home with a commitment to serve their tribal community. For example, as mentioned, some return to work for the programs that supported them as youth, others have returned to serve on their tribal governments and others have become cultural keepers who will assume responsibilities to pass on learned language and traditions.

History of Indian Education. Understanding the context of this study's population also requires consideration of the historical events that shape Indian education. Perhaps the most relevant facet of Native American history that influences contemporary Indian Education is the legacy of the boarding school era (Lomawaima, 1995). In the late 1800's, the federal government created Federal Indian boarding schools as part of the U.S. assimilationist policies affecting Native peoples. Native youth were forcibly removed from their traditional homelands, cultures and families under the premise that they would shed their Indian identities and become integrated into mainstream American culture.

The destructive nature of these assimilationist policies was epitomized by Richard Pratt, the founder and superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School. He infamously indicated that the driving philosophy behind the boarding school system was to "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). This philosophy was manifest in the physical and psychological abuse of Native American children and the forceful implementation of culturally destructive pedagogies that aimed to unravel Native American languages, religious practices and traditional ways of life (Lomawaima, 1995).

The image below shows the stark contrast of a young boy forcibly stripped of his outward cultural presence in one of several boarding schools throughout North America echoing the decree of Colonel Pratt. The boarding school era scarred generations of Native people and continues to impact the relationships between schools and Native American people. Although most Native American youth today

are two or three generations removed from the boarding school experience, the impact

of this collective trauma lingers in the hearts of Native American people (Lomawaima,

1995). The lingering effects can be seen in the sometimes contentious relationships

between Native families and schools.

Figure 1: Effects of Indian Boarding Schools

Perils of Success. In this research, I also wanted to include a less explored, at

least in Indian Education, socio-cultural factor that contributes to the contemporary

context of Native American students. Some students (Huffman, 2001, 2013) have

expressed concern about a perceived sense of cultural abandonment as a result of

academic ambitions or success in school. In this author's experience, among Native

American youth, there exists an idea that achievement in school is reflective of white or non-Indian students, not tribal students; and that to perform well in school means that you are trying to be something other than yourself, something other than Native American. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) wrote about this concept as it affects the academic performance of African American students. They talked about the "burden of acting white" as part of an explanation for why many black students were not meeting their academic potential: in their analysis, black students suppressed their own academic achievement out of a fear that achievement itself was "acting white." The participants in this current study discuss a very similar issue.

This construct has been widely critiqued, notably by scholars studying how racialized school tracking arbitrarily marks some classrooms and social relationships as "white." Some of the challengers (Tyson, 2011) to this work consider how members of non-dominant cultural groups resist pressure to conform to mainstream cultural practices and beliefs in order to still find success in school (Carter, 2006). Carter (2005) also asserts that the most successful students are able to navigate school systems by employing a multicultural approach that capitalizes on the multiple cultural strengths rather than assimilation. Tyson (2011) argues for a shift in perspective indicating that students of color are not creating the myth that academic success is a purview of white students, rather, it is the organization of schools in America (for example, the practice of curriculum tracking is perpetuating the myth). However, some key ideas of the original construct could be applicable to Native American students as part of the social context that affects academic achievement and

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subsequently, pre-college ambition and practices. The problem leading to this "burden," according to Fordham and Ogbu, "arose partly because White Americans traditionally refused to acknowledge that Black Americans are capable of intellectual achievement" (p. 177) and that eventually, Black American students began to emulate this idea that academic success was the purview of White America. Furthermore, black students who strove for academic excellence were mocked for "acting white" and often resented in their own communities. There is a similar experience in Native American communities; thus, in spite of any academic critiques, Native American students are describing as their own experiences.

Masta (2018), looked at Native American middle school students attending a "mainstream" (predominantly white) school. She described how the students modified, or "accommodated" their behavior for the benefit of their white teachers and in the presence of white students, in order to successfully navigate the public school setting. Closely related to the concept of "acting white," Masta describes the perception that white students and teachers in her study often referred to Native American students as "apples," a derogatory term for a Native American person suggesting the person is "red on the outside, white on the inside". "The term 'apple,'" as noted by Masta, "was meant to diminish the identity of the Native American students – they might look Native American, but in essence, were White" (p. 29). These issues, "acting white," "accommodating behaviors," and the perpetuation by schools of a myth that academic success is white (with simultaneous denigration of Indian identity), are very much at play for Native American students. Identity is such

a pervasive topic in Indian education that it is necessary to explore this concept of "acting white", as described and critiqued, in order to understand how it has been discussed and situated in the field of Indian education.

Specific to Native American student development, Huffman's (2001) Transculturation Theory also underscores the importance of understanding identity and further explores the role of culture as it relates to Native American student experiences. Huffman contends that there are four stages of Transculturation that a Native American student could experience during their college years: Alienation, Self-Discovery, Realignment and Participation. According to Huffman, throughout this process, students transition from feelings of isolation and being "out-of-place" on campus to fully integrating into the campus and structure of student life. Those initial feelings are believed to be caused by the student's recognition of and unease about the incongruences between their identity as an Indian person and the new identity of a college student. These expressions echo a sentiment similar to younger Native American students who grapple with how to negotiate the integration of a strong Native identity and a successful academic student who cares about grades, homework and test scores.

Huffman contends that over time, these college students come to realize that they are able to assume the role of an academic, or a college student, without sacrificing their cultural identity. At that point, students are better able to incorporate into the college environment and find academic success while maintaining their "Indianness". In this way, Huffman's Transculturation Theory reflects Carter's

challenge to Fordham and Ogbu that purports the value of strengthening cultural connectedness for academic success. This conversation between ideas as presented by Fordham and Ogbu or Carter and Huffman provide a frame to understanding part of students' descriptions of their pre-college experiences.

The socio-cultural experiences related to the "burden of acting white" as described by Fordham and Ogbu are only one factor related to context to consider as I examine the experiences of Native students and participants in cultural programs. The context of this population is complex and varied by the unique factors of individual students. Understanding Native American students' perceptions about the relationship between academic success and cultural fidelity, however, is necessary to understanding students' pre-college experiences.

Theoretical Frameworks

As a way to begin thinking about the connections between the literature and the experiences and practices of contemporary Native American precollege students, I began by exploring aspects of two important theoretical frameworks to emerge in the field of Indian Education, Transculturation (Huffman, 2001) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005). Exploring these two theoretical frameworks provided direction as I began the data collection and analysis process in this current study. These beginning constructs now helped to develop a frame for the current research questions, methodologies and analyses.

Transculturation. Transculturation is a theoretical framework underscoring the importance of cultural connectedness. In his study examining the experiences of

232 Native American students in higher education, Huffman (2001) described these experiences in terms of their successes and strengths, rather than a typical deficit model approach to Indian Education research. Huffman found that students who maintained strong cultural ties to their tribal ancestry were better able to persist through a transculturation process that included personal self-discovery and ultimately, successful participation in the university setting. Huffman's Transculturation theory is an appropriate framework to apply to the present research of pre-college practices of Native American students involved in cultural enrichment programs because like Huffman, these programs emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening cultural connections in order to successfully navigate a non-Native setting, i.e. the university.

The students in Huffman's sample who were able to develop practices that allowed them to maintain their cultural identities while also adopting the identity of a successful college student were able to do so because their strong cultural identity served as an "anchor" allowing them to participate in the university setting without feeling that they were sacrificing their identities as tribal people. Similarly, students in culturally grounded enrichment programs are tasked to learn how to apply these strategies by integrating traditional (Native) and institutional (non-traditional) learning practices. For example, one of the intertribal summer programs has students participate in science activities on a university campus as well as under the stars with tribal elders. According to Huffman's Transculturation theory, individuals are constantly engaging in some form of cultural learning; academically successful

students can engage in these forms of socialization on campus because they are secured by a strong sense of cultural attachment.

This framework also describes some of the barriers to success that Native college students encounter, such as feelings of isolation or the pull to leave school in order to participate in cultural ceremonies. These issues, and others related to Huffman's Transculturation theory, promised to be potentially meaningful/were meaningful to the young pre-college participants in the current study as well, as they negotiated their pathways forward after high school graduation.

Huffman's seminal study involved American Indian students in a small Midwestern university. He found that students who maintained strong cultural ties to their tribal ancestry were better able to persist through a transculturation process that included personal self-discovery and ultimately, successful participation in the university setting. "Transculturated" students were able to navigate successfully in two distinct cultural settings, home and university.

Both the university setting and the home setting serve as significant contexts considered in this study. Huffman described the university context in terms of size of the school and racial composition, as well as the surrounding community. He discussed the context of home in terms such as family dynamics, religious practices and language. Transculturation Theory was developed specifically to address the experiences of American Indian students in higher education. However, Huffman emphasizes the experience of students in relatively homogenous settings. In his study, the 232 Native students were primarily Lakota. This theory does not consider areas

with large inter-tribal populations or Urban Indians but does serve as a grounding principle.

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit). TribalCrit is rooted in several different disciplines/fields including Political Science, Education, Legal Theory, Anthropology, and American Indian Studies (Brayboy, 2005). It is a relative of Critical Race Theory and although the two frameworks share several principles, TribalCrit is distinct in significant ways. Critical Race Theory describes racism "as endemic and deeply ingrained in American life" and schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). TribalCrit recognizes race as one component of American Indian identity but focuses on the history of colonization as a fundamental underpinning of U.S. society and its institutions (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, 2013).

TribalCrit is a theoretical lens that recognizes the unique positionality of American Indian tribes and individuals as racialized, political and legal beings. This analytical framework considers this liminality of American Indians in light of the "hundreds of years of abusive relationships between mainstream educational institutions and American Indian communities" (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2006). Summarizing the fundamental framework of TribalCrit, Brayboy (2005) identifies nine major tenets as follows:

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 goal 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 (pp. 429-420).

As described by Quijada and Murakami-Ramalho (1992), "TribalCrit framework problematizes frameworks that assert... American Indian youth enter schools with cultural deficiencies." They argue that other analytic frameworks center the "cultural knowledge of the school" as the standard, which therefore situates students of color as lacking or deficient. According to Quijada and Murakami-Ramalho, "by not validating the knowledge Indigenous youth bring to settings; schools are simultaneously rejecting their lived experiences". TribalCrit, they argue, serves as a tool to validate Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in a school environment.

This critical framework seeks to address the unique and specific needs of Native American students and communities necessary for academic success. TribalCrit challenges traditional Western schooling practices and ways of thinking to become more inclusive of Native ways of learning, thinking and being. In this dissertation, I use TribalCrit to help consider how Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment programs influence students' pre-college experiences. Though none of the programs involved in the current

study explicitly cite the tenets of Brayboy's TribalCrit theory as foundational to their operations, they do engage in practices that honor the fundamental aspects of TribalCrit. In particular, these programs are engaged in work that honors tenets four through seven; making TribalCrit an appropriate lens for this study. This study itself especially exemplifies tenet eight by listening to student stories.

Combining Theories

Huffman's Transculturation theory is useful because it recognizes diversity among Native American students that is sometimes overlooked in other research. Huffman recognizes that there are differences among Native American learners who have varying connections to culture. His theoretical framework offers explanations to support successful engagement in two cultural settings. I assert that his theory can be pushed further in two ways: 1. his labeling of "strong cultural ties" and "culturally estranged" students and 2. his assertion that the students he has identified as "culturally estranged" students are more likely to fail at the process of transculturation because of their (perceived) lack of strong cultural ties. Although Huffman presents a clear case for the advantages of strong cultural connections, I believe his theory is shortsighted in suggesting that there are primarily two kinds of students – culturally engaged and culturally estranged. He suggests that some students will ultimately flounder, unable to acculturate to a new setting while maintaining close cultural ties. Brayboy's TribalCrit Theory, conversely, allows the possibility that all students could potentially become empowered and successful if they are engaged in some cultural

experiences. I believe the Transculturation Theory can be interwoven with aspects of

Tribal Critical Race Theory in a way that speaks to these two challenges.

TribalCrit is a theoretical framework that I believe can be applicable to most Native American students, meaning that even students who might be initially seen as "estranged" can *become* comfortable on campuses through *thinking in TribalCrit ways.* I posit that by experiencing TribalCrit thinking in pre-college programming itself, even students who might be identified as culturally "estranged" and en route to unsuccessful engagement in school can *become* academically successful. In practice, the culturally grounded education enrichment programs in this current study instinctively integrate important aspects of Tribal Crit. Figure 2, on the following page, illustrates the link between Huffman and Brayboy considered in the initial stages of the current study design
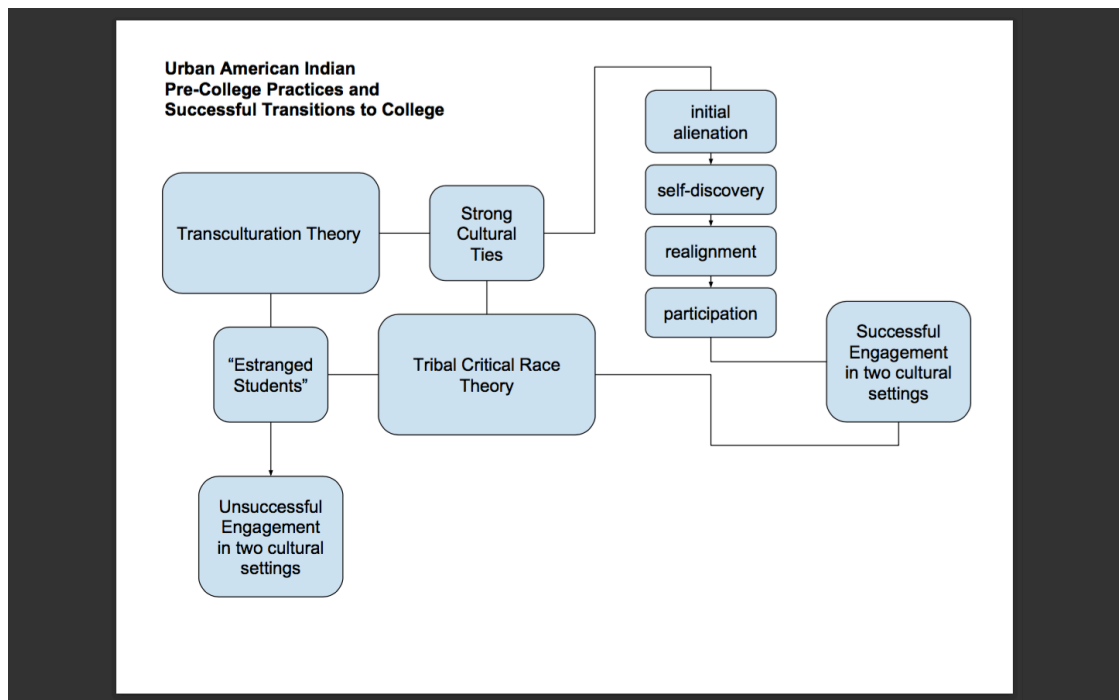
Figure 2: Combining Transculturation and TribalCrit

Blackhawk (1995) adds to this discourse, indicating, "cultural adaptation is

often an inseparable process of individual and collective adjustments in which

individuals understand and interpret new experiences within familiar cultural

frameworks" (p. 16). Native American students, both in higher education and those at

the pre-college stage of their educational journey, are going through their own sort of

cultural adaptation, experiencing campus life and cultural development

simultaneously. Blackhawk recognizes the complexities of the necessary adjustments

Native American students endure. The "inseparable" nature of individual and

collective adjustments necessary for Native American students to navigate school

complements the theoretical frameworks posited by Brayboy and Huffman.

Combining the work of Huffman and Brayboy helps ground the foundations of this

study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The research in this current study centers on the experience of Native American secondary students. Specifically, it seeks to garner an understanding of Native American access to higher education as influenced by student experiences while participating in culturally centered enrichment programs. As discussed briefly in the introduction, much of the literature on Native American students' success is focused on the experiences of Native American students already in institutions of higher education and understanding what factors contribute to successful retention and graduation. In this literature review, I will extend the Introduction chapter discussion of the literature to explore existing research as a frame for Native American, pre-college students at an intersection of K-12 and college experiences. Indian Education research in K-12 environments includes students like those in the current research. As will be explored, much of the research in higher education for Native American students suggests factors that contribute to a positive experience and the academic success of Native American college students. Some of these factors may also hold true for younger Native American students, such as those involved in the current research. This literature review will cover several areas in the field of Indian Education related to strategies for successful experiences in the classroom and in school settings and college readiness.

Academic success is a fundamental component of college readiness. However, research in Native American pre-college practices and college success indicates that a

lack of academic preparation is one major factor that contributes to failure in college (Brayboy, 2005). This lack of preparation is often cited as an important factor in understanding barriers to success for Native students in higher education. However, Guillory and Wolverton (2008) point out that "to say that Native American students are ill-prepared for college only scratches the surface of a deep, historically unresolved problem – getting students through the mainstream higher education pipeline" (p. 58). This literature review will further explore factors beyond "good grades" that are important to creating access to higher education.

As suggested in the Introduction, Castagno and Brayboy (2009), for example, contend that there are two primary approaches to Indian education that either hinder or support Native American student success: assimilative and culturally responsive. They indicate that there is increasing evidence that culturally responsive approaches are more successful for supporting the academic success of Native students. This literature review will highlight some of these major factors, including obstacles and successes, as they relate to the two primary approaches in Indian education as indicated by Castagno and Brayboy. The key factors considered here include: research on Multiple Worlds, understanding a common disconnect between school and home settings; research on Cultural Relevancy, understanding the importance of being able to relate (culturally and socially) to the material and experiences in schools; and research on Sense of Belonging and Support Systems, understanding how Native American students are situated within their learning environments.

Multiple Worlds

In many different ways, research has described the experiences of Native American students, both in K-12 settings and on college campuses, as a negotiation between multiple worlds and distinct cultures (Barnhardt, 1994; Huffman, 2001). The literature has described the struggle that many Native American students experience due to incongruences between the culture of school and the culture of home (Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, & Newland, 2011; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). Castagno and Brayboy (2008) suggest "students of color and students from low-income backgrounds consistently and persistently perform lower than their peers according to traditional measures of school achievement because their home culture is at odds with the culture and expectations of schools" (p. 946). This may be one contributing factor to the fact that Native students have the highest high school drop out rates and are least likely to be prepared for college (Weaver, 2015). Weaver, however, also maintains that in addition to cultural discontinuity, there are myriad reasons for perceived academic failures, including academic rigor or preparation in high school. Nevertheless, it is important to give consideration to the impact of cultural discontinuity before shifting focus to factors that students lack that may affect academic success. Negotiating the cultural differences can cause students to struggle with feelings of isolation, a competing sense of responsibilities, and financial frustrations (Brayboy, 2009; Weaver, 2015). Students must develop strategies to overcome these fundamental factors before a fruitful discussion about academic rigor or preparation can be engaged.

There is some indication that the ability to assimilate into mainstream or dominant cultural ways congruent with school institutions will support academic achievement (Huffman, 2005). However, assimilation can come with a high cost. "The assumption that students must be assimilated into higher education culture overlooks the cost of giving up one's home culture, particularly in terms of how that sacrifice impacts student learning. Likewise, it does not place appropriate responsibility on the institution for ensuring the student's success" (Lundberg, 2007, p. 406). Lundberg is arguing that assimilationist models, as has been the historic precedent in Indian education, do not acknowledge the skill that is required to successfully navigate two cultural places, like home and the university.

Beaulieu (2006) identified factors that lead to success for students from diverse backgrounds and cultures uniquely distinct from what is represented as "mainstream" in the school. In other words, these were students learning to navigate the concept of multiple worlds. Specifically, he contends, "it is parental, familial, and community involvement that matters," even though that "involvement" may look quite different from the school's interpretation of the word and practice. Beaulieu argues that while much of the literature in Indian education is focused on "culture," there has been, in his estimation, a devaluation in the significance of social and linguistic aspects of culture as the key distinctions. The effectiveness of culturally based education in schools is dependent on "how we teach and arrange social activity in schools." According to Beaulieu, "the extent to which the social-linguistic approach of the school mirrors that of the students and community will determine the extent to which

the purposes and goals of the school can be accomplished." Beaulieu is calling for

schools to make decisions that are informed by members of the community and reflect

the community's expectations and values. In other words, according to Beaulieu, "the

goal of culturally based education is two fold; the school must provide both effective

and meaningful educational programs."

Beaulieu's study included a survey of the "culturally based education

programs" in the United States. This review indicated that there were five types of

culturally based programs. The five types of programs he identified were: 1.)

Culturally Based Instruction, 2.) Native Language Instruction, 3.) Native Studies, 4.)

Native Cultural Enrichment and 5.) Culturally Relevant Materials. In the current

study, I have identified the programs that students are involved in as culturally

centered enrichment programs. Beaulieu's study provides a broader range of

understanding and description as to the purpose of each of these types of programs.

Beaulieu, however, is focused on schools intentionally designed to promote culturally

based approaches. He points out that schools that are not designed to address or meet

these goals will, naturally, have less success supporting their Native American

students. The programs identified in the current study, however, are supplemental to

students' schools.

Although experiences of cultural discontinuity in schools are common for

Native American students and their families (Weaver, 2015) research suggests that

cultural differences that exist can be bridged. Teachers, for example, can support

Native students by making an effort to understand how "assimilation and cultural

eradication have been the central goals of (Western) education" and how "schools have functioned as a tool of colonization" (p. 252). This echoes Brayboy and Castagno's assertions about assimilative education as a goal of American schools.

Reflecting on this history can help teachers and other professionals working with Native students better understand the contemporary experiences of Native students. The programs in the current study attempt to help students themselves understand and reflect on these histories. For as much as it would support students if their teacher made concerted efforts to understand students' experience, most program leaders and staff understand that this is not a common practice and assume the responsibility to equip their students with this critical lens.

Research on students navigating the multiple worlds between home and university further draws attention to persistence factors and barriers that influence Native American students; and whether or not students are experiencing assimilative or culturally responsive approaches to education. One factor that contributes to Native persistence is the desire to meet family expectations (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008) or a positive feeling of responsibility towards one's family. Another persistence factor is related to the desire to "give back" to the tribal community (ibid.). Students are motivated to succeed, driven by a desire to contribute something meaningful to their own communities. A third persistence factor has been identified as on-campus social support systems. In fact, according to Lundberg (2014), "a supportive campus environment (is) the strongest predictor of learning for Native American students" (p.

266). These persistence factors shed light on how students can balance assimilative attempts with culturally relevant responses.

In another study of persistence factors, Pewewardy and Frey surveyed students about their perceptions about the racial climate on their campus including student support services and cultural diversity courses and also students' perceptions and attitudes about cultural diversity. The researchers then compared the response of the American Indian students to non-Native students in an effort to better understand the experience and perception of Native American students in a non-Native university. The researchers found that there were substantial differences between Native American and non-Native students in all areas, including the perception of campus support services, the value of multicultural courses, and understandings of racism and the frequency of ethnic discrimination.

According to the authors, their findings indicate a need for colleges to address the issues of racism and discrimination on their campuses. Their research highlights the causes and effects of an unwelcoming campus environment and the detriment of social isolation experienced by so many Native American students. They indicate the need for universities to support Native American students' adjustment to life as an engaged university student while at the same time guiding them to appropriate support services in order to find a community on campus. Additionally, the researchers emphasize the significance of different cultural backgrounds between Native American students and their peers, university staff and faculty. They contend that the dissonance between Native American and non-Native folks on campus "has profound

implications for the success of American Indian students attending predominantly white colleges and universities." Similar to several other researchers in the field of Indian Education, Pewewardy and Frey found that racism, oppression and "unexpected intergenerational grief" contribute to the challenges faced by Native American people and communities. According to the authors, these challenges are compounded in institutions of higher education and necessitate the need for "special attention" to address these barriers.

The two primary implications drawn from this study are that Native American students are more successful when given access to culturally specific and relevant student support programs and that racism and oppression are so pervasive on predominantly white campuses that this is an area the urgently needs to be addressed by campus administrators and other leaders. Although this study focused on Native American college students, it is reasonable to consider that these issues and forces may be important factors in the lives of secondary students as well.

Whereas some of the literature has identified strong predictors of success for Native American students, Guillory and Wolverton have also identified some of the primary obstacles to student success. According to Guillory and Wolverton, students and university staff identified different obstacles to success. From an institutional perspective, obstacles include inadequate financial resources and lack of academic preparation. From a student perspective, obstacles included, single parenthood, inadequate financial support and lack of academic preparation. Additional research indicates more reasons for American Indian student withdrawal, including financial

difficulties, family obligations, the need to get a job, inadequate reading or study

skills, and disinterest in studies (Lee, Donlan, & Brown, 2010). Understanding these

barriers can help Native American communities, including culturally centered

enrichment programs, to provide the most appropriate supports for their students.

In line with Huffman's Transculturation Theory, one common theme in the

literature suggests that strong family ties and traditions can support student resiliency

(Montgomery, et al., 2000). Guillory and Wolverton (2008) contend that family

connections can be so strong that students can "overcome many difficult situations,

such as an unwelcoming environment, lack of academic preparation, and inadequate

financial support" (p. 74) and ultimately achieve academic success. Conversely, there

is evidence that family pulls can, at times, be a detriment to student success when

those connections force students to shirk academic responsibilities. Sometimes,

"family obligations are not limited to participating at family events, but extend to

providing assistance that often related to financial need" (Lee, et al., 2010, p. 268).

Even so, family responsibilities and obligations are not themselves impediments to

student success. Instead, these challenges illustrate the disconnect between school and

home or family and how assimilative, non-culturally relevant approaches to education

create a perceived dichotomy between home and school, forcing students to learn

adaptive strategies in order to find academic success.

Cultural Relevancy

Recognizing the rift that often exists between home and school cultures, many

researchers write about ways to help youth bridge home/community life and school

life. Research supports the incorporation of culturally relevant curriculum in schools,

and pedagogy that considers and prioritizes the importance of students' cultures in

schools. This type of thinking has been described as culturally

relevant/appropriate/sustaining/responsive pedagogy (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008;

Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris 2012; Yazzie, 1999). The common argument, according

to Ladson-Billings (2005) is that culturally relevant pedagogy can provide a way "for

students to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically" (p. 476).

Brayboy and Castagno (2009) note that "although many reading and literacy scholars

have argued that students' academic achievement and school performance improves

when curriculum and pedagogy are relevant to students' lives, many Indigenous

students are not experiencing this sort of schooling" (p. 44).

American schools foster individual success; which is a notion that is

incongruent with most Native people and communities who develop knowledge

systems based on community (Weaver, 2015). Ladson-Billings (1995) describes,

"culturally relevant teachers (as encouraging) a community of learners rather than

competitive, individual achievement" (p. 480). This demonstrates one way in which

researchers argue that a culturally relevant approach is appropriate for Native students.

There are additional benefits as well. As described previously, it is important for

Native students to learn how to navigate multiple worlds between home and school.

According to Castagno and Brayboy (2008), this ability is akin to creating a bicultural

student who is competent in both mainstream and tribal communities. Students who

are unsuccessful in this endeavor and who consequently suffer academically because

of the incongruence between cultures are marked as the root of their own problems in school. Either the individual child or his family is held accountable, or the Native culture as a whole is (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). They describe culturally responsive schooling in Indian Education as an educational shift in teaching methods, curricular materials, teacher dispositions and school-community relationships that speak specifically to Native American epistemologies. They contend that culturally responsive schooling is necessary to create an environment where students can hone a bicultural identity that supports academic achievement.

Moreover, Castagno and Brayboy's review of literature offers a critique of the implementation of classroom and school approaches to culturally responsive schooling for Native American youth. According to the authors, in over forty years of advocating for curriculum and policy that honors Native American cultural values, schools in the United States continue to fail in meeting the needs of Native American students, in general. The reason, the authors posit, is that the literature on culturally responsive schooling in Native American communities lacks concrete guidance or direction and instead provides anecdotes and generalizations that are near impossible to implement as practice or policy.

Castagno and Brayboy point out the academic disparities for Native American students compared to other groups of students. The discrepancy in grades, test scores and almost every other measure of academic success indicates, as posited by Castagno and Brayboy, that "schools are clearly not meeting the needs of Indigenous students," and that moreover, dialogue among educators and with Native American communities

that centers on culturally responsive schooling is essential to improving educational outcomes for Native American youth.

First, the authors define culturally responsive schooling as "that which 'builds a bridge' between a child's home culture and the school to effect improved learning and school achievement." The authors go on to describe three specific topics that need to be added to the discussion of culturally responsive schooling: sovereignty, racism and epistemologies. They argue that without these three elements it will be impossible to fully and successfully implement practices of culturally responsive schooling for Native American students. Sovereignty and self-determination describes the unique political status of Native American tribal citizens. It is necessary, the authors argue, to consider the political sovereignty of tribes in relation to the nature of education and schooling for Native American youth. At minimum, Castagno and Brayboy contend, "tribal nations have inherent rights to determine the nature of schooling provided to their youth." This is a fact generally left unconsidered by schools and even conversations about culturally responsive schooling for Native American communities. Racism is the second element that the authors assert has been too often ignored in the culturally relevant schooling conversations. The authors point out that racism continues to be a persistent issue in the schooling experience of Native American students. The authors illustrate the variety of ways that students must contend with racism and racists including, "paternalism, prejudice, harmful assumptions, low expectations, stereotypes, violence, and biased curriculum materials." Next, the authors identify Indigenous Epistemologies as the third element

that needs to be added to discussions of culturally relevant schooling for Native American students. As a means of describing the meaning of Indigenous Epistemologies, Castagno and Brayboy offer a numbers of factors that contribute to the notion. For example, they identify the complex set of technologies passed through generations. These knowledges, they explain, serve as threads that are woven together, stitching together the fabric of a community. These knowledge systems are composed of a sense of relationality, responsibility to individual self and whole community, grounding to a specific place and a "responsible" use of power. "Reclaiming Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies," the authors contend, "is an important strategy toward the actualization of sovereignty and self-determination among tribal nations."

Quijada and Murakami-Ramalho (1992) further discuss the importance of nurturing a social and political consciousness among Native American youth that will allow for a positive engagement in the "complex cultural dynamics of society". They recognize that various school policies serve to disengage certain students, particularly Native American students, from the their schools, the classroom and the overall learning process.

Resiliency, a necessary quality for students to overcome obstacles and barriers that exist in schools, is a key strategy for Native American students who have demonstrated success in secondary school. Beyond resiliency, the authors focus on a framework called Transformative Resistance, which calls for individuals to actively resist and transform the challenges they are forced to confront in schools on a daily

basis. In this example, the authors examined the impacts of the school's In-School

Suspension policy. In effect, the policy was punishing responsible, family-oriented

students who carried the burden of taking care of younger siblings and ensuring that

they arrived at school on time, at the expense of arriving to school late themselves,

only to then be punished. The authors argue that through Transformative Resistance,

for example, a parent committee meeting with the school board to make

accommodations for students arriving late, students' life experiences would be

validated and valued and moreover, may inform school policy makers about how to

best engage with students in a manner that works to retain students and set them up for

success. This would require that school be willing to embrace Native American

epistemologies and recognize the reciprocal relationships between generations.

Lee and Quijada Cerecer (2010) described the benefits to a socio-culturally

responsive (SCR) education from the perspective of Native American youth.

According to the authors, the youth identified two primary factors necessary to the

successful implementation of SCR education; meaningful learning experiences and

relationships at school. In their study, the students understood SCR education as an

array of factors that would allow them to "learn and assert or reclaim their Native

identity despite school, teacher, and peer-based influences" that might contradict their

agency. In addition to representative language and culture in the curriculum, the youth

in this study identified pedagogy, cultural values, vision, teacher preparation, school

climate and assessment as integral to SCR education. Lee and Quijada Cerecer

indicate that the SCR is "necessary in order to respond to educational inequities that

negatively affect poor and/or minority youth," like many Native American students. Furthermore, they contend that a SCR approach to education validates the experiences of a multi-cultural student body allowing all students to "actively participate in constructing what counts as knowledge in their classrooms and schools."

The youth in this study commonly indicated a belief that their schools were intolerant or even hostile regarding Native American cultures. They felt disrespected by non-Native peers and were treated unfairly by teachers. They lamented the lack of Native American representation in the mainstream curriculum and noted that when a Native perspective was included it was typically marginalized and set-up as a contradiction to the non-Native perspective of U.S. history. The authors contend, "these experiences negatively affected the students' motivation to persist and succeed in school" even when students were in positions to advocate for greater inclusion in the classroom discussions.

Students also talked about the significance of having positive role models and supportive teachers in their lives. In this particular study, the teachers who were most supportive taught courses that validated the students' lives and knowledge from home. These teachers emphasized and modeled the importance of "cultural knowledge," including the revitalization of traditional language revitalization, "and strengthening cultural identity and self-confidence." These positive experiences had students reflecting on their own interest in establishing strong connections with teachers and other significant adults. The students identified adults who were able to talk about their personal experience and relate to some of the issues that the students themselves

were also navigating. For the students, these types of exchanges represented a reciprocal relationship given the fact that teachers are privy to all manner of personal details about their students. They sought out teachers with whom they could build authentic relationships. These are important considerations when seeking to understand what factors contribute to a successful implementation of SCR education but also the academic success and satisfaction of other Native American students in secondary schools.

Lee, Donlan and Brown (2010) explored how some schools were able to foster the well-being and development of Native American youth "by attending to their academic achievement through Indigenous language, knowledge systems and values." More specifically, Lee examined the concept of k'é as a Navajo term focused on the importance of family and relationships. The author described how incorporating this Indigenous notion as central to the schooling experience of Navajo children fosters important relationships between students and teachers and other adults. In her research, Lee was able to identify how this Indigenous knowledge system was used to forge school-community partnerships in order to support language revitalization efforts, specifically. However, she also points to the recent literature that illustrates the benefits of home and school partnerships in relation to the overall academic success of Native American students

For example, she cites Kulago (2011) indicating that positive relationships between schools and the communities they serve can "create a compassionate environment" that benefits the students and can "begin a healing process between

schools and communities, given their negative histories and present-day distance from one another." Lee asserts that Native American students experience greater academic success when there is an alignment between the goals of the community and the school. She also looks to Kushman and Barnhardt's study (2001) that reiterates the advantages of a cooperative relationship between schools and their communities. In this study, relationships between youth and trustworthy adults again plays a key role in addressing the needs of Native students.

Native American students have many different experiences in school and may have different experience with culturally relevant practices. As discussed, the research supports the argument that culturally relevant practices support academic achievement for students not representative of the mainstream dominant culture, such as Native Americans, in U.S. schools. Ultimately, academic achievement is necessary for students interested in pursuing opportunities in higher education. Kanu (2006) states unequivocally that cultural integration in education supports college preparation. Teachers and schools who aim to integrate culture into schools must demonstrate a sense of responsibility to use accurate sources (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Often, "one of the reasons Indian children experience difficulty in schools is that educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into the education instead of education into the culture" (p. 159). These attempts may reinforce stereotypes and only serve to further alienate Native students who then experience a sense of silencing and invisibility (Brayboy, 2004).

Sense of Belonging and Support Systems

   Several studies indicate that creating linkages between home and school serves to foster a sense of belonging for Native students, which ultimately can lead to academic achievement (Gilliard & Moore, 2007; Weaver, 2015). This supports the existence of the dichotomy presented by Brayboy and Castagno between assimilative and culturally relevant practices. Conversely, Kanu (2006) found that even with the inclusion of Native American culture and perspectives in the curriculum, rates of attendance and retention did not necessarily go up. Claiming that Native American culture is "included" in the curriculum is a relative statement. It would be necessary to develop an understanding of how culture is incorporated into curriculum and what other strategies are employed to improve outcomes, be they academic or attendance, for students. This study of students' full range of experiences while enrolled in culturally grounded enrichment programs, including home life, school life, experiences on the reservation and in their communities and among their peers and families, aimed to do just this.

   Gloria and Robinson Kurpius (2001), for example, found that academic persistence among Native American students was strongly supported by social support networks, comfort in the campus environment and self-efficacy. More precisely, they found that social supports that included faculty or staff mentoring had the strongest relationship to persistence. Although this particular research focused on Native American students in a university setting, the findings may have important meaning in a secondary school setting as well. In fact, for Native American students, it could be

that the "mentoring" component could be garnered outside of the school setting, in a culturally centered enrichment program, for example. Moreover, Gloria and Robinson Kurpius determined that both formal and informal interactions with faculty or staff served as the "critical noncognitive variable related to American Indian students' persistence decisions." It is, therefore, interesting to note that the students in this current study moved through environments conducive to both formal and informal interactions with staff in their enrichment programs who often served as mentors to the youth.

Furthermore, Gloria and Robinson Kurpius found that campus environment also played a major role in the persistence of Native American students. When students found the environment to be a friendly, welcoming environment, students were less likely to indulge nonpersistence behavior patterns. Like Huffman, Gloria and Robinson Kurpius found that environments fostering feelings of marginalization or alienation were detrimental to the success and persistence rates of Native American students. Like some other researchers, their research supports the idea that "those students who were more highly integrated into American Indian culture may be less comfortable in the university environment and at greater risk to make nonpersistence decisions" (p. 97). In this instance, "integrated into American Indian culture" refers to individuals who were raised in "traditional" homes that maintain cultural practices, customs and belief systems.

Beaty and Chiste (1986) discuss the implementation of a university program designed to improve retention and graduation rates of Native American students in

their study. In this example, faculty from the Canadian university created a program

known as the University Preparation Program (UPP) in collaboration with tribal

leaders from local reserves. The theoretical framework in this research was grounded

in so-called "gate-keeping encounters," a term describing all of the activities related to

Native students' experiences gaining access into the university. Navigating the

university bureaucracy, according to Beaty and Beaty Chiste, requires the acquisition

of new knowledge that may be in contrast to the values of Native American students'

home communities. They contend "that students negotiate these institutions and make

a successful transition to university life by undergoing some degree of 'perspective

transformation'." It is not, however, in their estimation that the responsibility rests

solely on the shoulders of the Native American students themselves; they also hold the

institutions themselves accountable for making the necessary changes and pedagogical

shifts to better serve Native students.

In summary of their research, the authors posit that programs designed in

collaboration with community and intended to serve the needs of Native American

students can be successful at providing a transition into university life. Beyond that,

they suggest the possibility that these programs should also include contingencies for

the event of academic or student failure. This issue could likely be grounded in the

need for better preparation during secondary school.

While there is evidence supporting Native American students' sense of

belonging as a strategy for school success, research has also discussed the fact that

school personnel often lack a sufficient understanding of Native students' mindset and

therefore feel ill-equipped to meet the specific needs of Native students (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). It seems reasonable to assume that teachers and administrators lacking an understanding and appreciation for their students' backgrounds will find it difficult to foster this sense of belonging.

Fortunately, other research provides evidence that American Indian students directly and indirectly provide support for one another that can counter the lack of belonging experienced from the school (Montgomery, Milville, Winterowd, Jeffries & Baysden, 2000). In fact, I would posit that this understanding is at the heart of most culturally engaged enrichment programs. This self-imposed support system does not absolve school professionals from the responsibility of seeking to support Native students, however. In fact, according to Montgomery, et al. (2000) school professionals are implored to not only create models of support and build relationships with students, but to make sure that the interactions are "viewed as authentic, empowering, and meaningful by those students who need them" (p. 397).

Creating a sense of belonging and building supportive environments is directly related to a culturally relevant approach to education (Yazzie, 1999). Cultural inclusion, according to Yazzie, leads to improved student performance and "positive engagement" in the classroom. Relationships forged in these classrooms cultivate supportive environments for Native students. Ultimately, these environments offer Native American students tools to contend with school systems and other classroom environments that may be decidedly not Native-centered, or even Native friendly.

Conclusion

The academic success of Native American students is a critical issue for tribes and Urban Indian communities. It is an important issue to the degree that many communities have created pre-college programs geared specifically toward Native students because there is a collective concern that the future of our Indian tribes and communities depends on the education of our people.

As discussed, much of the current research in Indian Education has focused on individual tribes or students residing on reservation land. The literature presented in this review addresses three of the most prominent issues highlighted in the current research, multiple worlds, cultural relevancy and sense of belonging. The current study seeks to expand this discussion by examining pre-college experiences of Native American students in a Native American centered enrichment program. Supporting the academic achievement of Native American students is necessary for the survival of Native American communities. As Weaver (2015) states, "however indigenous students pursue their education, their educational success is key to maintaining vital native communities and contributes to the wellbeing of society at large" (p. 456).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

The aim of this study was to better understand how Native American youth, participating in cultural enrichment programs, think about and prepare for opportunities in higher education. In the field of Indian education, considerable research has been done in the area of college success (Adelman, Taylor, & Nelson, 2013; Barnhardt, 1994; Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, & Newland, 2011). Success is primarily defined as retention and graduation but also includes ideas about academic success, social-emotional well-being and the ability to remain culturally connected. This research began by reviewing literature regarding Native American student success and retention in college and considering whether there might be similar contributing factors or something different occurring during the pre-college years. It also included research about experiences in some K12 settings for Native American students. Research in the area of secondary education related to Native American populations tends to focus on issues of dropout rates or suicide prevention (Shaughnessy, Doshi, & Jones, 2004). One goal of this study was to try to shift the focus to academically successful and/or college-motivated Native youth and to examine that transition period from secondary to post-secondary experiences. Understanding how students think about college and are preparing themselves for these opportunities may support the future development of other Native students, as well as the programs, schools and universities that serve them.

The research in this study was designed to address the question: what experiences do culturally engaged Native American students talk about as important to their goals in, and preparation for higher education? Culturally engaged, in this context, indicates involvement in one or more culturally centered enrichment programs specifically serving Native American students. This overarching question was supported by two sub-questions about students and the programs that support them:

- Which precollege experiences do students/families identify as critical to successful preparation in order to apply and enroll at a college or university?
- How do staff from a Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment program talk about and support student success?

In the course of the research, it became necessary to expand my inquiry to understand the precollege experiences that students and families identified as problematic and having a negative impact on college access and preparation, not just those experiences that were helpful. Additionally, because of access issues, I also moved to interviewing students from various types of enrichment programs, rather than studying a single program as in the original study design. Expanding the study to include more programs also provided an opportunity to include the voices of other program leaders and staff. Interestingly and unexpectedly, a few of the interviewees, it turned out, were both former participants of an enrichment program and current staff members of the same program. These participants added a unique perspective to the questions at hand.

Positionality

   Maxwell (2012) reminds us it is important to consider potential biases researchers have in qualitative data collection. One such bias could be the familiarity the researcher may have with the setting. Going into this research, I had a familiarity with all of the enrichment programs to varying degrees. For example, I was familiar with one of the intertribal summer enrichment programs because I had worked as a volunteer and as a staff person in the early days of the program. This was approximately twelve years ago. Then, I held a lead counselor role and chaperoned an international cultural exchange experience in the same program, working closely with staff, students and families. I believe in the value of this program and programs like it, and as an educator and a community member I support its mission and philosophy. I came to study the program as one program and one model among many that support Indian education and Native youth, and as a researcher, I also learned to simply listen more objectively to program participants and staff.

   Similarly, I was familiar with one of the tribal youth centers and their students because I had worked in the community for nearly a decade. I was a resource teacher in the tribal school and in fact, four of the student participants were former students of mine. I knew of other programs because of my participation in the community. Though I was not necessarily involved in all the programs, I knew families, youth or coordinators in almost every program in which the students had participated. This familiarity with the programs posed no substantial conflict of interest, as my participation had no bearing or influence on the experience of the participating

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students. At times, however, the familiarity with students and programs led to sidebar conversations, inside jokes and the occasion to commiserate with students when interviewing them. It is likely that these shared experiences shaped the stories they shared with me; however, I believe this methodological issue largely built comfort with participants and allowed them to speak more freely and earnestly.

Another area of potential bias could have been my new role one of the local universities. I was recently hired as the inaugural Director of the university's Intertribal Resource Center. Although this position has no formal connection to the represented programs at this time, it is possible that there will be future collaborations or partnerships. Among many different responsibilities, this new role requires me to collaborate with Native communities and programs serving Native populations. One goal of this position is to increase the number of Native American students on the campus. It is conceivable that students or parents could have perceived our interactions as a type of recruitment activity. I made every attempt to clearly explain that my primary role in our interaction was that of a graduate student. However, I did not hide my professional role; I responded to participants' inquiries when they expressed interest. I believe it is possible that this aspect of my role may have led participants to suppress their negative connotations or doubts about higher education, but this was not the case for all students. Some, in fact, very freely expressed their mixed feelings.

Lastly, like the participants in the study, I am a Native American student. I have more time spent in the world of higher education than these young students, but

as a member of the local Native American community, I have thoughts and opinions about the questions I asked in this study. In many ways, I feel that I can identify with and relate to the students in the program. I grew up in the same region, likely attended many of the same community cultural events and even know some of the students' families who are participating in the program. In this case, I contend that my familiarity with the community was an asset that allowed me access into places I might otherwise have not had access. For example, in one community, the tribal council had to approve my access to the students in the youth center on the reservation. Since the tribal council knew who I was and was familiar with the work I do, the approval process was fast and easy. I also contend that my familiarity with the participants and their communities fostered a rapport making the interview process comfortable.

Participants and Setting

The beginning of this study coincided with a 2016 summer residential program at a large university in Southern California. As described previously, this summer residential program was an educational enrichment program for Native American youth, ages 12-18. Although the program has evolved over its sixteen years of operation, the fundamental goal of providing a cultural and enrichment program for Native youth with a focus on science, arts and wellness, has remained constant. There were approximately 25 participants, one director and 5-6 college age staff mentors. All of the student participants were Native American; some were of mixed heritage.

Many of the students came from the local Southern California Native American communities and others came from various regions throughout the country.

Students who participated in this summer residential program represented a wide range of college readiness attributes. There was no academic requirement to participate in the program, meaning students did not have to meet a minimum GPA requirement, nor did they have to indicate an intention to attend college in the future. However, in addition to cultural enrichment activities, all students were exposed to college motivation and readiness curriculum on the university campus. I was present during the summer as a supporter of the program and in this way, I had an opportunity to build rapport with students participating in the 2016 summer residential program.

Still, as the research progressed, it became necessary to expand the range of programs and participants. There were a number of considerations that factored into this necessity. First, because of my new position at the university, the time I was able to spend with the students during the summer program was more limited than expected. In the original study design, I had planned to interview students and conduct focus groups during the program itself. However, because my time spent with the students was less than anticipated, I had few opportunities that I could available to collect this specific data. Additionally, the program schedule included long days, with early mornings, late nights, and very little down time. This meant that even during the times that I was with the students, there were no opportunities to collect this data. Instead, I asked students to consider signing a participation form (Appendix II) and asked if I could contact them over the summer, after the program, when they were

back at home. All of the students agreed and signed the participation forms, however, ultimately I was only able to connect with a few of the students. I felt strongly that there were more stories that had not been captured because of the low number of participants. For this reason, I expanded the range of programs and participants.

Similar to the population of the first program, participants from other programs represented a range of academic and cultural experiences. The current students were also in high school with the exception of one student who was in middle school. As I recruited students who had participated in a cultural enrichment program, I also had volunteers who were recent high school graduates and could reflect on their experiences from the perspective of a Native American youth at the intersection between high school and college. The students represented several different tribes and were all involved in at least one local enrichment program that specifically served Native American students and families. In total, I interviewed seventeen youth, including the high school graduates. In all, seven different programs were represented in this study; some students participated in only one and some students participated in multiple programs. A more thorough description of the programs is provided in Chapter 4.

In addition to student participants, study participants also included parents or guardians, former participants in the programs studied, and program leaders. All of these voices contributed critical insight into Native American college readiness as supported by cultural enrichment programs. Student voice was paramount, but the additional participants supported students' messages and added important historical

and "big picture" perspectives. This range of voices contributed distinct perspectives to develop a better understanding of the college preparation of Native students. The recruitment and selection process for all participants, including parents, former program participants, and program leaders is described in more detail below.

Recruitment Procedures

In the initial design of this research project, I had intended to focus solely on the students in one specific summer enrichment program. I joined in the activities during the summer, giving me an opportunity to meet the students and gain a sense of their day-to-day practices in the two-week residential program. During this program I was able to talk to the students about the research study and gain student consent to participate. After the program, when students had returned home, I reached out to them via phone using the numbers provided by the students. This strategy proved less than fruitful as most students did not reply or respond to my phone call. Students might have been on summer vacations or involved in other activities; regardless, it was necessary to expand participant recruitment efforts.

After updating the IRB and receiving approval to expand the range of participants, I began an outreach effort to find additional students who had participated in other culturally engaged enrichment programs. I started with colleagues and community members I knew who were involved in programs or had worked with Native students and began to ask if they would be interested and able to help connect to students for the study. I explained that I was interested in working with young Native American students who were either currently involved or had previously been

involved in some sort of culturally engaged enrichment program. The examples of culturally engaged enrichment programs that I provided to my initial contacts included reservation based youth or education centers, traditional dance organizations, or urban based, intertribal youth center or education centers. There were specific programs I was aware of that I also used as examples, Native American organizations that were well integrated in the local communities and engaged a lot of Native American students in their programs. I clarified that although I was interested in the students' thoughts about education and college prep specifically, the programs themselves need not necessarily be explicitly college focused in their missions. I was using participation in these programs as a defining characteristic of a "culturally engaged" student. It was this quality that unified participants for the purposes of this study. Additionally, I understood, and throughout the conversations with students and program leaders it was confirmed, that all of the programs that the students represented encouraged the pursuit of higher education and emphasized the importance of attending college to their students in multiple ways.

It was interesting to interview both high school students and recent high school graduates who were involved in a culturally engaged enrichment program. I was also interested in talking to the program leaders who would be able to provide input on Native student college preparation from the perspective of a community program. These leaders had varying degrees of experience working with the youth. One was the founder of his program and had been involved with enrichment programs for Native youth for over sixteen years. Others had been in their current positions for only a

short amount of time but had worked with Native youth in other capacities throughout their work histories. Their familiarity with the community and their commitment to improving outcomes for Native youth made them good resources in this context and an important voice in the dialogue.

I also included outreach to parents/guardians and program leaders as part of my recruitment process. The purpose of the family interview was to acknowledge the contribution of the family in the experiences of Native youth and to understand from them what activities, practices and ideas they considered important to pursuing higher education goals, if that was indeed a goal. Although I was primarily interested in the students' perceptions and voices, my contention was that understanding the intent of program leaders and the hopes of parents/guardians would help inform the bigger picture. I dedicated more energy to recruiting students but when possible, I extended an invitation to parent/guardian participants and program leaders. Some students were adults over the age of 18. I did not invite parents/guardians of adults to participate. I invited all of the program leaders who helped to recruit students to participate as well; although, due to scheduling and location challenges I was unable to interview everyone. In total, I interviewed three program staff and eight family members.

I reached out to different program leaders by phone, in person or via email. After describing my research objectives, to better understand culturally engaged Native American students' perspectives on college and college readiness, I asked them to share my outreach flyer (Appendix I) with their students and to reach out personally to any of their students they thought would be strong representatives and willing to

participate. In two cases, the program leaders agreed but informed me they would need to seek additional approval; so we went through the process of providing detailed information to the tribe in one instance and to the school in the other case. The other programs ran autonomously and program leaders were able to grant permission individually. In another instance, I was invited to attend a community night event where there would be several potential participants. At this event, I was introduced to parents and students and was able to talk to them directly about my work and invite them to participate. If they were interested and willing, they provided their contact information and I followed up to arrange interview times and locations.

The program leaders shared the research project with their students and the students who expressed an interest, or at least a willingness, were recommended to me by the program leaders. After agreeing to be contacted, I emailed or called students and parents to arrange interview times and locations. I was able to connect with some of the students from the initial summer program as well. All of the participants were informed that they would be receiving a modest token of thanks for the participation. Students received five-dollar Starbucks gift cards and parents received twenty-five dollar Wal-Mart gift cards. I did not offer thank you tokens to program leaders for a couple of reasons. First, I considered how I would respond if I were in a similar situation and being asked to talk about my program for a graduate student's research. I decided that I would be happy to oblige without expectation for compensation; and I made an assumption that these programs leaders would feel similarly. Second, I had a relationship with each of the program leaders, all of whom were willing to support my

research as we have supported one another's work throughout the years and in multiple capacities.

Data Collection

Individual Interviews. According to Brenner (2006), qualitative interviews allow participants the opportunity to express meaning in their own words. In this study, interviews were conducted in various locations based on convenience for the participants. In some instances I travelled to the participant's home; other times we met at a local coffee shop and I also met with some students at their youth center. If they had not done so previously, participants were asked to review and sign the appropriate consent forms (Appendices I-IV). Additionally, some interviews were conducted over the phone and one was conducted using a video conferencing tool. All of the interviews were recorded using my personal iPhone voice recorder feature. To ensure an uninterrupted recording, I turned off the ringer and set the phone to airplane mode. This guaranteed that no incoming messages, phones calls or notifications would interrupt or discontinue the recording process.

At the beginning of the interviews with students, I briefly reviewed the overall focus of the study as it pertained to their participation, namely that I was interested in how Native American students involved in culturally engaged enrichment programs framed their experiences in school and specifically how these experiences relate to their perceptions and talk about college planning and preparation. When interviewing families and program leaders, I added my interest in understanding how the programs talk about college preparation and support college readiness. I informed participants

that I would be recording the interview but that they were free at any time to pause or stop the recording. Furthermore, I thanked participants for their involvement and reminded them that it was completely voluntary and they could discontinue their participation at any point, including after the conclusion of the interview. In addition to the interview protocol I kept in front of me, I also used a notebook to keep notes during our conversations. I shared with interviewees that I was keeping notes to help me keep track of main points or threads of conversation that I did not want to forget to revisit in order to delve into more deeply.

I employed a deductive approach to the interviews in that I examined multiple themes from previous research related to successful practices of Native American college students and looked at how my participants address these factors. Characteristic of a deductive approach (Brenner, 2006), I used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix V) across participants, one that addressed the constructs I was interested in related to successful practices among Native American college students. For example, there is a common theme in the research that suggests that many teachers lack an awareness of Native American cultures and understanding of Native American students (Demmert, McCardle, Mele-McCarthy & Leos, 2006, Huffman, 2015) to the detriment of Native American students. The interview protocol I used with students included a question asking students something that they wished their teachers understood about them. But the protocol also included broad questions to ascertain their thoughts about college and allowed flexibility during the interview process for me to ask questions about their specific enrichment program. The

structure of the questions allowed different students to address cultural experiences as a whole and others to describe personal experiences. The interview protocol I used with participants went through several iterations after consultation and feedback was received from cohort members and dissertation advisors. The protocol also evolved throughout the six-month process of interviewing based on the responses from interviewees, as I expanded areas of questioning that the students themselves introduced in early interviews. Although the questions included in the interview protocol were important, I essentially used the protocol as a way to start our conversations that students most often steered in a particular direction. I wanted to let the students lead the conversation but also give myself opportunities to ask pointed questions tying together the points that they relayed as important to my central questions. I also relied on the protocol to bring us back to the focus of the interview. For example, when a student shared a story about an awful experience they had in school, I attempted to get a deeper analysis by asking probing questions about their experience, but then would come back to a question on the protocol to re-center our conversation. In the process of refining my interview tactics and questions, I also conducted one follow up interview to flesh out experiences with more active questioning, based on the critical feedback provided by my advisors.

Although there was a sense of formality based on participants understanding that the interview was part of my dissertation work and the presence of the recording device, I tried to create a casual environment that would encourage participants, especially parents and students, to be comfortable and open. I intentionally engaged in

a code-switching practice speaking and carrying myself as a community member, like an "auntie" or family friend and someone familiar with some of the issues students might be discussing. In a few instances I had a literal "auntie" or family friend relationship with the participant. To the extent possible, I wanted students to feel they could be uncensored in their responses, that I was not there in a "teacher" role and there was no pressure to provide "the right" answer. Indeed, I indicated there was no "wrong" answer since I was interested in their thoughts, words and experiences. Interviews typically lasted between forty and sixty minutes, with some interviews considerably longer and a few that were rather brief.

As mentioned, the setting for the interviews varied greatly depending on the availability and accessibility of each participant. Again, some interviews were conducted in the family home, others in a public space, such as a coffee house, and still others occurred over the phone of video conferencing. It is also worth mentioning that several interviews also took place at community events, specifically at local powwows. A powwow is an intertribal community and cultural gathering that brings Native American people together to express a shared sense of cultural pride through traditional drumming and singing, dancing, ceremony and food. Many powwows are free and open to the public who are invited as spectators, to engage in specified arena activities and to shop from the numerous vendors there to sell their arts, crafts and other goods. Powwows are very loud; conducting dissertation interviews during the pow wow is not a common practice. However, I was committed to going to participants, as opposed to making them come to me. And I was committed to

creating a trusting, comfortable environment. And I was deliberately seeking out participants who were culturally engaged. Therefore, a loud, bustling community powwow was an appropriate setting for several of the participants. There were several unique challenges as the consequence of conducting interviews in such an environment. The recording device had to be held at close range. Drumming and loudspeaker announcements often interfered with the recording. Friends and visitors sometimes interrupted the interview because visiting with friends is a primary activity at the powwow. It may have been especially challenging for the individuals responsible for transcribing the interviews, in fact, one recording was returned to me as "unable to transcribe," but the practice created an authentic element to the data collection process.

Document Analysis. In order to gain a better understanding of each of the programs in which students were involved, I sought information about each program through a document analysis. Many of the programs maintained robust websites with a lot of detailed information about various enrichment programs offered for Native youth. Additionally, several of the programs had been featured in various news articles highlighting their goals and their successes. The websites and online news articles helped to provide the context, history and philosophy behind these programs. As part of my qualitative data collection, I reviewed the materials made available by the programs themselves regarding the purpose and direction of the program. These type of data, according to Mertens (2015) provide background and insight into the "dynamics of everyday functioning" (p. 387) of such organizations. Corbin and

Strauss (2008) also contend that document analysis can support the qualitative development of meaning and understanding. I looked to these documents for the stated purpose, philosophy, direction, history, and desired outcomes of the program. This document analysis allowed me to understand the stated direction and goals of the program so that I was able to consider these factors in subsequent data collection. Mertens (2015) cautions researchers when interpreting the value of such evidence; fortunately, since the original authors of these documents are still available, it was possible to conduct member checks, when necessary, to "determine various perspectives for the interpretation of the data" (p. 387). These data were not the source of any discernable contention.

Data Analysis

As soon as possible, typically within the hour, I emailed the voice recording of each interview to myself. The recordings on my phone were password protected on my personal device and the emailed recordings were also password protected. As part of the first phase of analysis, I would listen to each recording soon after our meeting. Often I listened to these recordings during my commute times so it was not possible to maintain written notes or memos but it helped me to gain a sense of the overall interview and pull out important themes or main ideas shared by each participant. Later, I would be able to add these thoughts or commentaries to the notes I derived from the written transcriptions.

I used Rev.com to transcribe my interviews. Rev.com is an online service provider that provides transcriptions of audio recordings and other media; for a fee

they provide transcription services with a one to two day turnaround. Occasionally, if the interview was especially brief or conversely, if the interview was especially lengthy, I transcribed the interviews myself as a cost savings strategy. In these instances, I used InqScribe, a software tool installed on my computer that facilitates manual transcription. Next, I reviewed each transcript for content and also to clean up any misinterpretations or misspellings. Each transcript was uploaded to MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software tool. In MaxQDA, I began the process of reviewing transcripts and assigning codes to the data. I ensured multiple opportunities to review the recordings and transcriptions. This process of reviewing the audio recordings, transcribing and reviewing transcriptions while maintaining notes helped me begin to make sense of the data. Sipe and Ghiso (2004) emphasize the benefit of multiple readings of transcripts and the ongoing process of writing notes throughout this process. Additionally, I kept multiple memos throughout the process of reviewing transcripts and discussing data with advisors. Memos have been determined to be an effective way to begin analysis while data collection is ongoing (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

I developed a set of a priori codes based on my initial research questions and interview questions. Over multiple reviews of the transcripts, emergent codes developed and shaped the overall analysis. Codes were continually refined and organized to discover relationships and themes within the data (p. 367, Green).

The interviews brought to light many issues related to college readiness, community and schooling experiences. Whereas my interview protocol focused

primarily on issues specifically related to school, education and college planning, our conversations invariably covered a much broader range of issues in students' lives. These issues introduced by the students became critical data to understanding students' perspectives. Because I was employing a semi-structured interview methodology, I allowed conversations to follow their natural trajectories but, I also continued to return to the questions on my protocol as I could and as appropriate.

I began the process of writing while still in the midst of analyzing the data. This practice helped me to identify which data sets were most salient and what organization would work best. After applying a priori codes to each transcript in MaxQDA, I took my analysis offline and printed out copies of each transcript. Once again, I reviewed the transcripts, this time highlighting and annotating directly onto the paper. Although this process is possible in MaxQDA, I preferred doing this part of the analysis by hand because I could physically and literally see multiple data sets all at once. I was better able to find common themes among the data and compare data sets side by side. As I combed through the transcripts, highlighting and annotating, I created separate documents that I called annotated transcripts to accompany each transcript from Rev.com or InqScribe. These documents served as memos, one for each interview. On these documents, I collected the most striking, memorable or standout quotes and ideas from participants and included my own commentary, reactions, questions and thoughts. As I became more and more familiar with the data, I was able to identify buckets to hold the array of data from my participants. In the next phase of the analysis, I used these buckets to organize the data from my annotated

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transcripts. I created additional documents, this time labeling each one of the buckets. For example, I created a document titled "Too Late" to hold data related to students' lamentations that they had not done adequate planning or preparation for college and felt that it was too late for them to apply to a four-year university directly from high school. As another example, I created a document titled "Cautionary Tales" relating students' talk about lessons they had learned from someone else or lessons they hope others might learn from them.

I began to write drafts of summary findings based on these buckets. My method was to identify one or two of the most insightful quotes from a student that I felt strongly represented or epitomized that particular theme. I built an analysis around that quote and talked about how it represented the overall theme of that bucket. At this stage, I would share my analysis with an advisor and we would reorganize, re-label and rearrange buckets and data sets. Over time I went through multiple iterations of organization and analysis. Ultimately, I arrived at the inevitable conclusion that multiple organizations could make sense depending on the themes I felt were mostly strongly represented in the data. As described, our interviews covered an extensive landscape of themes and issues, all of which were important to the participants. One of the most challenging aspects of the data analysis was to decide which of the important issues to include in this study and which to save for future projects.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to better understand the attitudes and motivations of culturally engaged Native American youth regarding college and

higher education. Improving this understanding may support future students, their

families and professionals or programs working with Native American youth to

prepare for opportunities in higher education. As well, teachers or colleges that serve

Native students may be able to develop better programs or services that support

college readiness and preparation specifically aimed at Native students. There were,

however, certain limitations to the generalizability of this study.

For example, it is important to acknowledge that the population of Native

American students who participated in this study, although they shared many

commonalities, did not represent the wide diversity of Native American populations

and experiences in a broader context. Additionally, the fact that all of these students

lived in the same geographic region means that their experiences are reflective of a

particular area and therefore, the ideas for best practices derived from this study may

not necessarily be applicable in another area. The experiences, the needs or concerns

of Native youth living in other parts of the country could vary widely and be quite

different than the students in Southern California.

In addition, the variability of the programs represented in this study could also

limit the generalizability of the research. For the purposes of this study, it was useful

to collectively categorize all of the programs as markers of cultural engagement.

Whether the programs were academically, culturally or socially grounded, each was

weighted equally as a measure of cultural participation. Future studies focused on a

specific type of program or on comparing programs could uncover unique findings.

Nevertheless, this study may help fill a gap in research related to college

preparation and motivation of Native American students. Previous research on Native

American college students informs the current study; however, the fact is that for

Native students to stand a chance graduating from any institution of higher education,

they must first arrive at the threshold. Native students must be academically and

socially prepared for college; and that long, arduous process must begin and be

cultivated long before students even apply to the university. This research sought to

learn more about how to support such development.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The Native American students in this study participated in a variety of enrichment programs emphasizing cultural engagement and revitalization. I intentionally targeted this group of students because I anticipated their K-12 experiences might be uniquely, or interestingly, influenced by these programs and that these experiences would color the way students thought about college. I was especially interested in investigating how their perspectives on schooling and higher education might be framed by their participation in such programs.

In addition to the culturally centered enrichment programs, some of the Native American students in this study also participate in more generalized academic enrichment programs, such as AVID. Presumably, they are receiving messages about college preparation and the advantages and benefits of a college degree in these programs. However, in studies examining the effects of such programs, Native American experiences are very often left out of the conversation, grouped under the category of "other" or relegated to the footnotes. Findings might address how well AVID students who happen to be Native American are academically prepared to complete competitive college applications, for example, rather than understanding how the lived cultural experiences of a specific group of students frames their schooling experience. The difference in this study is the specific interest in understanding how Native American students and families who prioritize a culturally relevant approach to education talk about and think about higher education. Although

it is not inherently a study of the programs themselves, students and families often drew strong connections based on how programs influenced students' perspectives on school and higher education.

The first set of enrichment programs that participants in this study engaged in are reservation based Education Centers and Youth Centers. These are programs that are supported by individual reservations serving their own tribal members. Some reservations run an Education Center that is focused on serving the academic and cultural education needs of the students who attend their programs. Generally, this means that students attend the after-school program during the academic year and sometimes an additional summer program. During the after-school programs students have access to tutors who assist with homework. Students are typically divided by age group and tutors work with multiple students at a time. There is no requirement for students to attend the tutoring that is offered on the reservation, but often staff will associate an incentive to encourage students to attend. For example, the education center may offer a fun field day at the end of the school year but make the opportunity only available to students who have actively participated in the after-school program. These education centers are ultimately grounded in the cultural education of their young tribal members. For example, students are given opportunities to learn their tribal language or hear traditional stories. Center staff at the programs I examined talked about their hopes for students to pursue opportunities in higher education but also submitted that the greater challenge is finishing high school.

Other reservations run a "Youth Center" that provides a space for students to do academic work but the primary focus is providing youth a safe space with structured and supervised activities to keep kids occupied during critical after school hours. In reality, the "Youth Centers" and "Education Centers" are very similar. Two possible distinctions could be the funding source on each reservation and one tribe's preference for using one term over the other. Centers provide ways for youth to actively participate in traditional and cultural practices. These centers provide language classes and cultural activities to ground students in traditional knowledge and education. At one Youth Center, students spend a portion of the summer helping to build and maintain a living replica of a traditional village. Sometimes, Youth Centers organize trips to educational conferences (for example, the local Dream the Impossible Native Youth Conference, the national UNITY [United National Indian Tribal Youth] Conference) and campus tours to a variety of university and college campuses. So, while college readiness is not necessarily a central tenet of the programs at the Youth Center, it is a message that they try to convey through some of their programming.

A second type of enrichment program is the intertribal program that serves students from multiple local reservations as well as youth from tribes from outside of California. Some of these intertribal programs operate year round, emphasizing, within a culturally focused framework, academic support during the school year and enrichment or recreational activities during the summer. Other intertribal programs are offered only in the summer, offering students and families options during summer

breaks to be actively engaged and productive. Often, these intertribal programs provide services to the area's Urban Indian youth. Urban Indian youth are young students whose parents or grandparents relocated to California from tribal communities in other parts of the country. Indian families who came to California from other tribal communities typically wind up in the urban centers. In these urban centers, intertribal communities began to develop and in time, educational and enrichment programs serving the youth were established. These enrichment programs are not located or based on a reservation, although they sometimes build partnerships with local tribal communities and local tribal youth also participate in these intertribal programs.

The intertribal enrichment programs represented in this study all have a focus on academic support and holistic development with an emphasis on cultural revitalization. These intertribal programs often present a more pan-Indian identity even as they find ways to connect youth to their own tribal traditions and practices. Sometimes these youth express feeling a disconnect from their tribe owing to the fact that they are not growing up on their reservation or around their extended families and tribal communities. Students participate in formal and informal educational programming. For example, one of the intertribal enrichment programs provides courses in American Indian Studies that students can enroll in and receive college credit. Other programs offer after-school tutoring or invite special speakers to encourage students to pursue opportunities in higher education. They also participate in other programs and conferences similar to reservations' programs.

The final type of enrichment program that students in this study attended was specifically designed to teach participants about cultural traditions, practices and protocols. These programs, run by community members with respected expertise, typically run year-round and require students to commit time outside of their academic routine, including nights and weekends. The programs emphasized the importance of doing well in school and pursuing higher education, in general, for the students and inn Indian communities. They encouraged their students to pursue these goals although academic support was not central to the programming. These programs focused on teaching students about the history, customs and practice of powwow dancing. One was specifically developed through the Title VI/Indian Education program and teaches students from local reservations and Urban Indians. The other was developed on a local reservation and practices in the same location where the youth center and education center convene. It is quite common for students to participate in more than one program, particularly in this area where local reservations are located relatively near to urban centers.

I talked to students from these different enrichment programs to learn about their attitudes, thoughts and plans regarding college. During this study, students talked about their schooling experiences and the challenges they sometimes faced in the classroom. They shared their thoughts about higher education, their motivations and future goals. With varying degrees of enthusiasm, all of the students expressed a desire to pursue a college education. All of the students confirmed that at least one adult in their world pushed the idea of going to college. Although all of the students

expressed a desire to pursue college at some point, the fact –considered throughout this dissertation -- was that after years of negative experiences in schools, not all of the students were actually prepared to pursue opportunities in higher education. Further, despite the cultural efforts of the precollege programs they attended, these strengths did not translate into a clear understanding of the steps necessary to achieve their higher education goals.

Data indicated three themes in the data on students' precollege experiences shaping their thinking about higher education, revealing pertinent information about their college readiness and motivation. These three overarching themes in their previous experiences are described here as:

1. Students' largely negative experiences *as* Native American Students in K12 schools (and enrichment programs' help with handling this);

2. Students' take on the additional positive influences of Native-centered, Culturally Engaged Enrichment Programs;

3. Students' Growing Understanding of College Readiness.

The first theme in students' precollege experiences – Native American Student Experiences in K12 School – really describes, in students' words, the number of ways that schools have failed Native American students, and secondarily how programs support students to handle school. There were three predominant arenas of failure addressed by students within this first theme: curriculum, negative interactions in school, and stereotype threats. In each case, students said, programs helped students handle these situations. The second theme, Additional Influences of Cultural Enrichment Programs, describes the additional ways in which students said

enrichment programs positively influence students' lives and provide something of a balance to the experiences in school. Three specific positive influences emerged under this theme, including: motivation, cultural identity and lessons from reservation life. The third theme in students' precollege experience, Growing Understanding of College Readiness, demonstrates students' developing understanding of college preparation. Data revealed two common such experiences described by several students: a realization that their college planning and preparation had come too late for their desired goals, and the fact that many students arrived at the end of high school unclear about college planning.

Native American Experiences in K12 Schools

Curriculum. Many of the students in this study noted a lack of and misrepresentation of Native Americans in the classroom and they talked critically about not being represented in the curriculum or textbooks. In general, students expressed a feeling of exclusion minimizing their experiences and even their existence. In contrast, students said that the cultural enrichment programs that students in this study attended emphasized Native American issues, histories, and cultures. Circularly, this programmatic emphasis tended to nurture students' ability to critically understand, examine and challenge the lack of representation in the K12 classroom. As we will examine further in exploring the second theme, students' classroom critiques indicated that, to them, the programs operate as a counterbalance to the lack of Native American perspectives, histories and culture in the classroom by bringing these lessons into the students' lives with intention.

Students understand that they have little influence over the curriculum used in any given primary or secondary classroom. The fact that neither students, nor families for that matter, feel they have a voice in the curriculum is meaningful because it indicates an experienced spoon-feeding of whatever distorted version of history is provided to all of the students. If the curriculum is not challenged – meaning, if students, Native American and non-Native alike, never challenge the misrepresentations of Native American histories and stories--then these inaccuracies will perpetuate. These inaccurate and misguided understandings of history, described by the students below, may contribute to a pattern of injustice supported by the glorification of history and domination of the United States, crafted, honed and secured in American schools. However, students who have been guided in some way to think critically about classroom curricula vis-à-vis their own communities, histories and narratives, as occurs often in these enrichment programs (see theme two), do have occasional opportunities to interject new perspectives and points of view challenging the curriculum, at least in the classroom setting. Their interviews indicated that the very ability to speak up in the classroom and even challenge teachers or curriculum is a skill that would benefit students aiming for college.

As Mayra indicated, "usually history is the only place that (Native Americans) really comes up, it's like a short little paragraph about Native things and then we just move on, it's never on a test or anything, never something like, made super important." Marena went so far as to describe the curriculum she experienced in school as being "twisted." When I asked her what she meant by "twisted," as an

example, she replied, "like, how they say Natives met pilgrims. They ate food and they were happy and got along. I don't like 'happily ever after' type things, when that's not really what happened." She described to me the reality as "briefly, they came over and killed a bunch of Natives, took land and stuff." I asked her about where she had heard this counter-narrative – how she came to question the curriculum she had learned in elementary school. She said she learned these truths from one of the mentors in her enrichment program. Marena's story provides examples as to how students experience enrichment programs' aim to equip students with knowledge to challenge classroom curriculum. Even if the lesson in the enrichment program is limited – pilgrims "came over and killed a bunch of Natives" – they are at least providing students with some tools and confidence to consider Native American representation in the curriculum and in the classroom. Students indicated that these tools can help to counter the negative experiences students indicate relative to the current curriculum.

Starla had another critical analysis of curriculum and textbooks. First, she talked about the fact that her hometown was known for its diversity. She appreciated the fact that she grew up surrounded by many different cultures. She talked about how much she enjoyed the cultural exchanges with her peers in high school and the community college she was attending. However, she also pointed out that these exchanges reflected a shortcoming in the K12 curriculum in regard to Native Americans. "They'll bring up things that they probably learned in textbooks," she said of her peers who shared with her their limited knowledge about Native American

culture or history. Since Starla had grown up in an enrichment program and participated in several summer programs, where she was exposed to an "indigenous education" focused on teaching and learning from a Native American perspective, she was in a position to share knowledge with her friends that countered the misinformation they had learned in the classrooms and "when they get to know me and actually start talking to me, they're like 'oh, I never knew that," she said. "Of course not," she would tell them, "you're not gonna get that in a textbook. Textbooks can't speak for a nation of people. Especially if it's written by someone not in that race."

Another student, Twila, had exposure to a variety of school environments and approaches to curriculum. She had attended K12 public school, private school and also an all-Indian high school. Based on our conversation, it seemed that she faced different challenges at each school she attended. She had been "bullied because (she) was Native American" at the public school, then felt like an outsider who was "different" at her private school, then felt that the classes were not sufficiently challenging at the all-Indian school. However, one of the redeeming qualities that she indicated about the all-Indian school was the fact that she was able to learn Native American history from a Native perspective. At her other schools, "I never really learned the history of Native Americans," she said, continuing, "I would have never known this but he (her high school history teacher) told us the history of what happened. His history class is just Native American studies, which shows you what happened to us, what we did to fight against stuff, and how we are still fighting against

stuff." Twila was pointing out that the curriculum at her other K12 schools generally failed to include any Native American perspectives in the classroom. "I like the fact that he didn't really sugar coat anything," she said, "I would have gone my whole life without knowing that, and I'm thankful someone taught me that."

Students responded differently to the lack of or misrepresentation of their existence in the curriculum. However, it is clear that students responded positively when they did see themselves represented. Vera, for example, recalled one of her visits to a college campus. "They have a big building for Native American Studies," Vera reminisced, "they have a lot of Native stuff in there, I've seen all the posters and stuff." Vera, who participated in a cultural enrichment program that focused on Native American dance and history, was enthusiastic in her recollection of being in a school setting that valued and prioritized Native American people and communities.

Having grown up in multiple Indian and cultural enrichment programs, Starla had learned that the lessons she was subjected to in school were half-truths and often lies and completely excluded the Native American perspective and point of view. Starla asserted that history and social studies classes portrayed only positive outcomes to the encroachment of white settlers on Indian land. She claimed that her teachers and textbooks only described the legacy of colonialism as a benefit to Indian people. The lessons she was taught softened or ignored the death and destruction of Indian lives and ways of being and framed expansionism as a rescue mission or part of the Doctrine of Discovery. As Starla recalled, "for a long time I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to college, until I realized we may be Native people, we can fight against

colonialism all we want and I'm for that, I'm down for that, I'm down with my people." Her participation in these enrichment programs, especially those that she was involved as a participant when she was in high school and shortly after, as a college mentor, taught her that the history of our country was a lot more complex than present in her school books. The programs, she indicated, had gave her a sense of pride that pushed her to be more critical of the education she had received and was receiving even as a community college student. This knowledge had motivated her to pursue opportunities in higher education.

Starla underscored the shortcomings of mass produced textbooks that omit the knowledge of Native Americans who have preserved the stories and knowledge of our shared history. Starla maintained that the need to include Native American perspectives means actually involving Native American people in the curriculum development. She contends that this inclusion is essential to accurate representations because Native American people have handed down knowledge for generations in a tradition that provides a direct link to our history. As she says, "what textbooks don't have that we have is direct connection. And it's important to learn it (history) from the people... and we all know that the textbook doesn't really explain colonialism... (but) we have this knowledge that was passed down to us for thousands of years. Things that textbooks wouldn't have." As I observed in one of the summer programs she attended, local tribal elders hosted a culture night where they shared a version of the local tribal creation story. According to the culture expert sharing the story, the version shared at culture night was an abbreviated version of the full creation story, as

the full creation story must be told over several days and at specific times of the year. Through such experiences, students received opportunities to listen to and learn from traditional stories and histories that they could then contrast to negative experiences in the schools.

Richard is a high school student from a local tribe who participated in the same program as Starla. He is a California Native who was not only involved in two intertribal cultural enrichment programs, he was also raised in a traditional family that taught the children about traditional ways and passed on oral histories. Richard reiterated Starla's concern about the misrepresentation of Native American culture and history. He recalled a class in high school where the teacher's lecture included misinformation about California Indians. Richard's family is well known in the Native American community for being culture keepers and maintaining traditional ways of life and language. His understanding of California Indians was far richer than his teacher's because it was based on a lived experience. His parents and his family are considered local experts in California Indian culture and history and this knowledge was passed on to Richard in ways that did not involve the classroom or teacher. However, Richard recalled "for instance, in history, when he was talking about Natives from California, (the teacher said that) they would eat corn but we never really had corn over here. We traded (with others, but,) we ate acorns but he was like, "oh, no, they never ate acorns, it was corn."

Richard struggled with these types of interactions because although he had an awareness and an expertise about the culture that the teacher did not possess, he had

experienced negative repercussions in the past when he ventured to challenge his teachers. He had described other times when he tried to challenge the teacher and he would be punished for speaking out, sometimes even kicked out of the classroom. He was often faced with the dilemma of speaking up in an environment that experience had taught him would be hostile, or keeping his silence and being forced to witness his culture and his ways of life misrepresented and misunderstood. The enrichment programs dealt with these issues and recognized the struggle students faced. For example, Vera, shared a belief that "out here (in the public schools) nobody really pays attention to Native students... I don't think they're really supportive but I know the people (at the Urban Indian center)... are really supportive. They've always been able to help me. I know I can go to them for help."

Indeed, it was not only students that talked about the problems with the lack of or misrepresentation of Native American cultures in the curriculum. Another participant that underscored the detrimental effects of harmful curriculum was Catalina, an enrichment program coordinator for a program serving primarily two reservations at a local high school as part of the Title VI Indian Education program. Her voice on the subject is important because it demonstrates the efforts made by these enrichment programs to help students critically evaluate the curriculum, and other experiences they were having.

Catalina spoke critically about the curriculum issues at the high school where her students attended. Early in her position, she thought initiating a dialogue with the school district about the importance of including Native American voices in the

classroom and in the curriculum would be helpful in supporting the success of Native American students. As someone who works closely with Native American students, she had first hand knowledge of the effects that the lack of and misrepresentation of Native American people in the curriculum had on the students. Catalina believed that the lack of Native American representation about Native American people pervasive on their campus, was contributing to low self-esteem and confidence of her students. This low sense of worth was detrimental to the students' success in school. According to Catalina, students were made to feel that there was no place for them on campus and that their histories and even their existence are invisible at best, inconsequential at worst. So, she tried to start a conversation about a solution: the school could work with the local reservation communities to create a curriculum that included Native histories and stories as an alternative to the curriculum excluding Native voices and Native students, and the school could also train teachers to work more effectively with their Native students.

It turned out that a curriculum had previously been created for elementary school students but the material was inappropriate for high school students: it was old, targeted a younger audience and needed to be updated. Catalina pointed out that her conversation to expand to a high school effort was particularly important at that time given the fact that, according to Catalina, at the same time conversations about updating high school history books were occurring in Sacramento. It seemed an appropriate time to talk about including Native American histories and contributions to society in the high school classroom at the local level and a teacher training

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program had the potential to be effective. As Catalina recounts, however, the conversation and the teacher training at her school were utterly unsuccessful. According to Catalina, "they have this book on anti-racism and it's all these educators and researchers talking about race and how to have these conversations about race. So I borrowed some of the stuff. I went in and I also talked about stereotypes, but apparently... when you train teachers, they're like f*cking students. You need to do classroom management. I thought they were grown-ass people, they're gonna sit their butt down. No, I was just like they were worse than my high school students. I was shocked. I was just like, "What the f*ck?" The principal blamed the teacher training failure on Catalina, saying that she had lost their attention. "I don't know," Catalina contested, "I think a lot of his teachers, who are racist, I think, for them, this is majority white teachers, older white women, conservative as f*ck, so you're gonna get that sh*t." Catalina indicated that the teachers found diversity-talk exasperating. "You probably lost a lot of them because they probably thought 'here she is talking about diversity again,'" Catalina quoted her principal. She was clearly frustrated by this whole experience with her teachers and the principal: "if you really want to make meaningful, transformative changes, you need to know about the community you're working with," she concluded.

Evidently, disregarding innovative and creative approaches to improving education for Native students was a common occurrence in her school district. She revealed that even in times when colleagues paid some attention to issues important to Native American communities, the conversations waned and ultimately another issue

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took the place of conversations around supporting Native American students. When she approached the principal about continuing the dialogue and the training, he dismissed her initiative and told her "well, we have to work on the English, we have to work on the English Language Learners." "So I attended one of those meetings for ELL," she said, "and I was shocked. I don't know why I'm shocked. I should know this sh*t. I should not be shocked. The conversations they're having, I know this, why am I shocked? But I was so shocked that a lot of the teachers didn't even know how to interact with English Language Learners and they thought they were dumb." Catalina had come to recognize that the issues confronting her Native students were more pervasive than she initially realized. "Clearly there's an issue here," she concluded, "and the issue is that they have these racist ideologies - you have to combat that. So me having those conversations with them wasn't just about Native kids; it was about all the kids who are students of color. That's the work we're doing."

Another program director who recognized how the lack of and misrepresentation of Native American perspectives in curriculum was harmful to the success of Native American students was Martin. Martin, a program director for a cultural enrichment program serving an intertribal group of Native youth, recalled his own struggles in school that he faced as a kid as a minority student. As an educator working in the Native community, he had seen many Native American students struggle to reconcile the complexity between defamatory curriculum and the need to acquiesce and recite this curriculum in order to be successful in school. He talked about conversations he had with youth who were struggling in school. He emphasized

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that to them there was no need for feeling guilty about their struggles because "this stuff (the curriculum, the system, the school) wasn't designed for us." He contends that schools were designed to meet the needs of "mainstream", non-Native communities. Yet, Martin recognizes that participation in the curriculum is necessary, "it's something we must do because we walk in two worlds" and that we have a responsibility to, in his words, "translate these things to our community." Martin's perspective is important because it feeds his intention to ensure the students in his program are able to challenge and question the standard curriculum.

Kalani, another program coordinator, had been engaged in a battle over the subjugation of her elementary school son to what she deemed to be inappropriate curriculum about the story of the Pilgrims and the Indians. She had had conversations with her son warning him that schools sometimes present activities that are inappropriate for Native American students. She instructed him and informed his teachers that he was not allowed to partake in these types of activities, such as an art project where students use paper bags to create "feather" headbands and pilgrim hats, because she found them not only offensive, but also harmful to his sense of cultural pride. "The next thing you know," Kalani shared, "he's coming home with these things or he's told me about stuff he threw away because he knew he shouldn't be doing it, but he felt pressure from the school to do it." One of the assignments he brought home was an activity touting the achievements of Abraham Lincoln. At home, the family had been discussing Lincoln's ordered execution of thirty-nine Dakota Indians for "rebellion" during a Native American uprising in the largest mass

execution in United States history, an aspect of Lincoln's presidency overlooked in American classrooms. In fact, Kalani's son struggled because while not wanting to disobey his mother, he also wanted to participate in the same activities as his classmates. Refusing to complete the assignments, inappropriate though they were, would draw undesirable attention to him; and really, most kids enjoy arts and crafts projects. Kalani talked to the teachers and the school, but the moral of her story was that students do not want to feel left out or pressured by teachers because of harmful curriculum. Her center offers purposeful refuge from these issues. She talked to me about how her students come to the center and it is guaranteed that they will not have to contend with inappropriate curriculum. For example, "you're not going to see racist mascots put up in our center," she assures.

All participants in the study indicated in one way or another that when students are exposed to a curriculum that discounts their culture and their peoples' histories and contributions to society, the effects are detrimental to those students' success. The students themselves, as well as those in charge of the enrichment programs supporting these students, recognize that their invisibility leads to low self-esteem and low self-worth. As we will see, these feelings of being less-than can lead to students becoming disinterested and discouraged in school. Indeed, when students are unable to be successful in school they are put at a huge disadvantage for opportunities in higher education. In this way, lack of and misrepresentation of Native American people, stories and histories in the curriculum ultimately limits their ability to pursue college and university. Students and staff suggested that the cultural programs played an

important role in making sure students are aware of the issues and are exposed to traditional teaching.

Negative Interactions With Non-Native Teachers in School. Another topic that came up frequently as an issue in schools that negatively affected students' thinking about opportunities in education longer term was negative teacher behaviors and actions toward Native students. Many students, parents and program leaders recounted multiple examples of negative teacher experiences including outright hostility and verbal discouragement. These examples of teacher interactions contributed to negative experiences in school that diminished students' ability to dream about and plan for a future that includes a college or university education. According to multiple program directors, students and parents, there is a straight line between these negative interactions and a student's ability to view themselves as strong and capable students with academic potential that belongs in a college or university. Without that vision, the motivation to succeed, to plan and to persevere becomes severely impaired.

Marena chose to go to charter school because she had been having problems with teachers. "I switched from normal regular high school to charter school because I had problems with my teachers and stuff," she said. " The way teachers are, they don't want to be there. They don't want to teach you stuff. They don't want you to be there. They kind of care about your grades because that reflects how they look. They don't care about how you're doing, and basically how you're doing in your life and stuff. They don't care about you." She also indicated a belief that she had a bad reputation

among her teachers based on their interactions with her older sister. This bad reputation, according to Marena, was why teachers chastised and criticized her verbally and publically. "I had a lot of problems with teachers when I went into high school," she recalled, "my sister went to the same high school as me and she had the same teachers. When they met me and they knew my last name they knew my sister. They immediately gave me my own reputation. One of my PE teachers was just like, 'Oh you're this person's sister. Are you as bad as her?' I was just like, yeah."

In most of the student households in this study, parents and grandparents had shared stories about interactions with teachers or recalled the damaging words teachers said to them. The memories of what one's parents or grandparents experienced in school are held close as a cautionary tale about what to expect in school. Saul, for example, was a parent in the study who was in a position to provide this historical perspective in Indian education. He talked about his interactions with teachers and school administrators from his youth and about the experience of being taken away from his family to attend an Indian boarding school.

"They believed that there was a progression from savage to barbarian to civilized," Saul recalled about boarding schools administrators and teachers. "We, as Native people, were the savages. They wanted to take us from savage all the way to civilized. They did not value our culture. They did not value our language, our customs, our history," he continued. Physically, "what they did was they would beat the kids if they spoke the language, if they engaged in any activities that were tribal in nature. The boarding schools were run like a military base where the youth were

wearing uniforms and they cut their hair. You know, in our tradition, we only cut our

hair when somebody dies," described Saul. "What most of the kids did in the

boarding schools was, they did code switching," he explained, "when the white

officials would come around, they would talk in English. When they would leave,

they would speak in the various Native languages so they kept that. However, when

they went home they didn't want their siblings or their kids to get hurt, so they

stopped using the language. They stopped participating in the culture. This is what I

meant by it had that delayed effect."

Today's young students continue to be affected by the boarding school era as

experienced by their grandparents and great-grandparents. Not only are the memories

of these experiences shared between generations, but the mistrust of American

systems of education, as expressed by several parents and program leaders, permeates

and impacts students' experiences. Saul is of an age that the boarding school era in

Indian education affected him directly. He was one of the many young Native

American children who was forcibly removed from his home and taken to an Indian

boarding school. This experience deeply affected his view of American education and

developed in him a sense, similarly expressed previously by Martin, that American

schools were not intended to support, or even educate Indian people. Even his

experiences outside of the boarding school gave him reason to resent American

schools, as he described more recollections from his childhood.

Saul recalled additional negative teacher interactions during his childhood,

which underscored for him a fact that Native American people "were always vilified".

His contention was that Native people were constantly made out to be the "bad guy" in media, like old Western Cowboy and Indian movies, but also in real life, like in the classroom when teachers overtly discriminated against boys with brown skin. Saul recalled a time when a Mexican boy in his class was physically beaten in front of his classmates for some seemingly minor infraction, and he remembered his own indignation at a teacher's utter amazement that he (Saul) was able to answer a question intelligently. Saul was providing some small examples of why Indian people and communities have come to develop a mistrust of educational systems over time. His stories are emblematic of lots of other family stories regarding even more unsettling, oppressive and violent interactions between schools and Indian children.

Saul was describing how negative experiences with teachers and school was rooted in the historic relationship between Indian communities and American schools. The issues are not just a matter of one particular teacher or one particular student. All of the negative experiences of our young Native youth are recorded in a collective consciousness that urges Indian people, families and communities, to be wary of teachers and to be prepared to take protective measures. Sometimes protective measures can even mean disengaging from school. In many cases, as described by the students, this is what it comes down to, disengaging from school. As Francisco, who had been a program participant as a youth but was a current staff person in the same tribal education program, described, students from an early age already hated going to school. Francisco had described his and his peers' disengagement as a student, and he made a comparison to the disengagement that he saw happening with the students he

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worked with at the center. When I asked Francisco how he knew this was a shared experience with the students that he currently worked with, he replied, simply that they tell him so. "Oh! This is so stupid!" he quoted his students. He blamed teachers' behaviors and negativism for turning them off to participating in school. According to Francisco, "it's the way that the teacher is teaching that makes the kids disengaged from what they're doing." Francisco said that he had tried to converse with teachers to advocate for his students, "I tried to reach out to teachers and talk to them and stuff like that. They just really don't even care." He added that teachers were "unwilling to help, don't put in the time, (and) put students off," indicating a belief that his students' teachers were not reliable sources of support even while programs tried to be.

When students follow the path of disengagement, their ability to compete for a spot on a college or university campus dwindles and this protective act ultimately becomes another detriment. The students' cultural enrichment programs have to mediate and mitigate many interactions that negatively impact students in their schools, even if mediation is not a stated goal for the program. Negative teacher behavior is one of the many issues these programs aim to counter both by liaising to school personnel when possible, and by providing positive interactions with educators and other adults in their own community environment.

Catalina, the coordinator who worked very closely with both the school district and the local reservations, talked about contending with this issue of serving as a mediator between teachers and schools and students and communities. In fact, her position was supported by the local reservations who were, according to Catalina,

"just really asking for someone to guide them and be an advocate" in the school system that had demonstrated a history of mistreatment of Native students and families. Catalina reiterated a community belief that "historically, that school district has not been kind to Natives," furthermore, "you have kids who have parents, even grandparents, (who) still remember those teachers and their treatment of them or what they were at school." Memory is a stubborn resident in many reservation communities. Mistreatment leads to mistrust. The mistrust of teachers, based on the mistreatment of Native students, is an attitude that continues to permeate the attitude of many of the parents in this study as well.

Samarah, for example, is a parent who continues to be wary about teachers. When I asked her about something she wished her children's teachers knew about them, her response was bristled. "I'm honestly not sure I want the teachers to know anything or understand anything about my kids," she said. Samarah continued to explain her idea-- that when teachers learn their students are Native American, they will automatically develop negative perceptions and low expectations. These negative attitudes are likely reflective of the negative stereotypes teachers hold about Native American communities --- a theme that will be discussed in further detail below. The effect of these negative attitudes, however, as Samarah fears, would be an overt mistreatment of her daughters. Samarah has a hope that teachers will refrain from bringing up issues related to race altogether. Racism is another issue that will be discussed separately below, but Samarah's concern undergirds the tenuous relationship between schools and Indian families. If indications based on the students

in this study's experiences are accurate, however, Samarah's hope for race-free school interactions as a solution may very well be an unattainable aspiration. In fact, the programs and the students in this study illustrate that race is already a prominent issue in the classroom. So, the evidence suggests that programs, even the ones in which Samarah's children participate, might do better by trying as they do to emphasize the inclusion and better understanding of Native American cultures, rather than the omission of race related topics altogether.

It is a delicate balance. Samarah held a fear about teachers knowing too much about her children. Yet, the programs with a focus on academic work, like an education center, were making concerted efforts to hold teachers accountable for appreciating and representing the cultures of their Native American students. This balance is complicated by the behavior of individual teachers. Other parents in this study, Stormy and Kyle, easily recalled the negative effects of teacher attitudes in their own schooling experiences. Stormy shared a story of a high school teacher who, upon learning that Stormy was Native American, declared that she would never graduate from high school because Indian girls like her inevitably wind up pregnant and drop out of school completely. In Kyle's view, the teacher held Stormy's access to education above her head as a prize that she, as a Native American girl, would never be able to attain. Kyle described this kind of interaction as an example of teachers using education as a weapon, or as he put it, a "bludgeon," against Stormy. Kyle asserted that the teacher used his position, as an educated person in an authoritarian role, to belittle and degrade Stormy. According to Kyle, "you encounter people all the

time who tout their education as if to show that they're better than people or even smarter than people." The programs attended by students in this research understand that these types of experiences are common in Native American families and can influence students' own experiences.

Kyle's wariness about how educators can harm students played a critical role in his and Stormy's approach to education for their two high school age children, who both participated in a tribal education enrichment program. Programs and parents both have an understanding of how teachers' negative words and actions impact Native American students. Kyle uses these types of examples as a sort of cautionary tale for his own kids.

Not going to college is not an option in their family; yet, together, Kyle and Stormy stress the benefits of the emotional growth, intellectual curiosity and personal development attained through experiences in higher education, far above the degrees that can be misappropriated. For as much as they have experienced it in their own lives and in spite of their understanding of the historic impacts of negative teacher interactions, they strive to instill in their children a sense of self worth that is impenetrable to educational "bludgeons," such as mistreatment by their teachers. Their attitude is more hopeful and more optimistic than other adults involved in the current study – perhaps because as college graduates, Kyle and Stormy have first-hand experiences about the opportunities and self-discovery made possible in college. In fact, Kyle and Stormy agreed that their experiences in higher education may give them different perspectives from the other parents in the community.

Mona, a recent college graduate, provided another example of the impact of negative teacher interactions in her pre-college experiences. "In high school when I was applying for colleges my (teacher) discouraged me from applying... she told me that I wasn't good enough," recalled Mona. According to Mona, her teacher's attitude was "why try and waste my money applying, she told me, she was like 'you're not even going to make it, so why try'?" This affront hit Mona hard. She confessed that she almost decided to heed her teacher's "advice" and not apply. Here is another example of the deleterious effects of teachers' negative actions, words and behaviors. "It just shocked me that somebody would tell me this," she recalled. Although, fortunately, this teacher was unsuccessful at completely quelling Mona's ambitions, the seeds of doubt planted by her teacher did ultimately limit her options in terms of which colleges or universities to which she could apply. Taking her teacher's words to heart caused her to miss application deadlines to certain schools and she wound up hastily applying to other schools with late application deadlines. Ultimately, she successfully applied to and graduated from a quality liberal arts institution, but her success was reached in spite of her teachers, not through their support.

Other examples of negative teacher interactions were related to cultural expressions during graduation ceremonies. Many Native American students and families bead graduation caps or adorn them with an eagle feather. The eagle feather is a symbol of a great honor. It is gifted to the recipient in recognition of their achievements with an acknowledgement that the recipient is representing their tribe and their community to the world. The graduate is reminded that they are supported

by an entire community and the generations that have come before them. Moreover, they are reminded of their responsibility to the community and the expectation that they will work in service of the people. Indeed, every year in this community, the tribal education centers bring students, families and communities together to honor graduating seniors by gifting students with an eagle feather to commemorate their educational achievement.

Mayra was a high school student involved in her high school's Native American club. She described the group's silent protest against their school's threat to not allow Native American students express their cultural pride during graduation. "We started wearing black on Fridays," she said, "because they weren't going to let us... bead our caps, wear feathers or anything." The high school was threatening an action, a policy that would thwart students' ability to express their cultural pride. According to Mayra, beading caps is "a form of self-expression, pride and culture." It is clearly a symbol of great significance.

As Vanessa explained, "when most Native students graduate they either wear their regalia or they wear an eagle feather. It just shows that, you know, that's a Native student, so they stand out more." Not only does the eagle feather, or regalia, signify to others and to the community that this Native American student has made this accomplishment, it also signifies a connection to previous generations, "like the people who passed away," says Vanessa. "Like our family members who passed away," she continued, "they can see us and they can come visit us because we have

the eagle feather, because the eagle feather's supposed to be like a really spiritual animal to the Native community."

One student who had a particularly negative experience related to her graduation moment was Marena. She proudly wore her eagle feather during her recent high school graduation. The family had permission from school leadership to wear the feather. The necessity to seek permission for cultural representation is itself notable but a conversation for another time. Nevertheless, according to Marena's mother, as she was approaching the stage, waiting for her name to be called, a teacher stationed on the side of the stage, supposedly there to assist, guide and direct students through the ceremony, aggressively snatched at the feather in attempt to remove it from her cap. The affront caught Marena by surprise and she struggled to protect her feather from the teacher's clutches. The episode escalated resulting in the student not participating in this American rite of passage; but it also resulted in the drafting of statewide legislation (*Assembly Bill 233* Pupils: right to wear religious, ceremonial, or cultural adornments at school graduation ceremonies*, 2017-2018*), allowing for the inclusion of cultural representation at graduation ceremonies in public schools (a short documentary also addressed the issue). Governor Brown ultimately vetoed the bill, indicating students' freedom of expression in school was adequately protected in the state Education Code and the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment (*AB 233 Veto Message, 2017*). This incident is only one example of several similar incidents that occur all throughout Indian country. It is a very contemporary example of the mistreatment of Native American students at the hands of the very teachers hired to

teach and protect them. For every opportunity the community has to overcome negative experiences at the hands of teachers and administrators, there seem to be an equal number of reasons for suspicions, mistrust and doubt to prevail. Program staff must contend with this mistrust when students walk in the door.

There are other experiences, outside of the academic realm, that impact students' experiences at school. For example, Richard's father, Saul, talked about the discrimination and negative treatment that Richard had recently experienced in high school because of his long hair. Like many other Native American men, Richard kept his hair long as part of a cultural practice and cultural identity. In his home and also in the cultural enrichment program that he attended, the practice of keeping men's hair long was highly valued and never challenged or questioned. In school, however, he often got picked on and teased by other students for his long hair. What was a symbol of pride and strength became a subject of ridicule against of young Indian men in the school. Saul went to the school administration to address the teasing that Richard endured. As he recalled, "I went to a conference with the vice principal. My son had been picked on because of his long hair, my older son. He was broken up about it. He was in tears. He said he just wanted to cut his hair." The teasing was part of an overall environment cultivated at the school that caused Richard to disengage from his academic work over time. Richard found that the administration failed to protect Saul even after their conference. The fact that not only were the students berating him based on his Native American identity, but that the teachers and administration did nothing to admonish or end the mistreatment or assure Richard that he was a valuable

member of the school community caused a reverberation that amplified other examples of mistreatment that Richard felt he had been made to endure. Saul went to the school and informed the administration that wearing their hair long was a religious practice; it was part of their traditions. He reminded the school that their job was "to make sure you create an environment where people will learn, a safe environment. It's not safe (here) for my son." The taunting that Richard endured at the school was one example of why he expressed feelings of alienation in the school. Richard was lucky that in addition to the support system he could draw upon in the multiple enrichment programs in which he participated, he also had a very supportive father and community network that surrounded him with nurturing and love necessary to combat negative experiences in school.

Richard talked about the relationships with certain teachers at his high school as a constant battle that he was sure to lose every time. Richard expressed a perception that some teachers demonstrated a bias against him as a Native student. These teachers, according to Richard, highly favored other students, in particular, those who looked like themselves or clearly represented the same racial identity. The biases experienced, together with teachers' apparent unwillingness to learn about Native people, spurred an aggressive defense within Richard that caused many arguments in the school, often resulting in his dismissal from the classroom. "Every time I would try to defend myself in class, and it actually got physical where I try to say shut the hell up or something like that... and (the teacher) pulled me out of class and stuff." Richard recalled that the teacher demonstrated a protective nature when it

came to other students who were "his [the teacher's] type of race, like, white also." Richard had expressed that he already felt out of place in a school that, according to Richard, was predominantly white. As a Native American student he felt like he did not truly belong, like the school was not a place for him. He never felt comfortable.

I asked Richard to tell me more about the feelings he described. He reiterated how much he felt like an outsider. According to Richard, other students were noticeably privileged. As he put it, "that school is filled with a lot of white kids. It was like rich snide kids at school," who, according to Richard, benefited from their teachers' positive interactions in ways that constantly eluded Richard. One example that illuminated Richard's feelings of otherness and isolation was in his telling of the difference between a Native sense of humor and everyone else's. "For instance," Richard shared "you tell a joke to a Native person and when you tell it, they start laughing and stuff, cracking up, and then you go over to someone white, or a different race, let's say white, yeah, and you would tell them the joke but they don't get it at all. They're like, 'what do you mean?' They don't really get it." His story reiterated his feeling that he never fit in in his school. He said there was no place for him to talk about his ideas or be himself, or have fun. Like other students in this study, he felt out of place and unwanted.

These types of feelings make it difficult for students, any student really, to take full advantage of the learning environment. Though students' emotional well-being is an important concern, the issue is not merely someone's "feelings" but rather the resulting consequences of these feelings. Those consequences can include a lack of

integration in the student's academic environment. Lack of integration can lead to missed learning opportunities, stalled progress and exclusion from college preparatory activities.

One example that illustrates the history of negative teacher and school interactions for Native American students is in Saul's recollection of his experiences in school nearly 50 years ago. Saul said that he felt like he grew up and went to school within a caste system, "if you were white, they would give you the royal jelly... anybody who was dark, you were either going to work in the fields or be a janitor or something." Saul recalled that "they (the teachers) didn't have very high expectations" and as a Native American student with deep brown skin he understood that the school and the teachers anticipated a life of menial, physical labor for him. He was not encouraged by his teachers; in fact, he his teachers ridiculed him and other Native students like him. "I remember the teachers, they would mock people. They really would. I just shut myself off from them. I just checked out," Saul said. This defense against the racist attitudes of teachers was echoed in the voices of the youth interviewed in this study. Today's students must also find ways to protect themselves against oppression. Unfortunately, students indicated that often times, this defense came in the form of disassociation from school and academic work. When this happens it is the student himself who falls behind, who is directed to an alternative education route and ultimately, the one who suffers.

Lionel, a high school student, described in detail the factors that contributed to his dislike of and aversion to school. He spent a long time talking about how he felt

unprotected, underserved and pushed out by the schooling systems and negative interactions with non-Native educators but ultimately protected by and saved by the cultural enrichment programs with which he had been involved and the support network he discovered on the reservation and in the Indian education community. Multiple issues compounded Lionel's experiences in school. Like other students described previously, he also had to contend with lack of representation or representation in the curriculum. His interactions with school personnel and at home also contributed to his inability to access information about college readiness.

Lionel showed up to school with the added burden of a troubled home life. He was very open in his discussion of the challenges that he faced at home. According to Lionel himself, one major consequence of his chaotic home life was the fact that from a very early age, Lionel showed up for school unprepared, disinterested and in no position absorb classroom lessons. Homework was never "a priority" in his home and so he showed up empty handed to class nearly every day -- and in spite of the intelligence he knew he possessed, he continued to fall behind academically right from the beginning in elementary school. There were no functioning support systems for Lionel within the school to help him overcome the struggles he faced at home. The negative interactions he experienced with school personnel prevented the development of meaningful relationships with teachers or counselors. Without the support of the enrichment program on his reservation, he said, he would have faced these challenges all alone.

As Lionel describes it, "I didn't grow up in a really nice home, so homework wasn't a priority. It was just one of those things that became bottom of the list. So, I'd go to school and there'd be projects due, homework due, and I just wouldn't have it. And they would just be like, well he really is the slow kid." Lionel expressed a feeling of being disregarded and ignored by his teachers as the result of family circumstances that were beyond his control. He was often pulled from his classroom to receive academic support, which caused him to feel even more segregated from the rest of his classmates. Other types of social and welfare support for his entire family might have been a better solution but the educators only paid attention to his academic stagnation, in a sense, holding him responsible for the consequences of a chaotic home life.

He admitted that he struggled through school, indicating that he "never liked school." He found it difficult to engage and educators' practices and policies kept his motivation low. "When I got into middle school, I was put in 'Concept Classes,' the slower classes... they're just more focused on getting me out of that class, getting me to the next 'Concept Class,' into the next one." The result of these experiences and specifically, the Concept Classes, was that regardless of Lionel's intelligence and potential, he would finish high school without the courses necessary to even apply to four-year university. Based on my interactions with Lionel it definitely seemed that these classes and experiences also had an impact on Lionel's sense of self; he would not have the exposure to college readiness curriculum or skills necessary for college.

He was working his way through high school knowing that the limited opportunities he had in school would continue to limit his opportunities to pursue higher education.

Being pigeonholed by these special classes limited Lionel's opportunities to pursue more academically competitive classes. Lionel had a keen awareness that he was bright and capable. Unfortunately for him, the chaos of his home life negatively affected his schooling experiences and without a teacher or other school representative to advocate for his access to challenging curriculum, he was essentially passed and pushed through school with the bare minimum requirements for high school graduation met. As he described, "it was never an option of like, oh what English class do you want to take, or what did you want to do for math? It was more of like, 'we're gonna plug you into this, this, and then you'll get through high school.'" Lionel understood that his educators' intention was not to encourage him to pursue opportunities in higher education. He understood that their intent was to pass him through the most basic requirements necessary to meet high school graduation requirements so that he would no longer be their responsibility. Although his educators failed to prepare him adequately for life after high school, Lionel found refuge in his enrichment programs.

As a result of his exposure to opportunities in the cultural enrichment program he was involved with at the reservation, such as visits to different college and universities, Lionel had an awareness that there were certain classes he should be taking in order to be eligible to apply to a college or university. But for him, he said, "it was more like, A-G (the set of required courses necessary to apply to a California

State University or University of California) was off the table. It was more like, 'we're getting you out of this school.' So I was just put in these slower classes and I'd just be sitting there for years at a time, put through one class to the next class, to the next class. And then, the whole time, I think when I got into ninth grade, a teacher actually told me, 'these don't count for A-G requirements' and I just didn't know what that meant, so I was just like, 'I don't care... as long as I get out of here and you give me a diploma, I'll be fine.'" The school's attempt to address Lionel's academic needs ultimately proved a disservice and there was no one at the school whom Lionel felt he could ask for help.

Negative interactions with educators other than teachers also played a role: Lionel very rarely talked to his counselors all through high school because they offered little support to him. This was a common theme among many of the participants in this study. Even successful students, like Mayra, expressed similarly negative experiences with their high school counselors. "I don't like her, at all," Mayra said of her counselor. "I feel like she doesn't want to be there. I always dread when I ask her questions... just the other day my friend was saying how she's very rude and was kind of condescending and stuff like that." Mayra viewed interactions with her counselor as a tedious necessity, in Lionel's case, the counselors and the school sent him messages that he was in no way college bound and therefore, there was no need to prepare for life beyond high school. The reservation program, however, was sending counter messages to all of their students by encouraging them to consider opportunities in higher education. For example, they began organizing

annual college fairs specifically for Native American students and hosted the event on their reservation.

Lionel and his friend Andrew both found refuge in the tribal education centers, expressing a sense of value and belonging that was garnered in their reservation community as a countermeasure to the experiences in school. Andres concurred with Lionel's suggestions that the schools had neglected him and his education. Andrew considered Lionel's schooling experience an example of a social injustice that Native American students often faced. He expressed a concern that Native American students like he and Lionel were quite distinct from other, "mainstream" students in their schools.

The home life and community circumstances that both boys experienced uniquely colored their interactions in the school system. Andrew explained that even though he was a "successful" student, academically, his success was in spite of the education system, not because of it. Both young men agreed that although the system did not work for Lionel, "the system didn't really accommodate people like" Andrew either, explained Andrew. He asserted that he himself was able to adapt to the system that neglected Lionel-- "it (the school system) just dropped him (Lionel) out completely," he explained. Andrew went on to describe how the school did not give Lionel an opportunity to improve or "pull himself up," as he put it. Talking about Lionel, Andrew said "they considered him one of the slower kids, and the kids who just had the worst time in school because they were left out of it." In contrast, both Andrew and Lionel suggested that the enrichment program provided a level playing

field – at least during program activities and events. For example, all students were included in the reservation college fair hosted by the enrichment program, regardless of academic record.

Even though Andrew was a successful student—doing well academically and on his way to a four-year university—he still described high school as a horrible experience, an experience that if not for friends like Lionel and the support he received from the tribal education program, he "would've probably dropped out and got (his) GED." Andrew described feelings of isolation and being invisible on his high school campus. These were feelings shared and expressed by several of the students in this study. Even though he was "smart" and knew how to perform well in school, Andrew felt like an outsider. The school environment, created by factors such as curriculum, negative teacher interactions and the prevalence of racism challenged Andrew's sense of belonging in the academic realm. The youth center, however, according to Andrew, picked up where the school left off. Both boys found critical support at their youth center. As we will explore further in the following main theme, they talked about the importance of reclaiming a cultural education that they were only receiving at their youth center.

Conversations with Lionel and Andrew illustrate some of the ways that Native American students have expressed feeling pushed out of the education system and pushed out of opportunities leading towards higher education. Where Lionel and Andrew described experiences of being left out or pushed out as individuals, Catalina, a program leader working with Native American students described some of the more

structural ways that schools push out Native students. Pervasive, negative educator beliefs about Native American student capacity to succeed academically led for many to improper placement in Special Education and alternative education programs.

The program coordinated by Catalina is supported by federal funds distributed specifically to serve Native American students and communities. Catalina described how the school district where she worked mismanaged the money intended for Indian students while simultaneously failing to meet the educational needs of the Native students – all situations her program then had to contend with. "They'll push them out, but not push them out because they need the money," Catalina said of the school district. According to her, the school sought ways to take Indian students out of the mainstream classrooms; but since the district would lose its Title VI money without Native students, they found ways to keep them in the district but out of the classrooms by directing them towards alternative education programs within the district. More important than creating educational opportunities, the school district, according to Catalina, took advantage of the Title VI monies by diverting the funds to other priorities in the district. Catalina recalled that the district would use the funds to purchase equipment intended for the school as a whole, for example, purchasing sports equipment or computers instead of dedicating the money towards improving educational opportunities for Native American students, as intended. Moreover, even though the purchases made were ostensibly made for the benefit of all students, including Indian students, Catalina reported that her students never really got to take

advantage of the equipment or supplies because her students were kept on the outside of the mainstream school environment.

In addition to pushing students out to alternative education programs within the district, Catalina noted that many students were also pushed into special education programs that she found to be limiting to the students she served. She explained that as freshmen, many of her students "either get thrown into alternative education or they just get pushed out. Honestly by 10th grade most of them are (pushed out), or (put into) special ed.. So some of them might have IEPs but some don't because the district doesn't want to do the paperwork or be responsible to following up on recommendations."

The overrepresentation of Native American students in special education programs is a well documented result of pervasive actions by many educators with precollege consequences for students (Robinson-Zanartu & Dixon, 1996); here, it provides another example of how schools exclude Native American students from rich academic, college preparation environments. Indeed, Catalina was explaining that in her district this overrepresentation is an example how Native students are pushed out of the schooling experience. In her program, she had to react to this situation by finding ways to support her students outside of the mainstream classroom environment.

Several of the students in this study corroborated Catalina's assertion by describing their experiences in special education as examples of schools keeping them out of the mainstream student body. Richard, Starla and Lionel, for example, all

talked about how their experiences in special education led to a dislike of school. All expressed a perception that they were put into special education programs as a way for the school to ignore them and not have to accommodate their unique needs in a mainstream classroom. The combination of each students' personal struggle and the perception that the school had no real desire to support them led to a disengagement from the whole schooling experience for many students. Placement into a special education program was just one example of what could lead to students' disengagement.

These students described these feelings of being out of place, uncomfortable or not belonging in their school environment. Lionel, for example, talked about the great lengths that he would sometimes go to avoid being in school. He believed that the school and the teachers and staff could only see him as a "bad" student and a "bad" kid. There was no place for him. There was nowhere in the school where he felt like he belonged. "So I just didn't want to be there," he explained. Lionel went on, "there'd be days where I would skip a period but I was just too scared to leave (the campus)," he said, "so I'd just sit in the bathroom, just shaking, and I'd just be like, oh, god, please." It was as though Lionel was hoping to completely disappear, to be transported out of his environment. Lionel's experiences are an example of the degree to which to Native students can feel completely detached from their schooling experiences.

Students were not the only ones to describe feelings of not belonging. Even some of the parents described their apprehension about becoming involved in the

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school or classroom. Samarah, Twila and Jessica's mom, for example (who had enrolled two children in a cultural enrichment program that provided a summer opportunity to live on a college campus and spend time on local reservations) believes that it is important for her to go to her child's school in order to support them. She understands that her presence in the school will have benefits for her child, like having a relationship with the teacher and getting to know other staff members at the school. However, she expressed a clear disdain for the other parents and the teachers at the school, indicating that they were "snobs" and made her feel like she did not fit in that environment. Her sense of the other parents as "snobs" was based on the way that other parents looked at her, the way that they dressed and the way that they talked. This has caused her to limit her involvement in the school despite the fact that she believes there is an advantage to being involved.

As indicted previously, these attitudes and their corresponding effects are tied to students' college readiness and attitudes about higher education. There were many examples of students, parents and program directors recounting instances of negative educator interactions and the effects these interactions had on students. Negative teacher (and counselor) interactions and low expectations lead to low self-esteem, withdrawal from school, limited success in school and inadequate college preparation. Ultimately, the caustic words and behaviors of some educators towards their Native American students lead to diminished opportunities for accessing higher education. Similarly, students were also denied opportunities to explore precollege experiences because of the structural barriers that included tracking students into alternative

education programs. Enrichment programs such as those in this study play a major role in helping students to overcome these challenges by serving as advocates and support systems and by providing motivation and encouragement outside of the school environment. For example, program staff introduced students to successful and accomplished role models from throughout Indian Country and they organized youth events specifically to create positive relationships and communities.

We have explored some of the many ways that negative interactions with teachers and school administrators can have prolonged and deep effects on Native American students and communities. In these examples, participants described how the literal words and actions of individual teachers affected their schooling experiences. Students and adults alike alluded to the attitudes and beliefs they felt spurred these negative behaviors. Many of the participants articulated the existence of certain widespread stereotypes that they purport fed the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and students --- including even some Native American students --- in their school. They talked about how prevalent these images can be and how they affect everyday interactions – both educator actions and student anxiety. The next section will explore participants' perceptions about stereotypes and the impact of widespread stereotypes on the schooling experiences, and in turn, the potential for college readiness, of Native American students. Programs, it turns out, played a role in helping students strengthen critical thinking skills to understand, explore and analyze the issues they experienced in school

Stereotype Threat. The Native American students in this study predominantly attended schools where they were, noticeably, a racial minority. Experiencing a typical American high school as a racial minority can be fraught with tension and stress. Copious amounts of mental and emotional energy are required to process these affronts that serve to stall or curtail student success. Indeed, stereotype research has argued that all of that mental and emotional energy drains the capacity students have to process all of the other challenges that face any other high school students, for example, the stress of classes, tests and social pressures. As Steele (2005) indicates, "...the existence of such a stereotype means that anything one does or any of one's features that conform to it make the stereotype more plausible as a self-characterization in the eyes of others, and perhaps even in one's own eyes" (p. 797). Native American students are required to expend extra energy navigating a typical high school experience because so much energy is necessarily dedicated to dodging, deflecting, countering or combatting racist attitudes and overtones. Examples of both parent and student astuteness about this issue were evidenced in the study.

Most of the participants in this study had experience confronting stereotypes in classrooms and in schools. The students themselves, as well as program leaders and parents, articulated why and how stereotypes were detrimental to the schooling experiences for Native American students. Essentially, participants indicated that stereotypes affected the way the teachers' aforementioned attitudes and beliefs about Native American students, as described in the previous section, developed. As long as teachers and school administrators continued to cling to these stereotypes, Native

American students would be subjugated to and even anticipate the negative treatment.

As Claude Steele (2005) has noted, "this threat can befall anyone with a group identity

about which some negative stereotype exists, and for the person to be threatened in

this way, he need not even believe the stereotype. He need only know that it stands as

a hypothesis about him in situations where the stereotype is relevant" (p. 798).

Moreover, stereotypes also threaten the students' sense of self and feed behaviors that

cause students to disengage from school. Steele (2005) also contends that "as this

threat persists over time, it may have the further effect of pressuring these students to

protectively dis-identify with achievement in school and related intellectual domains.

That is, may pressure the person to define or redefine the self-concept such that school

achievement is neither a basis of self-evaluation nor a personal identity" (p. 797). In

other words, students might proactively detach from school as a way to protect their

own identities. Program staff and parents indicated that enrichment programs were

necessarily put in the position of serving students suffering this detachment.

Beyond creating an ongoing burden of having to resist pervasive stereotypes,

stereotypical images also presented the students in this study with a frame that

contradicted the lessons learned at home, in their own communities and in their

enrichment programs. The Native American students in this study who participated in

cultural enrichment programs were taught at home and in their programs about the

strengths of Native American cultures and people. They are taught to appreciate,

value and honor these contributions. In contrast, in the schools, students are presented

with negative stereotypes of Native American people that go against what they are

taught outside of the classroom. According to students in this study, stereotypes often present Native American people as drunks, lazy and stupid. These kinds of messages are conveyed in textbooks, lectures and images. Students indicated that teachers tend to teach about Native American people as though they, teachers, possessed a level of expertise, even when they were directly challenged or contradicted by students who spoke from a lived experience. With few exceptions, students said that teachers typically dismiss these challenges and continue instead to assert that as teachers, they are the experts and therefore the students must be wrong and misinformed. Richard's calamitous classroom experiences described previously exemplify this attitude. This section will explore how conversations about stereotypes pervasive in schools also indicate that exposure to one or more of the cultural enrichment programs can play an important role in equipping students with the ability to identify and manage instances of stereotyping.

As a program leader, Catalina described how the school her students attended attempted to hide its legacy of racist stereotypes. She described a conversation she had with the school principal when she first began her position. According to Catalina, he appeared deeply ashamed when explaining that the school used to use a caricature of an Indian as the school mascot and created offensive banners each year in the name of school spirit. The evidence of this history was hidden in dusty closets and painted over on gym walls. "So every year they had different (banners). They were just red-faced, honestly. Like if you had a Native person with the big nose and with the feather. And every year would change, but it was always the same type of

imagery," it was "obviously really racist," recalled Catalina. Many of the teachers and

non-Native community members were nostalgic for the old mascot and failed to see

the detrimental impact that this type of imagery might have on Native American

students. The principal faced backlash when he decided to change the mascot, "he had

a lot of former students, former classmates," explained Catalina, and "people were

like, 'Why are you taking this down? It's our class banner.' So apparently, he was

getting into all these fights on Facebook and a lot of them were white and looked nice,

fighting him and he's white." Catalina revealed that many of the teachers at the school

had been there for a long time, long enough to remember and miss the offensive

imagery. According to Catalina, the same teachers who asserted that the offensive

mascot and imagery were harmless were also the teachers who held on to a misguided

perception that Indian people do not value education. This was a conclusion she

reached after multiple conversations she had with the staff. The teachers' attitudes

and subsequent behaviors, coupled with a problematic curriculum, contributed to a

negative school environment for students that ultimately became an issue for program

staff to address.

In place of appropriate or accurate representations of Native American voices

in schools were stereotypes perpetuated by teachers and school mascots -- and an

inadequate curriculum. As told by students and their supporters, these stereotypes

contribute to particular attitudes and expectations towards Native American students.

Most students expressed a sense that teachers and other, non-Native American

students in their schools held generalized beliefs about Native American communities

and students that were negative in nature and counterproductive to the academic success of Native American students. Any example of an attitude or practice that stalls the academic success of Native American students or contributes to their disengagement from school is negatively affecting the students' ability to focus on college readiness or even consider college as an option. The perpetuation of stereotypes is one such example of these dangerous attitudes. The issue of stereotypes is another area recognized by the enrichment programs. As indicated by the data described below, confronting stereotypes on a regular basis without such support can have an impact on one's ability to fully benefit from exposure to college readiness experiences.

These experiences confronting stereotypes can start very young. Kalani, one of the program directors, talked about encounters she has had with multiple parents who struggle with stereotypes in the classroom starting with their preschool children. Parents in her program have a practice of not allowing their young Native students to participate in "making fake villages and dancing (and) whooping around" types of activities that stereotype Native American cultures. This issue is closely tied to the curriculum issue as well, but it is specifically an issue of stereotyping -- not just a lack of representation or misinformation. These are examples of common practices and activities in young classrooms, particularly around the Thanksgiving holiday, for example. Parents of students in Kalani's program asked how to explain to their kids that these types of activities are wrong, hurtful and destructive when the child just wants to do what all of the other children are doing.

The youngest children want to participate and have no desire to challenge or disobey their teachers. It is hard for them to understand why they should not be allowed to engage in the same arts and crafts activities as all of their peers. Kalani's center, similar to many of the other centers and programs in this study, have offered to go in to schools to provide culturally and age appropriate presentations, share cultural practices or even offer classes based on actual traditional practices. According to Kalani the schools are usually dismissive and choose instead to stay comfortable in their ignorance. In other words, they are comfortable and familiar with perpetuating stereotypes and prefer to continue to do so unchallenged. She acknowledged that countering or confronting these acts of aggression on your own is emotionally hard for adults, let alone young teenagers or young children who are just finding their voice and learning to use it. However, as a program director, she feels strongly that her role includes keeping up this fight.

Francisco was a student who had been involved in a cultural enrichment program and then began working for the tribe in the same program after his high school graduation. He talked about some of the stereotypes about Native American students that he felt permeated various school environments. According to Francisco, "everyone thinks that we're drug addicts or drunks. We just do bad stuff all the time. I mean, the stigma's there." In his case, these negative stereotypes and attitudes towards Native American students led he and his friends to retreat socially and isolate themselves amongst their own peer group. This behavior is a perfect example of how the perpetuation of stereotypes can influence Native American students to retreat away

from school.   In his words, his experience "going to high school, all the Natives, we just stuck to ourselves. I mean, we knew a lot of people, but we just stuck to ourselves... we needed to be unified in order for us to be strong, in order for people to not pick on us, in order for people to not say things about us." This is the type of unity that is forged in the enrichment programs. In my own observations, I saw program leaders talk to their students about the importance of getting along and supporting each other because as tribal members they would need to always be able to rely on one another.

Although this type of response may have some benefits for Native American students, insofar as isolation may be a protective factor against the real or perceived hostility of a particular environment, it also indicates that Native students are not in the social circles that are focused on college preparation. Negative stereotypes led to social isolation. Many of the students in the study talked about teachers' beliefs in stereotypes that Native American students were not interested in academic success or college readiness. It could be argued that some Native American students, in turn, acquiesced to this sense of disinterest by choosing to not participate in classroom discussions or to not participate in extracurricular activities or to simply not participate in the schooling experience as much as possible without getting expelled. Francisco specifically talked about how the Native American students that he was spending his time with, now that he was a staff member, were not focused on academic work or college preparation. He talked a lot about how much they disliked school instead. The social isolation that Francisco and his peers, and other Native American students

in this study, experienced, wound up excluding them from the college bound

environments and conversations at their school. This social isolation is an example of

the response students may have when it comes to a negative campus climate that

includes, in this example, the perpetuation of stereotypes --plus those examples

previously described, such as problematic curriculum, negative teacher attitudes and

racism. As a staff member, Francisco feels that he identified with his students and

empathized with their disengagement from school.

Augustine, another student involved in the same cultural enrichment program

on the same reservation, also as a student and a staff member, echoed this sentiment

that negative stereotypes are prevalent in the schools. He provides another example of

how these stereotypes have negative consequences for Native American students that

can ultimately lead to exclusion from college bound opportunities. "In high school or

even in middle school, when you go into school, you see this certain... stereotype.

'Oh, he's Native American; he doesn't want to try. She's Native American; she's

going to be a troublemaker.' You get that all your life," says Augustine. Both

Francisco and Augustine described the tension between the desire to resist stereotype

beliefs held by teachers and the tendency to assume the role of certain stereotypes,

even to one's own detriment.

Both Francisco and Augustine are adamant, however, that the stereotypes are

false and that Native students are capable of so much more than what teachers and

other students believe about them. As program staff, both Augustine and Francisco

suggested that Native American students often deliberately live up to these types of

expectations, because it is easy to do so. It appears that both young men, a couple of years out of high school, had the maturity to look back and reflect on their younger selves and their past behavior and recognize the self destructive nature of living up to negative stereotypes. Both attributed this behavior to an ironic logic that as long as they were perceived as lazy and dumb, they might as well behave lazy and dumb. Again, given the advantage of hindsight, both young men conceded that though they had the ability to change their own behavior and live up to a full potential, there was most likely nothing that anyone else could have said to them, in a world filled with stereotypes, to convince them that they were on a self destructive path. They both admit that students have to make a conscious decision to change their trajectory and that even the most caring support networks, like the cultural enrichment programs, could not have convinced them to change their behavior. Having already graduated from high school, Augustine acknowledged that he would have done things differently, recalling, "I knew I was smart. I knew I could do it. I just didn't want to try."

Now that both Francisco and Augustine are working for a tribal education department they are seeking ways to positively influence the students with whom they work, feeling that they can relate well to their experiences and sensing a great responsibility that they have to support Native American student development. According to Augustine,

> "Our responsibility as Native American people (is) to get a higher education. It's very important for all of us because we're still regarded as a stereotype that we just don't want to do it. It's just, 'he's Native American. She's Native American.' They don't want us to do it.

What if we can break that stereotype and say that we are going to do it? Yes, we come from broken homes and from broken communities. We don't look the cleanest or we don't look the brightest, but if we can try harder to show them that we can be their brightest, that we can work the hardest... yeah, we come from broken places but we're willing to change that. I think that's very important for all of us because we're not just doing it for ourselves. It's also the future generations behind us that count the most. We make their paths."

Augustine hit on several important recurring themes shared by multiple students. These expressions are complex and difficult for young students to process. Staff indicated that the enrichment programs strive to provide support and a safe, caring environment to unpack these issues.

Influences of Native-centered, Culturally Engaged Enrichment Programs

As expressed by several participants in this study, many Native American students started to lose interest in school at an early age in response to schooling experiences. There are a variety of forces that conspire to discourage Native students. In the previous section, it was discussed how factors in the school – interactions with teachers, and pervasive stereotypes – can often create negative experiences that lead to disengagement from school, ultimately limiting the possibility of pursuing opportunities in higher education. Conversely, the findings in this study suggest that there are efforts in the cultural enrichment programs that might be useful in countering the negative experiences in schools and supporting Native American students. Students and staff indicated that these support efforts start to provide a counter narrative to the experiences described in the school, fueling students for challenging curriculum, handling negative teacher attitudes, and confronting racism and the effects

of stereotypes. As will be discussed in the final section, students said these efforts are important and impactful – indeed, crucial – however, it seems they are not necessarily sufficient to fully prepare all Native students to embrace a *college readiness* approach to school. Students, however, did find these efforts essential to improving Native American student experiences, so that hopefully they are able to remain positively engaged in school and ultimately, benefit from more college readiness experiences.

In this research, participants' narratives indicated that students, their parents and the program staff experienced the cultural enrichment programs as offering three main supportive factors. The first support factor is a combination of curriculum or lessons that center on Native American experiences, culture and voices. These types of lessons provide some balance to the lack of or misrepresentation of Native American stories in the classroom. The second support factor participants found in the enrichment programs is the presence of supportive adults who encourage students to push past low teacher expectations and the low self-esteem resulting from negative interactions. The exposure to supportive adults serves as a counter-balance to negative teacher attitudes indicated by the students. The third way participants said the programs support Native students is by building resiliency against instances of racism and empowering students to dismantle stereotypical archetypes, by exposing students to a wide array of experiences and role models. I am labeling these skills supported in the various enrichment programs collectively as Indigenous Knowledge.

In this context, this term Indigenous Knowledge is meant to underscore the social, cultural and political capital acquired through participation in one of the

cultural enrichment programs. It is "Indigenous" knowledge in both context and content; meaning students acquire this knowledge from a uniquely Native perspective within an environment created as a safe and supportive space for Native American students. Ultimately, Indigenous Knowledge is about survival skills. If in pre-contact eras, survival skills and Indigenous Knowledge meant knowing how to thrive in a particular climatic and geographic environment, contemporary Indigenous Knowledge means understanding how to survive in a colonial based education system whose aim has historically been to eliminate your cultural identity and personhood. Is it any wonder that many Native American students struggle to find a sense of belonging in these institutions? The cultural enrichment programs represented in this study strive to develop students' Indigenous Knowledge base that can serve as powerful protection as students navigate through school.

Sense of Community. When I asked Myra what type of support she received from the youth center programs, she said, "if any time I'm feeling bad about school or something or maybe I get a bad grade, they are very supportive. They're not like, you know, 'oh,' they're not like, hard on me. There's like, you know, just, 'you'll get through it.' 'You're almost done,' stuff like that." Mayra described a shared sentiment amongst other students in the study – that the enrichment programs are primary sources of encouragement and support for Native American students. She described her center as a place where she received encouragement and a reprieve from the challenges she encountered in school. Programs take different approaches to supporting students, but students indicated that whether they are focused on promoting

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traditional teachings or supporting academic success, programs strive to create a strong and positive sense of community for the students that participate in their activities.

Francisco's work at the tribal education center was focused on countering negative and minimizing messages about Native communities that he had received as a young student. He recounted that many of the current students he works with continue to relate instances of similar messages received in school. In their program, they focus on traditional language revitalization to reinforce the value of students' own culture. The program staff also work to build healthy relationships with the students that might translate into better academic outcomes. "I mean they come here (to the tribal education center)," Francisco described, "they can be themselves. They can laugh and talk and do what they do." He talked about his approach to working with kids as a balance, "at the same time, I have to be strict with them, sometimes, because they get a little carried away," he explained. "Sometimes, they're not really on task. I have to put them back in work mode. I'll give them incentives like reading time," he shared. "I'm like, 'all right, find a comfortable place to sit. Let's try something different. I'm going to start the timer.' We can read. I'll be like, 'You guys have a minute to get everything that you need and get reading,' I'll give them that structure, but then, I'll give them the comfortability (sic), the leniency to work," Francisco explained, "a lot of times, it works really well with them. They get done. They get their homework done in 10, 15 minutes after they're done reading. They get done really fast. A lot of times, they have some really good sentences that they write. I

can tell that they were engaged in the book that they were learning. It really makes me happy." In his program, Francisco capitalizes on his position as a leader/teacher to talk to young students about the importance of taking personal responsibility for their schoolwork because, as he explains to his students, they are working not in pursuit of their individual endeavors but also for the betterment of the tribe and all Native American people as a whole. These are examples of how enrichment programs are positioned to support Native students.

I was able to observe in some programs that traditional stories and the teaching of traditional practices like acorn gathering and basketry are also interweaved into many of the programs. One program describes their activities as "preserv(ing) traditional Native American values and practices through storytelling and other activities rooted in cultural identity and community." These types of activities were included in addition to the academic support offered at the program to demonstrate to students that the Indigenous Knowledge passed down since the beginning was also essential learning and would, in fact, give students a solid foundation upon which to build resiliency as a protective factor against the negative environments in the schools.

As indicated earlier, Richard experienced many feelings of disconnection and derision in school. Conversely, Richard said his experiences in the Native centered enrichment programs allowed him to feel connected and a valuable member of a community. "Well, everybody has different cultures," Richard said of one of the programs in which he had participated. For example, students shared different aspects of their tribe's spiritual practices and ceremonies. "But (in) my experience, it was a

pretty good fun experience. There was a little bit of education. There was a little bit of spiritual," described Richard. It created a sense of community amongst a new set of friends who had first come together that summer. The people in these enrichment programs, both the staff and the students, shared a common language, history and sense of humor that students indicated supported student development in ways that schools did not. "It was when you have a lot of people that you are staying with for like two weeks, you get to know them better, you get to hang out with them," he shared, "you get to learn their secrets, and you get to like just chill with them like talk to them a lot. It just brought me closer." Richard's close ties to his community, his family and his extended family complement the support he receives from the enrichment program. Richard's expressed sense of community and sense of belonging garnered from the enrichment programs is a common theme amongst the participants in this study. Empowerment served to counter the disempowerment many experienced in school.

Sometimes, however, as Andrew discovered, students could encounter a mismatch between a program-driven desire to be grounded in their cultural education and the desire to pursue opportunities in higher education. Andrew shared his thoughts about a conflict he encountered in his consideration for pursuing his opportunity to go to college. There was a pull he experienced to stay home and help "rebuild" the culture and that pull felt in direct conflict with his desire to leave his home reservation in order to pursue higher education. Andrew articulated the struggle to find a balance between his commitment to his community and his desire to take

advantage of the college experience to create a life of his own outside the reservation. "So I'm thinking I'm going to be living in the dorms over at (my college)," Andrew began, but, "I'm not sure if I'm going to be permanently staying over there for the few years that I'll be there, or if I'll be coming back and forth, or if I'll live on the rez and drive over."

Most students in the study discussed the value of community and working to benefit a collective, whereas they felt institutions of higher education revered individual success over this sense of community responsibility. Andrew also argued, however, that pursuing his individual goals would ultimately benefit his tribe as a whole, even if meant he would have to go away for a little while. As he put it, "a lot of tribal members aren't really going to college, but... you know... you want to stay and learn the culture, but at the same time, well for me, at my age, I want to go off to college, get educated, come back and help the tribe." Despite conflicts he felt, Andrew said he was greatly influenced by his enrichment program that encouraged students to go to college in order to be better assets to the tribe as a whole. It was in the program that Andrew learned to understand that he could be an academic person without giving up his identity as a tribal person first. "It's okay to not be the same as everybody else. It's okay to just go on your own path," Andrew explained when he talked about being one of the few Native American students taking Advanced Placement (AP) in high school. "Whenever I tell that to the Natives down here, they're like, 'AP classes? You took those? That's incredible.'" he recalled. Andrew indicated that the staff and the community members that the staff brought into the

program influenced Andrew's thinking to understand that he would be most helpful to the tribe if he got a college education and brought it back to the reservation community.

Andrew's friend, Leroy, who also participated in the tribal after-school and summer enrichment program on his reservation, reiterated the importance of Native youth pursuing opportunities in higher education. Leroy made a similar connection between the value of a non-Native education and the ability to return home and serve our tribal communities. Leroy's perspective is that "our generation is the generation that's going to be taking care of the next, really. Especially for us tribal members, where we have something to take care of, you know, the casino. I think it's really important to get educated and learn how to run and manage our own stuff. Because you know, one day the people that are doing it right now for us aren't going to be here." Leroy's participation in the tribal enrichment programs has taught him about his responsibilities to the tribe. "I feel like it's important," Leroy explained about the cultural aspects of his tribal enrichment program, "because, we're trying to rebuild the culture. I mean, it's alive, but we're trying to grow it, you know?" Like other students, Leroy struggled with the pull to stay on the reservation and the push to leave, "but there also comes a balance with that too," he said, "because a lot of tribal members aren't really going to college, but ... when people begin to find this balance, you know ... you want to stay and learn the culture, but at the same time, well for me and my age, I want to go off to college, get educated, come back and help the tribe."

These are important lessons that would never be touched in his school setting. They help to sustain cultural continuity and counter messages from the school that Native communities are insignificant and purely historical.

Cultural Identity. Like other adolescents, Native American students in secondary school are continually developing their sense of self and identity in relationship to the multiple environments that make up their world. This identity development as described by the participants in this study has a major impact and influence over the way they think about college. Students indicated that cultural enrichment programs have an important role to play in this development.

One aspect of Native identity for some of the youth in this study was the perception -- held by some youth and their Native American peers -- that being Native American and all the complex rules, expectations and requirements that define Nativeness are sometimes incompatible with being successful in school. As Veronica explains, "I know my cousin, for example, she's really against going to school and like going to college. She brings up how like that wasn't our way, like our way was living traditionally, living off the land. And that's something she like truly believes in is like living off the land and like I learned she's not the only person that thinks that way. And they basically say the only way to have money or to live is to go into school but that's not our tradition." But, "we do live in their world," conceded Starla, "so in a way, we do have to do what they want us to, which is go to school." Even though Starla has talked about the value of a college education and her desire to pursue this goal, it remains clear that she recognizes that participation in the world of higher

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education is an unfamiliar experience for many Native American students. At the same time, however, she reconciles the two expectations, arguing that a college education holds a value worth the high risk. These are values that staff believed were reinforced in the cultural enrichment programs. As Martin, the director of Starla's summer enrichment program himself indicated, "...we would go out to the reservations to link up with professionals that are in the community (who) are practicing something that they studied for or practicing something that they require education for, so they could see themselves, and picture themselves in that role and have a... perception of how this all links together."

Cultural enrichment programs aimed to play an important role in countering the negative experiences and interactions at school that the students experience. Staff expressed a sense of responsibility to create an environment where Native American students felt a sense of belonging and acceptance, unlike some common experiences in school. For example, Kalani, the director of an urban Indian Education center indicated, "What the kids have said to me... is that they feel like it's a safe place to be and that having a place for Native youth, it just feels comfortable." "They are facing micro-aggressions all over the place," she continued, "now they can come to our center and not have to deal with that... it's a safe place for them."

Several students talked about feelings of marginalization in their school. Describing one of his high school teachers, Richard said, "he had a mentality of being white and he didn't really get any of the other types of kids, like blacks, Mexicans type of people." When I asked him what it was like to be in that classroom, he replied,

"uncomfortable, (like) it's not really my place to talk, have fun, be myself, and stuff."
"It's pretty much like white privilege," he continued. Although, some students, he observed, found a way to better fit in to the culture of the classroom; but, "it's like some of the other races, like blacks, Mexicans, from ghettos turn into white-washed," he explained, "(and) I don't want to be one of those that are white-washed." When Richard tried to be his authentic self in the classroom, he was often in trouble and out of sync. To better acculturate to the classroom, according to Richard, he would have to become "white-washed," a tradeoff he was unwilling to concede. Richard indicated that his enrichment program, which allowed opportunities for youth to talk about these kinds of challenges with Native mentors, helped him contend with the issues he faced at school by equipping him with positive identity messages. They worked to create an environment where identifying as a Native American youth was the norm and students felt no need to explain or defend their identities, their communication styles or the existence. Kalani, the Urban Indian Education Center director explained, "when you strengthen the youth's identity," she began, "you strengthen them overall as a person. I truly believe that… strengthening a cultural identity is suicide prevention and it is mental health. It is wellness. It is all these things."

Vanessa also described a tension between her cultural program experiences and her experiences at school. She also talked about the concept of "white-washed" describing it as "someone who is... not really into their culture. They just, you know, do what white people do." Such statements by students suggested an aversion to being perceived as "white-washed" or in some way, failing to meet some Indian inventory or

behaving contrary to established and reinforced community norms. "My mom always says that they're kind of lost and they're confused because they have no culture," continued Vanessa, "and they don't know what to do with themselves or (they) have no spiritual connections." In her program, however, Native elders regularly talked to the youth about cultural traditions and appropriate ways to behave and carry oneself. Whether described as "white-washed" or a sense of alienation, whether self-imposed or put upon students by teachers, some students are able to successfully disrupt these negative perceptions about the incongruence between Native Americans and academics with support found in their enrichment programs. Francisco, the former student turned staff in a tribal education center described this support through the ways in which staff treated students. "We treat them as if we really sincerely care about them," he shared, "as if we're parents teaching them this respect, this morality, these goals, there aspirations. We're trying to teach them how to grow up, how to be adult when you're an adolescent, how to be adult when you're around a bunch of immature people."

Programs helped students by supporting positive identity development – they surround students with positive images and role models of Native American people. In all of the enrichment programs attended by students in this study, program leaders, parents and students noted that staff worked to prioritize Native American traditions and cultural practices (i.e. organized celebrations of California Indian Day and commemorative marches in recognition of a tribal removal from original territories).

According to several participants, students outside of the experience of the

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enrichment programs, however, find it difficult to climb out from under the weight of these misguided notions and instead perpetuate stereotypes and meet low expectations. Examples of students discussing these challenges are expanded later in this chapter, but one student who reflected on her peers who were not part of any enrichment program was Mona. Mona had been involved in a several enrichment programs and became a mentor for one powwow dance program. Mona shared that, "I also think that your peers and who you hang out with have a lot of influence as well. If you're just sitting there partying and drinking or shooting up drugs and you're exposed to that, that's kind of like a way into doing that is that you get pressured. You want to fit in. Or you think that that's normal. It messes with your frameworks."

These students did not have the advantage of a cultural enrichment program to support their identity development as Vanessa did. Vanessa, who had participated in multiple urban, intertribal enrichment programs talked about some of the lessons she learned in one program that helped strengthen tribal identity. "They had us learn about boarding schools, Native American boarding schools. That was a long time ago," she explained, "Native American kids were taken and they had to go to... boarding school. They were taken away from their culture - because they couldn't speak their language or really have long hair. Like, the boys couldn't have long hair, anything like that." Conversely, at one session of this particular program that I visited, community elders talked to students about the importance of language reclamation and the strength Native people derive from their long hair.

All the students who were able to navigate between these various expectations had participated in a culturally relevant enrichment program that whose staff explicitly tried to instill a strong sense of Native American and tribal identity. For example, one program's mission is to "guide Native American youth... towards their full potential as healthy well-rounded young adults through the use of cultural, traditional, and non-Western modes of healing." The program "provides a unique opportunity to enhance the life of youth through cultural exploration, wellness activities, and social interaction. We encourage youth to stay physically and mentally active while exploring their creativity and Native American heritage in a positive, inclusive, and safe environment where they can develop a healthy cultural self-identity." These mission statements indicate a sense of responsibility and striving by staff to support positive identity development.

Ironically, however, some students enrolled in some such programs had developed such a sense of cultural pride that they, for better or for worse, begin to critique other Native American people – and have created their own measures for how Indian a person is. "I don't want to be rude," began Vanessa, "but there's some people who are Native and they don't really want to learn anything about their culture or who they are. They're just like, oh, yeah, I'm Native. It's only important when they're applying for stuff or when they want to show it off." She continued, "they don't really want to learn anything about it and they don't want to get involved in the community." For Vanessa, Native American identity is more than a box that can be checked; it is not, or at least, should not, be a matter of convenience. For her, there seems to be a

sense of responsibility that comes with being an Indian person and a disdain for individuals who wear their Indian identity as an accessory. This sense of responsibility is nurtured in the enrichment program that encourages and provides opportunities, such as workshops and lessons, for students to learn about their culture, learn their languages, and be responsible tribal members. Catalina, the director of an intertribal enrichment program described how the relationships she had in the community helped her guide students toward responsible behavior. She told one student, "you're representing your mom and you're acting a fool right now, like no, your mom is gonna be embarrassed to hear that you're acting like this and so I use that, but not like I use it all the time, but those relationships."

This is an important issue in the current study because we know that Native American students can face significant challenges at the college and university levels. The issue of identity has been central to understanding the success or lack of success for Native American students. Students said the cultural programs they attended attempted to help them develop a healthy identity by providing positive reinforcements of Native American culture and positive role models. For one student, Starla, one of the participants who participated in an intertribal summer program for several years before becoming a volunteer staff person, the program influenced her to the point that she wanted to continue the work for other youth. She indicated that in the near future she hoped to find a job that "hopefully it's with Native kids and it's a program." She continued, "because I think I know I want to do a program of some sort, an after-school program, a summer program, an all-around year program that

does this and that with children, and then also getting to work with these kids closely and hearing one child at a time." These reflected the experiences she had as a Native youth participating in such programs.

Huffman (2013) described four Native identities to theorize how Native American students can best be supported in college; the same ideas can apply to precollege experiences. In Huffman's terms, students with "strong Native American identities" are not necessarily experiencing the most positive outcomes in institutions of higher education; but students who were able to acclimate to the university had better outcomes. Therefore, it is important to understand how these young Native American students are forming their identities and situating themselves in different contexts, such as schools. Although it is unspoken, there seems to be a belief that a strong Native American identity is incongruent with an academically successful identity. Huffman's suggestions for higher education programs indicate that it is important for programs to develop Native American students' academic identity as much as their cultural identity; or even to include a positive academic identity as part of their cultural identity. As discussed in Part 1, programs offered students a way to process the negative impacts on their identity experienced in the school environment, described previously by the complexities of negotiating multiple worlds, feeling maligned by school personnel and developing a sense of cultural pride. For example, we have seen this in the way program leaders counter inaccurate or lacking curriculum regarding Native American people, in how students are encouraged to learn cultural history or practices and tribal languages, and in the ways students are introduced to

cultural leaders and role models. There are still other identity issues that ultimately

impact students' college readiness levels by distracting students away from school

activities.

Another particular dilemma students revealed that encompassed many of the

issues raised thus far – the imperative of navigating stereotypes, the contradiction

between "traditional" values and "non-traditional" values – was the issue of local

casinos and "per capita" payments received by tribal members. Students indicated that

enrichment programs had to address this issue head on by keeping the students

grounded in a more "traditional" Native identity. For example, Lionel and Andrew,

both members of a tribe engaged in the gaming industry, explained that the enrichment

programs provided opportunities to reverse certain negative impacts of the gaming

industry on traditional values by offering classes on money management emphasizing

community well-being over personal wealth as a cultural value. This relatively recent

"per cap" issue has surfaced in some tribal communities, with impact on Native

student identity development. Multiple tribal casinos surround the area in which the

current study took place. Tribal members of these gaming tribes sometimes receive

what is referred to as "per cap" or "per capita" payments that are the result of a

distribution of part of the profits from gaming operations to individual tribal members.

Per capita is essentially a profit sharing mechanism that refers to a monthly monetary

allocation based on the revenue generated by the individual tribe's gaming enterprise.

Per capita payments to tribal members varies greatly depending on the scale and

success of the casino.

In some cases, the amount of "per cap" distributions can be quite high, significant enough that some of the adult tribal members can choose to not work and will still live comfortable, middle to upper-middle class lives. Students indicated that the issue, and accompanying misperceptions, of per cap, has infiltrated the schools and become a sensitive subject for some Native American students. This issue has added to the already abundant barrage of stereotypes, low expectations and overall challenges for Native American students. It has become an issue both in terms of the school and the teachers' perception of Native American students as inferior and beneficiaries of some unearned, unfair advantage. Students indicated that the attitude of students, teachers and the community affects students' sense of self-identity and motivation.

The youth in the study who were representing gaming tribes and who knew that they would be receiving per cap money in the near future said they faced a challenging dilemma. As will be discussed, the issue of per cap brought to surface several contradictions that truly forced these young Native American students to think about how their identity as Indian people. One challenge for these young people was learning how to navigate the contradiction between "traditional" values and "non-Native" values. I would assert, as have others, (Deloria, Deloria Jr, & Wildcat, 2001). that "traditional" Native values teach that individuals have a responsibility to consider the well-being of the community as a whole. In other words, having access to resources and per capita money would serve to benefit the tribe as a whole and all tribal members would be responsible for the careful management of resources. By

comparison, contemporary, "non-Native" values emphasize individualism and the accumulation of "wealth". In other words, owning the biggest house and the shiniest car symbolize success and happiness in America – something that could also be part of the "per cap" experience. The Native youth in this study are growing up under the influences of both Native and non-Native values. California Natives certainly enjoyed a life of wealth and abundance prior to the encroachment of the Spanish and the Americans; however, more recent generations have endured a life of relative poverty. The new reality of per cap, for certain tribes, has highlighted the contradiction Native and non-Native values as young people must learn how to balance, manage their money and become responsible tribal members.

The Native American students in this study who are not from tribes that provide per cap monies to their members encountered different challenges related to the same issue. All of the students who participated in this study lived in Southern California, though not everyone was from a California tribe. There is a stereotype that exists in the region that all Native people in California are "rich Indians" because of the popularity of a few lucrative gaming tribes in the area. There is an assumption that Native American people in California never had to work and that they typically wasted all of their money on cars, drinking and gambling. Students indicated that even the young participants who will not be receiving per cap monies in the future are forced to confront these images and consider how the issue contributes to their identity formation. As Esme put it, "we were sitting at lunch, me and a couple of my friends, and this guy came up and he sat down. We started talking, I forgot how the whole

conversation started, but he said something about getting per cap and how it was so easy for Native Americans to make money. I'm not allowed to discuss per cap and everything with my parents because there's so much arguments and it's so much political reasons." She went on to talk about how non-enrolled tribal community members do not receive any per cap, "their enrollment is so complicated... so I tried to explain it to him, 'Some people don't get per cap because of their elders.' He was just saying, 'Your elders don't know how to handle their money which is why none of your younger people get it.'" Programs understand that students face these types of issues.

A related challenge that young Native American students described was reconciling the dilemma between the construct of college as a path to economic security and the promise of per cap money as a(n) (easier) means to economic security. Some of the students in the study talked about people in their lives who they knew were dependent on per cap. Esme, again, said, "there's some people who I understand that they don't do anything they just wait for their per cap money." According to the students, those who understood college only as an economic security blanket saw little or no value in pursuing higher education. Per cap was a de-motivating factor for some. However, it is important to note that none of the students in this study, who had all participated in a culturally grounded enrichment program, shared this view. The students in this study, both from per cap and non-per cap tribes, understood that college held a value beyond pure economics. Participation in the cultural enrichment programs had provided a place, space and opportunity for students to process these issues impacting their sense of identity.

It is clear that for youth who have yet to receive their own per capita payments the issue has nevertheless permeated their schooling experiences, especially in terms of their interaction with other youth. Esme expressed the animosity she experiences from other students: "A lot of people, I feel, in their eyes, that we are just Indians who get money from the casinos and we don't earn anything." She was expressing the idea that other students are critical of Native American students because of a belief that they do not have to work for anything. But students suggested that they felt these issues also contribute in some cases to instances of lowered motivation for Indian students, particularly those unassociated with one of these cultural enrichment programs. As described by several students in the study, some of the other per cap students they know have no desire to pursue education beyond high school; students suggested that these per cap students were often those who did not participate in enrichment programs like they themselves did. Furthermore, none of the student participants in this study indicated that per cap would dissuade their decision to pursue a college education.

Mayra, talking about other Native American students who did *not* participate in programs, said "people think that they don't really have to try because they have per cap. And that is always a safety net, and it is a safety net but like, they don't try because they get per cap." Some students develop a sense that their future is secured by the presence of their per cap and therefore, there is no reason to persist. According to a 2011 article in the local newspaper, "the payments have made some tribal members' lives very comfortable. In other cases, the money has led to excesses, such

as problem gambling, and aggravated other issues, such as drug and alcohol addition."

"There are no studies that address the extent of the problem," the article continues, "but some tribal leaders acknowledge it exists." According to the author, tribal leaders said "some children are losing interest in school and work, in part because they know that when they turn 18, they will get their per capita payments."

The "per cap" issue is thus a very complicated one for young people throughout the region studied. Some enrichment programs, however, explicitly provided resources to the students to help them better understand how to properly manage their "safety nets" and also provided a safe place for students to address their concerns or process and share their experiences. Mayra explained, "I think it's because they want kids to be more involved with their culture. I think that's like the main purpose of the program. I feel like in the past maybe a little bit, it's more been about the money but I think we're kinda moving towards a place where it's more about the culture, at least that's where it's trying to go to." As Mayra indicated, through such experiences she was able to develop an appreciation for the value of education and meaningful work while still acknowledging the benefits of receiving per cap payments.

Although Starla came from a non-gaming tribe and in fact, her reservation is one of the poorest in the country, she also had some insight into the issue of per cap and how it affects young students. Through participation in numerous enrichment programs throughout California, she has met many young Natives from many different reservations, including some gaming tribes. She recalled a conversation she had with

a friend of hers who came from a per cap tribe. According to Starla, "he said it was kinda bad, because people don't understand what it means to go and work hard for something when it's just given to you." "People can waste their money in one month," she continued, "and then when the other month comes, they have more coming to them. So they don't feel the need to go to school and get their education and work. They don't feel the need to go to work because they get money every month." Starla's conversation was with one of the students that she met in the summer enrichment program she attended. In other words, it was another student who was involved in these types of programs who was offering this *critique* of per cap. Even though he was a youth who would be receiving per cap in his future, he himself was not dissuaded to pursue opportunities in higher education. The cultural enrichment program where Starla and her friend met provided opportunities for students to engage in these types of conversations. Here, Starla and her friend had the opportunity to consider the impact of per cap and how it related to Indian identity.

Money, in general, was a big issue that came up for many students. Earning potential was one of the major themes students discussed as a benefit of a college education. Students talked about college as opening the door to the ability to earn money, "have a good life," or establish financial security. Students indicated that the idea that a college education is correlated to financial security was perpetuated, both intentionally and inadvertently, by the enrichment programs. This sentiment was expressed by Richard who shared, "If I'm living on the reservation, they'll pay for college, or something like that. That's what I heard from my dad. They'll pay for it

because it's education - they care about education because they want to be successful because they came from poor, still poor today, but they'll pay for the education because that's what they care about because they want you to be successful in life."

To several of the students in this study, money, income, and wealth were often big motivators for the consideration for pursuing a college education; but the youth in this study recognized that for some students the promise of guaranteed money would make a college education seem less essential. Myra, who had participated in a youth program that explicitly provided space for dialogue about per cap, made this claim. "I think that people think that they don't really have to try because they have per cap," explained Mayra, "and that is always a safety net, and it is a safety net but like, they don't try because they get per cap." Here, Mayra is acknowledging that students who understand per capita money is coming to them after high school or when they turn eighteen may not be incentivized by the perceived increased earning potential of college education. She is articulating a belief that "per cap" students tend to lack the motivation to succeed because the promise of per capita payments removes the drive to do well in high school, in order to be competitive college applicants, in order to later benefit financially from a college degree. However, Mayra, a participant in her tribe's youth center, was clear that she did not share this mentality. In fact, it was a concern she expressed about the future of her community. Not all of the youth in her tribe benefitted from the influence of the youth center where students were given opportunities to talk about these important issues.

In fact, Mayra acknowledged the youth center's explicit attempts to help their youth better manage their money. It appeared that the tribe recognized some of the issues that Mayra and others describe and is working to create a better situation. She said that the tribe now offers financial advising classes to the youth where they bring in individuals to talk to students about managing their money. "She talked about investing and stuff like that," explained Mayra, "and then this last one, we just had a talking circle, (two youth center leaders) talked about the dangers, people trying to take advantage of you because you have per cap, you know, the bad side of it." These attempts by the youth center to address issues that come with per cap demonstrate the understanding that per cap has created some unique challenges for Native youth. When I asked Mayra why she thought these types of classes were important to the youth center, she indicated "maybe because they know that per cap won't be here one day and that we all need to save our money and get jobs so we can support ourselves."

Mayra expanded on her position indicating the youth program's potential support role by noting a distinction between youth who base their identity on the promise of per capita payments and youth who are committed to cultural continuance and revitalization. Citing her cousin, Mayra claims "there are two types of Natives. There's the Casino Indian or the Native American... one cares about the culture and where they come from, their language and stuff like that. And the other one just wants to be a part of it because of the money." Her perceptions are potentially reflective of the messages that students are receiving in the cultural enrichment programs' efforts to promote dialogue about per cap: her program explicitly emphasized good stewardship

of their money *as well as* the preservation of the culture. Mayra indicated that she is building a more sophisticated understanding of Native American identity that has been nurtured in the tribal education center she attends.

Lessons from Reservation Life. Students and staff indicated that the programs in which these students are involved also take on the responsibility of helping students to understand the beauty and complexity of the Native American cultures, including reservation life, whether they live there, visit from time to time, or have never been home. As Kalani put it, "our youth come from everywhere. We have people who were born and raised in San Diego. We have people who have come from the reservations surrounding San Diego. We have people who have come from other cities, who have come from other reservations, people who have come here through military transfers. We have people from everywhere." She described her program's emphasis on culture by indicating, "culture is important in our program because our youth come from so many different tribes. It's really important to recognize their individual identities and their individual tribal identities. Some of them don't know anything about the tribes and some of them come from the reservations; they are looking for a place to fit in again."

Developing a critical understanding of reservation life and particularly, navigating its current struggles (in addition to community strengths, as described in prior sections) can start to equip students with important capital that also helps them dare to be critical about their schooling experience. Students indicated that this ability to critique their experiences can help develop their sense of self-efficacy that may

serve them on the road to college. For example, most of the students studied have developed a strong sense of what reservation life is and how it can impact or influence their schooling experiences. These understandings are not developed solely by students' involvement in an enrichment program, but alongside the influence of other adults in the community. Some of the students have first hand experiences that shapes their thinking. Other students who may be spending less or no time on their reservation still develop this understanding based on stories they have heard from their parents or other family members. Tales of reservation life are varied. Not all of the stories from the reservation are negative (earlier examples demonstrated positive messaging from the enrichment programs) but the painful or sad stories have a way of tales permeating the students' psyches and shows up in their talk related to school.

It is important to understand that the students in the current study are connected to at least ten different reservations. Although some of the students are from the same reservations, tribal enrollment varied among the participants. Students represented tribal diversity and it is important to recognize that reservations differ vastly between one another. Nevertheless, there seem to be some notable shared experiences among the different reservations. These shared experiences impacted students' identity development, and enrichment programs, whether they are tribal centered, Urban, or intertribal, all had to contend with the issues affecting students and their reservations. In this way, programs took on the shared responsibility of supporting students' development through engaging the reality of their environments.

One of the common experiences shared about the struggles of reservation life was the impact of substance abuse on the youth and the community. Starla, a student who is attending community college, noted that on her reservation drug and alcohol abuse are so prevalent they have simply become commonplace. Ordinary. Expected. She shared that "the typical thing for someone on a 'rez' is to drop out of high school, become an alcoholic or drug head. Things that people expect Native people to be. Especially alcoholics." These expectations, she goes on, are typically held by people outside of the community who have these expectations, white people, according to Starla, "the ones who brought the alcohol to us." "And unfortunately there are a lot of Native people who drink and do drugs. That's what's expected out of reservation people" according to Starla. Her point was that youth who have little opportunities on the reservation, few job prospects or low motivation to pursue a different way of life often turn to drugs and alcohol. Starla is talking about the challenge of making it through life on the reservation, with few prospects, without resorting to drug and alcohol abuse. Staff in all of the enrichment programs mentioned in this study – and program mission statements – promote the value of maintaining a healthy, drug and alcohol free lifestyle.

Given the severity of these social issues on the reservation, it is necessary for the youth programs to be explicit in their expectations. As an example, one of the programs describes part of their mission as "is to guide Native American youth... towards their full potential as healthy, well-rounded young adults through the use of cultural, traditional, and non-Western modes of healing. We envision a community of

well-adjusted youth who have reached their full potential as healthy young adults." As Kalani puts it, "I use that example... about getting into those positions and being able to make change. We talk about the things that they get frustrated with and, (I ask them) What are you going to do about it later? How are you going to help make this difference? What are you going to change in the world and how are you going to do? How are you going to be a mentor to somebody else in the future?" Kalani continued, adding, "I also teach my students to question. Question what you are learning... because it's like, yes, you've got to answer the test questions and what the teacher said, but if you see something questionable, question it. If you don't feel comfortable questioning it in school, let's talk about it here... again, a safe place. Let's talk about it."

Separate from the issues of drugs and alcohol influences that affect many communities, including reservations, Marena offered another perspective about reservation life. She added that higher education does not, in her experience, seem to be a priority on the reservation—ironically, because family ties are particularly strong. She explained first that "there's not much you do with a degree over there (on the reservation). There's little jobs you can work." She added that community members on the reservation often have a hard time leaving the community they grew up in, "my mom talks about how a lot of people she grew up with had trouble leaving... they always say they're just comfortable with their life. They know everyone there and they've lived there forever. They have a bunch of family there." She is sympathetic to the situation, " I can see that as beneficial as well because living in the city I'm not

around very much family. I have family, but they all live further out. We're not all together any more." Marena indicated that the enrichment program she participated in aimed to support this type of student and family. There was an understanding on the part of the Urban and intertribal enrichment programs that students and their families are likely separated from their extended families, reservations and home communities. Part of the mission of this program is "Building Traditional Family Values" and they state that, "(our) programs for American Indian families are designed to heal and strengthen traditional American tribal family values and instill a sense of belonging to the American inter-tribal urban community through cultural awareness and friendship". This recognition and commitment demonstrates that program staff regularly take on the task of supporting students who are separated from their home communities to feel a sense of connection and belonging to this new, Urban, intertribal environment.

Vanessa also lived off of her reservations. She describes herself as an Urban Indian because she does not live on a reservation. She has, however, spent significant time on her father's two reservations, having visited often and lived there for a year. She knows her reservation family well and has appreciation for the challenges of reservation life. Life is better off the reservation, according to Vanessa, because "people are a lot more (healthy) and supportive. I grew up around people who didn't drink and who thought school was important and thought family was important... a lot of people (on the reservation), they don't really have hope." "They drink a lot," she said, "and they don't really do good in school. They're stuck there and they don't

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really see what good things can happen. Here, you can see other people doing good things... there, they don't really have people like that." When Vanessa talked about seeing people do good things in her community, she was referring to the role models and peer models she knew from her enrichment program family. "I (have always) been around people who didn't drink and who thought school was important and thought family was important," recalled Vanessa. Having participated in the same enrichment program for most of her life, Vanessa indicated that she has benefitted from the positive influences of the mentors in her program. Her program's mission statement states that one of the aims is to "create a warm family community atmosphere" and encourages all family members to participate. Through a "relaxed American Indian community social environment," staff strive to provide a healthy alternative for Native youth and their families.

Vanessa explained another common theme of reservation life. She described the way a reservation community can ostracize members who leave in search of a better life. "They're kind of like, 'oh, you think you're better than me because you left and you went to this fancy school and now you have a nice job?' Vanessa described as she explained how sometimes even your own relatives could be non-supportive. "I know that happened to my dad," she said, "He was on the reservation, but he was like, 'I don't want to stay here forever. I know there's better things.' He left, and my grandma, she didn't really like it at first because she wanted him to stay there. But once she realized that that made better and stronger, she was cool with it, because he learned to be a better and smarter person." I asked for her thoughts about how her dad

knew there was something better for him outside of the reservation. She replied, "I think it's just because of all the bad things that happened to him. When he was little, his real dad would drink, so he was like, 'I don't like how my dad is, I don't like how he's treating me. When I get older and have kids, I'm not going to drink and I'm not going to treat them bad." Vanessa's father was instrumental in getting her involved in the enrichment programs. In fact, he was one of the cultural advisors and a mentor to youth. He would drum for the students learning pow wow dances and he shared stories about his own upbringing and the values that were passed down to him from him grandparents. Vanessa indicated that the values that he holds as a father carry over into the values held by the cultural enrichment program as well, and that program staff strive to support students navigating the myriad challenges, as described here (i.e. schools, stereotypes, reservation life, etc.), confronting Native American youth.

Vanessa's recounting of her dad's experiences demonstrates one impact of this dilemma: students see this type of lifestyle as "normal" or as an actual option and life choice. But substance abuse creates a life circumstance that is typically in conflict with a circumstance of someone who is college-bound. It is unrealistic to expect alcoholic or drug dependent students to prioritize college readiness. Even students who have avoided the pitfalls of drug or alcohol abuse in their own life are affected by exposure to the problems affecting their family and community members. Consequently, they are uniquely challenged in school. Whereas programs attempted to support students to handle these challenges; the people facing those challenges in their lives also served as cautionary tales guiding students to avoid these pitfalls.

Lionel is a perfect example of Native American students who have paid attention to and learned from the cautionary tales related to substance abuse in their lives. "So, I've learned greatest from the worst people," Lionel shared. "The greatest lessons (were) from my mom. My mom was a drug user; she passed high school, but barely. And I've learned my greatest lessons from my family (who were) alcoholics, abusers; they're gone to prison. So my greatest lesson is not to do what they have done." Things could have gone very differently for Lionel. He had opportunity and exposure to fall into the traps of drugs and alcohol, trapped. Instead, Lionel said he found refuge and community at the Youth Center on the reservation. Fortunately.

Lionel shared that the youth center was the greatest source of support and positive influence in his life.   "That's why I come around here (at the youth center) so often. Because going from all that negative (at home) and coming here, and they preach, basically nothing but positive, it's great. It was like throwing me out of a boiling water into an ice bath, and I was like, 'holy crap!'" Lionel found dependable adults who loved him and were concerned about his well-being; this was a gift that he never received at home or at the school. "It was total shell-shock. It was crazy. I didn't know how to handle it, so I just started involving myself as much as I could in it. And I remember that year I got one hundred plus hours was the worst year of my life. Because I just needed to get out of the house, I came here more often." He learned a valuable cautionary tale from the experiences of his own mother, but his participation in the enrichment programs helped him to persevere through, or at least survive, the painful world at home.

He describes his experiences at the youth center as a metaphorical and some times literal lifesaver. With a "hundred plus hours," Lionel was referring to the time he spent at the center to meet service hours required by his school. He was able to meet and exceed these requirements through his involvement at the center. As several participants in this study have indicated, there is a battle between what is witnessed on the reservation, the expectations held by other people, the encouragement to do and be better that students receive from their enrichment programs, and the individual's ability to negotiate all of these challenges. Programs necessarily became spaces where students had to navigate and reconcile these many influences.

Lionel summarized his view of college as a way out of the negative aspects of reservation life, something his programs had assisted him with even while reminding him of the positives of his community too: "one of the main points of what got me thinking about going to college was that it's sink or swim," he said. "At this point," he continued, "if you don't get a degree... I've seen family members, I've seen just people stagnate. Like, they just didn't do anything, and they just sit on top of the per-capita and just do nothing. They either pick up drugs or drinking or pick up some bad habit of gambling or something. And they just sit there with their money, and they're just garbage basically." Lionel, expressing his exasperation, concluded, "and I'm like, okay, I don't want to do that, so I might as well try to do something productive, and try to make something of myself, and get a degree in something, in anything at this point, and I'd just be okay. Then I'll be fine."

Students indicated that regardless of the criticisms that Lionel or other students may have about their own communities, their experiences in enrichment programs started to instill a sense of cultural pride that led students to want to pursue their ambitions not only as an individual endeavor, but as a means to improve the community overall. In this way, students said, programs consistently offered more than the stated goals of the individual program. As described previously, each of the programs offered explicit cultural learning (i.e. traditional values, protocols and histories) that could be used as a buffer against negative school experiences and helped students to view the "cautionary tales" witnessed in their communities as opportunities to make different and better choices that would not only positively influence their individual lives, but could help bring positive change to their communities as a whole.

Mona, who was near graduating college, also talked about the effects of drug and alcohol abuse in her reservation community and how programs supported her instead to make her parents *and* her community "proud" via a college education. Like Lionel, witnessing the scourge that substance abuse brought motivated Mona to stay away from drugs and alcohol and ultimately steered her towards higher education. "Seeing what drugs and alcohol did to some family members, I didn't want to go down that route, whatsoever. I wanted to be more. I wanted to make my parents proud. I wanted to make myself proud and my community. I wanted to be able to support myself and become independent and not depend on a man, for one, for sure. I also wanted to support other students and motivate them as well to go to college."

Mona said that her program, "open(ed) doors for more opportunities" that expanded her belief about what was possible. Lionel and Mona were both detracted from the substance abuse they saw in their families and their communities. Their ability to achieve academic success was greatly influenced by their participation in their enrichment programs.

Mona was able to offer some hope in talking about how to avoid the draw of drugs and alcohol. She talked about the importance of surrounding oneself with friends and peers who resist the negative influences found on the reservation or in the community. "I also think that your peers and who you hang out with have a lot of influence as well. If you're just sitting there partying and drinking or shooting up drugs and you're exposed to that, that's kind of like a way into doing that, is that you get pressured. You want to fit in. Or you think that that's normal," Mona explained. Her friends, immediate family and importantly, program leaders and role models modeled different behavior. "I grew up in a household drug and alcohol free," Mona shared, "all my friends weren't into all of that. We all had a goal of going to college and helping each other to get there." Mona is articulating a particular common thread that underscores the importance of having positive influences in order to counter the pressures of substance abuse. The programs offered a space where those positive influences and behaviors were expected and modeled. For example, according to the director of one summer program for intertribal youth, they intentionally introduced students to Native American community members who had stories to share about overcoming some of the same obstacles and challenges facing the youth. In another

intertribal program, one of the parents, Karina, shared that the program emphasized the importance of maintaining a clean and sober lifestyle – both in the program and as a community member.

One of the values perpetuated at the multiple enrichment programs is the resistance against stereotypes that dictate a particular model of Indian identity. So many of today's Native youth fall under an impression that there are particular ways of looking, behaving and believing that are fundamental to identifying as an Indian person, some of which can be quite negative and detrimental to the well-being of individuals and communities as a whole. By exposing youth to multiple examples and variations of Native American identity, enrichment programs can try to dismantle stereotypes, both internal and external. These lessons are explored sometimes formally through invited lecturers or participation in educational conferences and sometimes informally through small group conversations that occur organically in the implementation and participation of the program activities.

Life on the reservation is complex, and trying, and tragic, and magic. While teachers only focused on presumed, stereotypical problems from the 'outside,' program staff saw students and communities in their full complexity –positive lives, traditions, and strengths as well as life challenges -- and supported students to thrive in that reality. Program coordinators also recognized the challenges facing their students. Catalina, for example, talked about the harsh realities of working on the reservation. She recalled "...that first week, there was a murder on the reservation and most of my students were affected. Either it was in (their family) or maybe they were related to

the people who ten went to jail. And it was on the anniversary of someone who had

passed away a year ago. So emotions were really raw, really raw..." (Catalina). In

fact, one of the days that I visited with Catalina at the reservation there was another

mysterious death, this time the death of an infant child. The death had occurred that

morning and as we were visiting details were emerging and I witnessed first hand the

rippled response through the community. The mysterious death interrupted daily life.

Catalina was describing another example of the experience of life on the reservation

that she contends deeply affects her students and other Native American students –

experiences that program staff have to routinely talk through with students.

As the data shows, these students involved in cultural enrichment programs are

learning to contend with multiple challenges that they face in their schooling

experiences. Through explicit teaching, intentional exposure to positive role models

and by honoring the collective histories and lived experiences of Native American

people, students are acquiring valuable skills. As also described in Part 1, students in

these programs are learning to be critical of curriculum and the educational systems

that were never designed to foster best practices for Native American communities.

They are being encouraged to engage in the conversation as active participants in their

own learning, challenging teachers, peers and systems that exclude or over-simplify

Native American cultures. They are learning to honor their communities while

lovingly resisting certain behaviors and attitudes that have created disharmony and

destruction in many of our tribal and reservation communities. The students engaged

in these enrichment programs said they have acquired many important and necessary

skills and perspectives that will serve them well on their individual paths towards higher education.

Nevertheless, it remains apparent that the next step for both students and programs alike is to make more concerted efforts to bridge the divide between students' ambitions and the realization of our individual and collective goals. Students in this study consistently expressed a desire to pursue opportunities in higher education. However, many clearly demonstrated a lack of understanding of how to achieve these goals. Sometimes it was a conscious lack of know-how: some students expressed confusion about next steps or how to go about pursuing their educational goals. But other times students indicated a misperception about how to navigate the institutional systems, and students did not necessarily seem to know that they were off-track, even if just by a little bit. This mismatch between ambition and fruition constitutes the discussion of the next finding, labeled A Growing Understanding of College Readiness.

A Growing Understanding of College Readiness

Too Late. Like several other students in the study, Vanessa indicated a desire to go to college built in part through the programs she participated in--but she also revealed her own lack of preparation. According to Vanessa, in addition to programs, her parents had instilled a strong sense of the importance of college education and had even provided positive role modeling as mom and dad both attended college. Still, Vanessa still found herself under-prepared when the time to apply to college actually came. I asked her when she really started thinking about and planning for college; she

replied, "it was actually way too late." Observing her peers, Vanessa came to the realization that she was falling behind a typical college going timeline. "When I was a junior, I finally was like, oh, I have to go to college for real," she shared, "it was always there in my mind, like, oh, I'm going to go to college. I'd go to field trips, (and think) 'oh, this is a nice college to go to'." By her senior year, she was even further behind, "then even still this year (senior year), I was really stalling," she conceded. "And I finally just applied to (a community college); and I was like, okay," she ruefully recalled.

Vanessa's experiences seem to resonate with other students in the study. She had the ambition and even the motivation to go to college. She said she had received the right messages from the enrichment programs in which she participated, had positive role models and supportive parents, and even found that some of the teachers in her alternative school setting were trying to be supportive. However, somewhere in the midst of encouragement, cheerleading and positive messaging, the details of how to make college happen were neglected. Vanessa is, in fact, enrolled in the community college and plans to eventually transfer to a four-year university; but this was a concession when her first ambition was to enroll at a university straight out of high school. There was a disconnect between the motivation to pursue college and the knowledge about the actual steps, exams, application timelines and deadlines to make it happen. Motivation without knowledge proved insufficient. As Vanessa described, "I had to graduate, you know, high school, and I was pretty behind in my studies." This focus on high school graduation, rather than college readiness, detracted Vanessa

from her goals. "My teacher said if you want to graduate, you have to, you know, finish (all the work)," she continued. Based on this statement, Vanessa and her teacher had both failed to appreciate the importance of completing her schoolwork *throughout* her high school experience, as evidenced by her admission that she was so far behind in her coursework. In contrast, her non-Native friends had successfully prepared for college and were ready to apply when the traditional application season came. "Then all of my friends were already applying. They already finished their SATs and I hadn't even started any of that. I didn't even study for the SATs and then I was like, oh no, I have to go to college," Vanessa explained, "I guess when my friends started applying and when they actually got accepted, I was like, oh my god, I need to do this." This explanation underlines the problem that students who receive motivation and encouragement without clear, personalized procedures are clearly disadvantaged. "The fact that I'd missed most of the deadlines for applying for college and that I didn't study or even go to the SATs," Vanessa indicated, meant that her plans for pursuing a college education would have to be restructured.

Starla, like Vanessa, was generally enthusiastic when she talked about school and the possibility of going to a four-year university. She had participated in several summer enrichment programs and was motivated to continue her education. But again, like many other students in the current study, by the time Starla was committed to the idea of going to college, she realized that she had lost a lot of time and traction earlier in her high school experience. "Junior year was probably the year that I took my high school serious," Starla explained. "So freshman and sophomore year I was

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slacking off a lot and just not doing what I was supposed to do. That caught up with

me my senior year, so I had so many things I had to do within that little time, to make

up and graduate," Starla continued, "and then I found out I barely made it with enough

GPA points to get out of there." After narrowly graduating from high school, Starla

enrolled in some courses at her local community college. After several years at the

community college, Starla's motivation to continue her education remained high, but

her understanding and ability to make a successful transition remain underdeveloped.

She had clearly bought into the message that college was important and worthwhile,

but the knowledge of the necessary steps to successfully transition through high school

and on to college had not been sufficiently articulated to her so that she could reach

her ultimate goal.

The lack of understanding the necessary steps to access college or university

seemed to go hand in hand with lack of academic preparation overall. Lionel was

another example of a student who fit this profile. As described previously, Lionel had

a tough time in school, to the point where he admitted to the fact that in some classes

he just stopped trying. "I just sat there and I didn't turn in all of it (assignments). I

think I turned one thing in, the whole thing. The whole year for freshman year," he

said of one of his English classes in high school. "So, that was terrible," he continued,

"and then, later on in senior year, all my friends are talking about how they got

accepted to colleges and I'm just like, 'I can't even submit anything. If I did, it

wouldn't be worth it.' Because what am I gonna tell them? I failed every year of

English, and then I failed a bunch of electives, and then I failed even more classes. So

I'm not gonna get accepted. I'd have to go to a junior college, do good in there, and then go a bigger school."

Community college is certainly a positive step for a student committed to higher education, even if several students like Starla, Vanessa and Lionel talk about community college as a last resort. It was actually one of the support persons, Asona, at his tribal enrichment program who talked to him about the possibility of community college as a vehicle into higher education and the possibility of transferring to a university at some point. Asona was a member of the same tribe as Lionel. She worked for the education youth center as a higher education consultant for tribal youth and their families. "It was (Asona's), basically, her job to convince me to go to a college. I didn't even want to go," explained Lionel, "so, she basically was suggesting junior colleges to me. Because of my track record, I couldn't get into a four year. So, I planned on going to (community college) and taking all general ed classes 'cause I don't know what my major is gonna be." Lionel's description of his path, his plans for college and his interactions with Asona demonstrates a belief that college is a worthwhile endeavor. It may be a belief held by a thin thread, but I would assert that based on his past schooling experiences, it is a belief that offers more and better benefits than the alternative – not pursuing education and settling into a life on the reservation fraught with peril. The problem is that Lionel's overall experiences added up to him being underprepared for college in time to start with some of his peers.

Another example of a student recognizing the limitations he faced owing to a lack of preparation and readiness is Leroy. Leroy shared that he started high school

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off on a relatively good foot, "my first couple years were okay," he said. At some

point, however, he was derailed, "then I decided to goof off a little bit, not take it

(school) so serious," he admitted. "But at the time, you know, I was younger and less

mature, so I didn't really understand what I was doing," shared Leroy with the benefit

of hindsight. He continued, "and right now I'm a little credit-deficient, but I'm going

to graduate." Like nearly every student in the study who talked about advice they

would give to younger students, or their younger selves, Leroy determined that he

would do things differently earlier, and attempt to stay on track academically. "So, if I

could go back, I would, you know?" he said, and "be a little more serious about my

GPA. 'Cause that's what colleges look at."

    Additionally, Leroy's school settings seemed continually to exacerbate Leroy's

challenges. As discussed previously, Leroy was one of the students receiving

instruction in a non-traditional setting. Leroy attended an alternative school and

according to him, it is a school "specifically individualized for kids who are trying to

just get a diploma," as opposed to preparing students for opportunities in higher

education. Based on previous knowledge and interactions with the school, I had an

understanding about the school program he was describing. It was a charter school

that functioned as a home-school based on the reservation. The classrooms and

teachers were housed in the same building as the youth center and enrichment program

attended by the young tribal members in the study, but it was facilitated separately by

an outside practitioner who has a background and professional business focused on

ABA (applied behavioral analysis) therapy and primarily serving adolescents with

Autism. Leroy is not autistic. "I haven't been with this school for the full four years," he shared, "I've bounced from school to school to school, because I never really had a steady home, and some schools didn't work for me." In this school setting where the focus, according to Leroy, is graduating students (a positive outcome, to be sure), but not preparing them for higher education, Leroy said, "I haven't heard anything about the A-through-G requirements at my school yet." Not only did he recognize his own shortcomings in terms of academic success as a limiting factor affecting his goals to pursue a college education, on top of that, his school only served to further perpetuate this lack of preparation.

Planning and Preparation. Many of the students in this study expressed a general desire to pursue opportunities in higher education. They indicated that these ambitions were encouraged in a variety of ways but primarily through their enrichment programs and for many, messages from their parents or other family or community members. Some recalled learning something about college in their schools but always they struggled to recall exactly what they had learned or what they knew about college preparation.

Ironically, several students spoke similarly vaguely of the college knowledge they'd learned in their enrichment programs. Esme's summary about the message she received about college from her enrichment program exemplified the broad and vague understanding that many students hold. "They talked about how the percentage of Native American students who go to college and end up dropping out because of reasons that we don't know," she explained. "I want them to higher that percentage,"

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she continued, "I want them to see that Native Americans don't drop out because of whatever reasons. I want them to see that Native Americans can do anything that any other ethnicity can do. They can go to college and they can pursue their dreams." The motivation, clearly, is there; however, the "how-to" eludes many students when it isn't explicitly defined. It is a message that many of the students are missing in their high schools. Moreover, students' experiences and commentary indicated that the enrichment programs that are providing encouragement and motivation about college with relative success are often also falling short in preparing students or providing students with the resources necessary to translate ambition into action.

John, for example, demonstrated a misunderstanding of how to reach his higher education goals. His plans included attending summer school in order to "get classes done early" with the intention that this would free up his schedule by senior year, "because I was thinking, if I get classes done early, I could maybe save some of the easier stuff for senior year. I've heard that colleges don't really care as much about your senior year." His hope was to create a path to a senior year that would be more relaxed while somehow simultaneously meeting more rigorous standards, for example, "I could get maybe some of my math classes knocked out, and get four years of math instead of just three." With an "easy" senior year and four years of math, he believes this will enable him to "focus more on college, like, getting into the college I want." While John deserves credit for thinking ahead and making a plan, it is clear that he still needs more guidance and a better understanding of how to make a competitive application. Four years of math is certainly likely to prove advantageous,

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but the idea that one's senior year is largely irrelevant is misguided; and attempts to engineer an "easy" senior year may prove to be less advantageous if the courses are less competitive.

Adolescents might be forgiven for the shortsightedness and inability to forecast long-range effects of decisions made today. Asking young students to carefully measure and weigh the impacts of multiple life choices and decisions seems almost unfair and yet a necessary aspect of transitioning into adulthood. These students are in a precarious position of having to consider the consequences of certain decisions as it affects themselves, their families and their communities. For some, like John, finding the easiest route forward makes the most sense to them. Others, as the data suggest, factor in financial security and earning potential as the primary consideration for the future. Students indicated that in direct and indirect ways, enrichment programs have instilled or encouraged a value in both the "alternative pathways to higher education" and "college means money" notions. In my own informal observations of several programs, I witnessed adults talking enthusiastically about the economic advantages of a college education and the fact that even as a student who hated school and consistently earned lower grades, they were able to overcome this disadvantage and enroll in college a little later in life. These messages are not inherently bad or even inaccurate. They do, however, run the risk of misguiding young students and potentially derailing plans for higher education, particularly when students are having a hard time understanding the value of education beyond the monetary advantages.

As discussed previously, per capita distributions on some reservations have affected the identity development of many Native American youth, whether they were from a gaming tribe or not. In addition to the identity issue, the way that Native students talk about per cap issues closely relates to their general concerns about money and financial security. Nearly all of the students in the study expressed an interest in pursuing opportunities in higher education and when pressed to discuss their motivations for these goals, many of the students indicated a belief that college meant more money. While the potential for an economic advantage may be one benefit to a college education for some, the students in this study cited economic stability as a driving motivation in their pursuit of higher education above all other motivations.

In fact, the students in the study brought up issues related to money and financial security more frequently than any other concern or issue raised. Vera, for example, indicated that a college education would afford her the opportunity for "having (my) own house, having a good job, like steady income, living comfortably... not have to worry about paying bills and stuff." Some students share these concerns because financial security is a real concern but even those whose foreseeable financial future is relatively secure carry the burden of generations of poverty and financial insecurity. Students indicted indirectly that programs are perhaps falling short in developing a deeper understanding about the benefits of a college education. In fact, student data indicated that programs could spend more time instilling in their students an understanding about the advantages of the college *experience*, beyond the diploma and earning potential. Few students expressed an understanding of the holistic

benefits of the college experience as a whole. Their narratives indicated that perhaps programs could afford to focus some of their energy on opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, meet diverse groups of people representing multiple world views and perspectives, and sharing formative life experiences with new friends, for example.

While it may be true that a college education could afford a more comfortable lifestyle, students preparing for college would be well served to develop an understanding of these or other motivating factors. Returning to the discussion about the contradiction between "traditional" or Native values and non-Native values, primarily associating higher education to a monetary value actually reflects, I would argue, a *non*-Native value. Native American students do not need a college degree to make them wealthier Americans; they need access to higher education to make them strong leaders for their tribal communities. The enrichment programs serving Native American students are in a position to take their messages of motivation to an elevated and more practical approach to college readiness.

Very closely related to the concept of economic stability is the preference expressed by many students to ultimately obtain either a "good" job or a "career" versus a "job." Almost every student in this study described a primary benefit of a college education as providing access to a "career" and not just a "job" easily aspired to by someone without a college education. I had observed in more than one of the enrichment programs where a staff person or program leader promoted this exact message to their students. Jessica, for example, is a high school student who has

worked throughout high school, earning money to help the household and to spend on herself. She described college as a benefit that allows young people to move beyond what she considers typical "youth" employment. "I think going to college is necessary because all the jobs you can get without going to college you can also get before you go to college or while you're in college," she said. "High schoolers can get jobs at Starbucks, McDonald's. Most people that don't go to college, they can get really good jobs too, but most of them end up working at those kinds of places." Again, Jessica is demonstrating another example of a limited view or understanding of the college experience.

Tangentially, it is interesting to see how Jessica talks about the possibility of getting a "good job" even without a college education. My observation here is that her experience earning money as a teenager has created a false perception about what "good" money is. During our conversation, she proudly talked about how quickly she was promoted to working at the front desk. She left me with the impression that she considered her front desk job a "good job" and would be content to work there rather than go to college, if not for the incessant messages she received about the importance of college from her mom and her community in multiple enrichment programs. It appears, for the moment, Jessica is more resigned to the possibility of going to college than she is convinced of its value.

Vera was another student who talked about the benefit of a college education in terms of creating career opportunities. Somewhere along the line she had received messages about the limited job prospects for her generation. In this case in particular,

it was her own mother who convinced her she would have frustratingly low employment opportunities, even with a college degree. Having also talked to Vera's mom, it is clear that mom shared her own disheartening challenges in the job market with daughter. And mom was as someone who had earned an advanced degree.

Vera expressed a belief in the importance of securing advantages to make her more competitive in the job market, especially in the particular field she would like to pursue. "I know for me there's not a lot of options or good jobs," said Vera, "so to say, that I felt like a college education... I know I want to study psychology... I knew, like, I wanted to have a career that had to do with psychology, so, in order to pursue that, I have to go to college for it." Vera's description of her future career goals and tentative plans for achieving them reiterate a lack of direct instruction on how to bridge the divide between ambition and achievement. She seems motivated by fear, or at least concerned about whether or not she will be able to obtain gainful employment as an adult. She expresses a general interest in a particular field, psychology, but it is apparent that she has no concrete plan or understanding of what next steps she will need to take in pursuit of this goal or how this field will be any benefit.

Throughout our interview, Marena also appeared uncertain about her plans for the future. It was clear that she had received positive messages about college from her program and other influences, and she talked about plans she had to pursue higher education. At the same time, she talked freely about her overall disdain for schools and teachers and indicated a preference to work and make money. "Me and my mom have a lot of conversations about college because sometimes I'm not very sure about

it," she explained. "The amount of time it takes to finish a degree, sometimes school seems a little bit pointless because it just takes a lot of time versus you could actually be doing stuff. I know it leads to something better. It tells me how to focus on what type of career I want to do because some of the majors don't have a lot of career choices," Marena continued, as she went on to explain her understanding of choices of majors in college and the connection to a good career. Marena talked about college in catchphrases and clichés and seemed to lack a concrete understanding of why the support people around her, including her mom and people in the enrichment programs, place a lot of value in a college education. More importantly, she demonstrated very little understanding of how she could actually achieve those goals if that was the choice she made. One moment she talked about the possibility of pursuing a medical degree, or as she put it, "I might want to go on to do doctor stuff," but then she described her post high school plans to "do some internships because I'm looking into nursing or possibly doctor depending how much I like college."

Certainly, students who are Marena's age, and even older, are still developing their areas of interest. She has been clear, however, about her overall disinterest in school in general and yet claims that if she were to go to college, she would pursue a medical degree. This contradiction seems to indicate a significant disconnect between her possible ambitions and her understanding of the commitment, time and effort required to fulfill these ambitions. To have Marena describe the process, she could decide at any given moment that she would like to be a doctor and that if college is "ok" or tolerable, then she can go ahead and do that "doctor stuff." On the other hand,

she might not. It seems evident that her experiences to date, including in the

enrichment programs, have provided enough motivation that a student like Marena

who is otherwise disinterested in school, is at least superficially open to the possibility

of entering college. It does not appear, however, that her experiences, including in the

programs, have prepared her sufficiently to pursue her highest ambitions.

"Going to college decreases any struggle that you might have," further

explained Marena when talking about the advantages of a college education. She

continued to frame the primary purpose of college as job security. Marena's

experiences, including those in her enrichment programs, home and school, have

persuaded her to consider a college education as important; but at this point, it appears

she has a narrow perception about the benefits of attending college. "It makes you

more stable. It makes you have an area that you specialize in so there'll be a job for

you. Everyone is going to have a degree in the future. You don't want to be below

that," she continued. Even though Marena is uncertain about the possibility of college

in her future and describes her attitude about it as going "back and forth" she

concludes, "overall, I think I do (want to go to college) because there's not really a job

I think I'd want that doesn't require a degree... I don't want a superficial job."

This narrow perception held by Marena may be contributing to her uncertainty

about her future in education. It is apparent that her primary concern is about what

type of job she will have in the future. Of course, this is an important consideration

and the type of work available to her in the future can certainly be related to

experience or lack thereof in higher education, but this view overlooks other factors

that might motivate her to pursue college. Motivation that hinges on one factor alone is less likely to successfully carry a student from secondary school to the university. Students who talked about multiple benefits or reasons to go college better articulated their plans and preparation than those who focused on job or economic factors alone.

Similarly to Marena, Twila primarily equated college with improved job opportunities, She stated, "I think college is very important because it's showing that you want an education, you want a career, not just a job, you want a career." Vanessa is another student who equated college with financial security based on the difference between a "job" and a "good career." "Going to college helps you get a good career," Vanessa explained, "Not just a good job, a good career and, I don't know, you get more money." When pressed to explain the difference between and job and a career, Vanessa said, "a job is just a regular job that you go to just to pay your bills and do whatever." After some consideration, she added, "a career is an actual doctor, a teacher, someone who does more than just a job, they have purpose behind it. A purpose not just for themselves, but to help other people." Although Vanessa was able to determine a deeper meaning behind certain professions that she would categorize as "career" versus "job," her primary motivation was clearly economic. She never directly connected college-going with the opportunity to help her community.

Again and again, students who had been through college preparation and enrichment programs voiced the view that the purpose of a college education was economic and "good job." Some students had influences in their lives to add to this simple frame: Stormy and Kyle, the parents of Mayra, acknowledge that the youth in

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our tribal communities are stuck on the idea of college primarily as a means to financial security; they are troubled by the trend among youth to not see the bigger picture, the growth, development and experiences afforded by college. Kyle, for example, teaches his two children that "the quality of life... comes from the inside." He added, "of course you want them to have money or family or whatever, but quality of life comes from the inside." His hope for his children is that they are able to find a true happiness that money cannot afford. According to Kyle, college is a necessity to reach this goal. Attending college is an expectation established very early in their home. The only option for their two children is which college or university they will attend. Both parents are clear, however, that they do not express this expectation in an "authoritarian" way. As dad puts it, they tell their children that college is "your opportunity to really enjoy life" and, according to mom, to "have fun". Distinctly different from school and enrichment programs, these parents frame the college experience as fun, exciting and an opportunity not to be missed. Both of their children talk positively about going to college and are well positioned to be competitive applicants. Their daughter, Maya, was already applying to several competitive universities and was excited about the transition to college. It could be perhaps that her deeper understanding about the benefits of college have led to better preparation overall.

Stormy and Kyle are highly educated parents. I asked them what they thought were some of the important distinctions between them and other Native American parents who do not emphasize higher education in quite the same way or who may

even hold a view of college similar to their children's view -- meaning that college is simply way for their children to get good jobs and establish financial security. Both Stormy and Kyle agreed that the key difference was first-hand experience themselves. But as Kyle explained, it was more than just having a parent who was college educated that made the difference. He talked about how he and his wife model behavior in line with the messages they send regarding the importance of ongoing and higher education. As a lawyer, he studies and prepares for work at the dining room table while his wife studies new techniques to improve her work as a personal trainer; at the same time and at the same table, the kids work on their homework. "We have the common experience of constant education," he says, "they (the kids) can look over and see their parents (studying)... They live the education experience through each of us."

Stormy is quick to acknowledge that there are other important factors to consider in understanding *why* some parents do not share these types of experiences, or may not have first-hand college experiences themselves: "maybe they have no time, working hard, trying to support, they don't have that opportunity. They've never experienced it," says Stormy. She suggests that the way these parents then interpret their own lack of opportunity or experience is to tell their kids simply, "you've got to do better than I have (done)." For those parents and those students, that message could easily translate into this perception that college equals money, and not much else. Both Stormy and Kyle are optimistic; however, that each small attitude change in every youth will lead to positive outcomes for their communities. As Stormy puts

it, "there's a ripple effect when parents and families gain experience in education; (it's an) experience that can change generations."

The students in this study represented a range of academic preparation and college readiness. Some students talked about attending a community college as part of their plan to eventually transfer to a four-year university and complete a Bachelor's degree. Other students talked about their plans to enroll in a four-year university directly after high school. The interesting distinction here was not in the different routes that students talked about, but rather the difference in students' motivations for pursuing opportunities in higher education. With a broader view of the advantages of college to the individual and the community, students could be better able to access the skills and information necessary for college readiness.

Summary

There are myriad factors that influence students' experiences and help to shape or frame their views on education and college planning and preparation. The students in this study identified many complexities in their lives and schooling experiences that have to be addressed in order to better understand the processes of college readiness. Programs had become key places where students navigated these experiences. First, schooling experiences for most had been largely negative (theme one); students said their enrichment programs had helped them critically analyze and weather those experiences by teaching them about cultural truths. Second, these students engaged in the various cultural enrichment programs indicated the positive role and influence that these programs strive to provide. Although not all of the programs were specifically

designed to promote higher education, they were often well positioned to support students through providing space for them to process and respond to life challenges. Third, however, the combination of negative schooling experiences and somewhat vague support on actual precollege preparation led to highly motivated students who were inadequately prepared to pursue their ambitions within a timeframe seamlessly linking high school to college.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Purpose of the Study and Revisiting Research Questions

Central to the undertaking of this research was the desire to better understand how to support Native American students' journeys into higher education. The premise of this question was based on a notion that tribes require educated citizens to successfully move forward as sovereign, self-reliant and thriving nations. As our tribal leaders become our tribal elders and our tribal elders join our ancestors, it is imperative that today's youth are prepared to assume leadership roles within the tribe and that they are able to successfully navigate and negotiate with the non-Native world we simultaneously inhabit.

It is clear from student narratives that schools in this country have been historically treacherous for Native American people and in many ways continue to be threatening, dangerous places for the youth. Nevertheless, narratives also indicated that education is highly valued in American Indian communities. In spite of negative schooling experiences throughout the generations, there persists a common shared value that education is important to Native American people. Student and staff narratives made clear that not all of the enrichment programs attended by students participating in the current research were centered on higher education, though they all emphasized the importance of education to our communities. There are a wide variety of needs and concerns in Native American communities and students in this study talked about the many influences in their lives, including enrichment programs, which addressed these needs in multiple ways. Students indicated that in some way, all of

the programs promoted the importance of academic success and encouraged their youth to participate in a variety of educational opportunities available to them, especially those designed specifically for Native American students. Parents, as revealed secondarily in the current research, also emphasize the importance of education for their children. Even those parents interviewed who had never, for whatever reason, pursued higher education and those who shared details about their negative experiences in school said they wanted for their children to do well in school and to consider college in their future. This is all to demonstrate that regardless of the negative statistics or teacher attitudes, education and the pursuit of a college degree were generally important to the Native American families and communities in this study. This was true even for families who might be struggling to overcome certain social and historical challenges affecting reservation life and Urban Native American communities.

The literature reviewed also demonstrated that education is necessary and valued in Native American communities. Guillory and Wolverton (2008), for example, talked about the influence of family expectations to succeed academically as a contributing factor to persistence. Knowing that there persists a disconnect between the ambition and the reality of thriving at the college and university level, as described in several of the studies included in the literature review (Barnhardt, 1994; Brayboy, 2009; Huffman, 2001; Weaver, 2015), makes it a prudent undertaking to examine *how* Native American students are preparing for college and how they are being encouraged and supported in their communities. The underlying predicament is

how to bridge ambition and execution – how to best support Native American students

so that there are more students enrolling and graduating from an institution of higher

education. The research questions guiding the current study were developed and

intended to address this very quandary. Interview questions were crafted to encourage

participants to think about and discuss the experiences that shape attitudes about

education and share their thoughts about going to college. The research questions

guiding this study were:

- What experiences do Native American students connected to culturally engaged programming talk about as important to their goals in higher education?
- Which precollege experiences do these students/families identify as critical to successful preparation in order to apply and enroll at a college or university?
- How, according to both students and adults, do adults in a Native-centered, culturally engaged enrichment program talk about and support student success?

This study was purposefully designed to target the experiences of Native American

students who had not yet entered college. The experiences of Native American

students currently in college are certainly important, as are the perspectives of Native

American college graduates. Both of these populations have insights into what it takes

to be a successful Native American college student, and both populations benefit from

the hindsight of what type of pre-college experiences were meaningful and impactful

on their pathway to higher education. However, in my literature review and my

experience in the field of Indian Education, by comparison, there is considerably more

research focused on Native American students who are college aged versus pre-

college. That is why I chose to focus the aim of this study on examining pre-college

students. The fact that there are so few Natives in college in the first place indicates a need to focus on getting them in to college first.

As previously discussed, the original direction of the research was to develop a better understanding of how cultural enrichment programs supported these efforts, through listening to the narratives of students enrolled in these programs. Throughout the study, however, students revealed much more about their personal and collective social and academic needs and the challenges they faced in school. The enrichment programs, as described by the students, provided meaningful support in navigating the variety of school-based and community issues described by students.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

After discussions with students, family members and program leaders, a very complex picture reflecting multiple intersections of history, pedagogy, and community began to emerge. There is no way to disconnect the history of Indian Education, the contemporary experiences of Native American students, and students' college preparation. They are intertwined in students' daily educational and program experiences. Therefore, the resulting findings in the current study address a range of issues all impacting the college readiness of Native American students.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it was useful to organize the issues identified by participants into different themes. The data yielded three overarching themes: Native American Experiences in K-12 schools, Influences of Native-centered, Culturally Engaged Enrichment Programs, and Students' Growing Understanding of College Readiness. The first theme described the impact, on students, of the

interactions between Native American students and teachers particularly in the schools – and how students said programs often helped them critically analyze and respond to these interactions. The second theme explored additional ways that the enrichment programs influenced students' experiences and perceptions of self and community, generally related to success in school and perceptions about college exploration. The final theme underscored the reality of students' varying degrees of readiness and highlighted opportunities for development and growth.

In summary, this research revealed that the students involved in culturally centered enrichment programs were generally motivated to pursue opportunities in higher education. Students expressed different levels of interest, but all of the students indicated that, in general, they were college bound. Additionally, this study revealed that to students, the enrichment programs played an important role in the lives of these Native American youth, providing structure, support and encouragement in students' lives even as many experienced difficulties both at school and in communities. The leaders and staff of these programs interviewed (and as described by students) were intentional in their support of education and encouragement of pursuing opportunities in higher education. However, many of the students finally expressed a concern that their pursuits and interest in college had come "too late" to have the direct high school to college or university experience that they envisioned. Other students demonstrated a level of understanding about college readiness and preparation that did not necessarily match their high level of motivation.

These data also reveal the unavoidable reality that generations of Native American students have suffered greatly in American educational institutions and continue to do so. Intergenerational, historical trauma (Evans-Campbell, 2008) refers to the lingering effects of trauma (i.e. the boarding school experience in Indian Education) inflicted on groups of people that persists in the hearts and D.N.A. of their descendants, like the students who participated in this current study. Navigating one's own negative experiences while under the burden of historical trauma can create additional adversity for students who are already disadvantaged in many ways. However, students indicated that cultural enrichment programs provided tools and knowledge to critically examine their schooling experiences. Time and again students demonstrated a sense of self-efficacy in their ability to call out instances of prejudice or other problematic issues in the school; they often linked this understanding to their program experiences. Ultimately, this is a skill that could serve students well, not only as they navigate through different systems of education but also as they transition into adulthood. These skills will also serve them well should they decide to become tribal leaders.

The data here revealed a similarity between the experiences of the young Native students in the current study and the original data leading to the theoretical framework of Huffman's Transculturation Theory and Brayboy's TribalCrit Theory, as discussed in Chapter 1. The students in the current study had been involved in cultural enrichment programs that aligned with the students in Huffman's study who had maintained strong cultural ties and were therefore better able to persist in higher

education. The students here experienced varying levels of academic success, yet they were all willing to talk about and consider pursuing opportunities in college and university. In this sense, they are persisting through their K-12 experiences, fueled in part by a cultural awareness of their own experience.

The programs themselves, as discussed by the students, parents and program directors, also seemed to follow the major tenets of Brayboy's TribalCrit framework. In particular, Tenet 5 states "the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an indigenous lens." Student narratives indicated that the programs helped to some extent to frame a critical perspective about the curriculum they were being taught in school – supporting the position that the programs operated under TribalCrit's Tenet 5. Furthermore, students indicated that these programs sought to instill traditional and cultural knowledge as fundamental to the education of tribal youth and also to serve as a protective factor against negative experiences in school. These values reflect Tenet 7, which states "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."

Students' insights were seemingly not limited to their program experiences: many of the students have been able to thoughtfully reflect on their experiences and with the advantage of hindsight, they better understand how and when their path was deterred. Other students have borne witness to activities in their homes and communities that curtail ambitions and quell talents of family and friends, limiting

opportunities to pursue higher education. Both of these experiences have served as a sort of "Cautionary Tale" that students either share with other Native youth or/and keep for themselves to maintain focus and determination. At least according to the students in this study, who compared themselves regularly to students not involved in such programs, many of the students supported in the culturally centered enrichment programs are able to resist or overcome some of the common threats that other youth who are not involved in such programs can succumb to.

This was a study of students enrolled in programs, not a direct study of the programs themselves in real time. Future exploration into the direct influence and impact of the cultural centered enrichment programs may reveal a clearer understanding of how these programs are able to support their students. But it is clear enough from the current research that to students, these programs do play an important role in the lives of the Native youth taking advantage of them. Whether a dance class, an after-school tutoring center or a summer immersion experience, students said all of these programs are serving needs unique to Native American youth. This is certainly not to imply that other enrichment programs could not benefit Native youth. Many Native American youth are involved in outside activities, including sports, clubs, summer camps and more that also support Native youth development. But, students made clear that the culturally centered enrichment programs are engineered to support Native American identity, through explicitly Native American experiences in school and community. These programs seem to serve as unofficial intermediaries between schools and Native communities and Native families.

These types of programs are created by local tribal or intertribal communities specifically to address identified needs in the community. As indicated previously, to students, program staff or other experiences often counter the negative messages or experiences occurring in the school. This also, of course, leads one to question what role or responsibility the schools themselves have to address the unique needs of Native American students. If schools have a general responsibility for the overall education and welfare for all their students, how are they being held accountable when they fail Native American youth? Furthermore, how do we support students who are not participating in these types of programs and are experiencing similar negative engagements in their school? These are important questions to consider once we have an understanding that these programs appear helpful in supporting Native American student development by serving an important role countering some of the negative experiences in school.

These data also indicate opportunities for growth within the enrichment programs and also in the schools. It is not the definitive responsibility of these programs to provide college readiness education for their students. But the communities recognize that the schools are doing a poor job of preparing our Native American youth for higher education and are in a position to provide a better, more culturally responsive approach. The responsibility does not lie solely on these types of enrichment programs; however, they are in a unique position to not only help Native American students better understand how to prepare for and successfully apply to

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opportunities in higher education, but also to help students understand the greater

purpose for setting these goals in the first place.

Further, students indicated that the programs did not and could not accomplish

all necessary supports: it is clear that even for many students in these programs, their

understanding about the benefits of a college education is relatively limited. As we

see in this study, students most often associated the purpose of going to college with

access to more financial security, based on the perception that a college degree leads

to a "career" rather than a "job". A "career," in the minds of the students, means more

meaningful, purposeful work and especially, a higher income. While these perceived

advantages might hold some merit, they are not the only, nor, I assert, the primary

purpose of a college education. The communities' collective push to increase the

number of Native American students in college and to encourage their students to seek

out these opportunities is not to ensure independent financial freedom or solely

"careers." Instead, I would argue, based on my interactions in the community and my

familiarity with the various programs and their staff and leadership, that the

communities' intentions are to improve the lives of the community as a whole.

Indeed, providing for the welfare of the collective is a traditional frame for Native

American tribes. Furthermore, it is evident that the schools attend by Native

American youth foster a far more individualized model of success. Therefore,

although it is not the express responsibility of these programs to provide the necessary

support for the Native youth, perhaps it could be. These enrichment programs have an

opportunity to fill in gaps left by the schools by intentionally front loading students

with the information and skills necessary to adequately, and competitively, prepare for college.

Implications for Research

The current study revealed several opportunities for additional research. From the initial stages of the study it was clear that the research could expand into multiple meaningful directions. As revealed by the interviews with all participants, the issues affecting Native American education are as diverse and complex as the individual students themselves. Narrowing in and defining the research questions meant that other questions and issues would have to be shelved for another time.

In this study, we learned about the students' perceptions of their programs but not necessarily the detailed activities of the programs themselves. A complementary study of the programs themselves that seeks a better understanding of their goals related to higher education and their strategies for achieving those goals would be beneficial to understanding the dynamic between the aims of the programs and the perceived benefit to the students. Some programs may perform regular self-evaluations or have overarching parent programs that require regular reporting. However, a study that intentionally evaluates and compares these cultural enrichment programs may have additional benefits by suggesting best practices for nurturing an environment that supports both a college-going mindset and literal preparation, in addition to identity development supports.

In this study, experiences in school and school environments were revealed to play an important role in framing students' perceptions about their participation in

higher education. Examining the role of schools and educators themselves in developing Native American students who are college ready would be another area for further research. As discussed in the introduction to this study, considerable work has been done examining the experiences and school environments of Native American students in college and university. Less research has been undertaken to examine teachers' role in the types of K12 experiences described by the students in this current study. The area in Southern California where the current research was conducted has several schools with higher than average numbers of Native American students. Further research in these schools, that takes into account the experiences described by the students in this study but further delves into schools' and educators' responses to students from staff perspectives, could also contribute to understanding how to support Native American students develop and sustain a college-going frame of mind.

Finally, I contend that a follow-up study of the student participants would expand the scope of the current research and contribute to an understanding of supporting Native American students. A follow-up of the students in the next five years, for example, would reveal which of the students were able to successfully transition from an expressed desire to pursue higher education to actual enrollment and persistence in college or university. Students would also have new perspectives on the factors that influenced their life choices and opportunities. It would be interesting to see in what way students remained involved in the cultural enrichment programs that they all purported to value. Or, if students were not involved in the programs specifically, it would be interesting to see how involved in their own culture

or tribal community they remain, and how that involvement influences their life choices. This type of study would provide valuable insight into the longevity of program experiences.

These are just three examples of different directions the research could follow. In this study, we have discussed multiple issues that impact Native American students, including teacher interactions, curriculum, impact of historical legacies, money and per cap, cultural responsibility, reservation life and more. All of these issues are important and significant in the lives of these young people and all of these issues merit further inquiry to help develop an understanding of how to best support Native American students.

Implications for Practice

The findings in the study revealed that there are many factors that contribute to Native American students' thinking about college. Although this study specifically set out to better understand the experience in/influences of cultural enrichment programs as shared in student narratives, students revealed that there many other significant factors that shaped their schooling experiences and therefore, their thoughts about higher education. Moreover, it became clear that in spite of positive intentions, the enrichment programs – and the schools themselves for that matter – are not adequately preparing many students to actually transition, prepared and accepted, into colleges and universities. As previously described, further research would expand the understanding of how best to support these students, but even with the findings of this

study alone, we can make early suggestions for practice that may begin to help improve outcomes and experiences for Native American students.

First, all the enrichment programs, to varying degrees, purport to encourage a college-going environment. Student narratives suggested that the programs could perhaps be more forthright about their hopes and motivations for the youth involved in their programs. Intentionally creating a college bound environment could include time and space in the program dedicated to teaching specific strategies that bolster college readiness. For example, programs could add or increase the number of information sessions geared towards understanding the necessary course work and testing requirements necessary to apply to the university. They could dedicate staff to monitoring students' academic progress. They could arrange visits with current Native American college students or alumni and visits to local campuses as a way to increase motivation and create a sense of belonging in the world of academia. They could host regular sessions on the college application process and navigating financial aid. Currently, according to the narratives studied, it seems that much of what students are receiving from the majority of these programs is generic "college" encouragement and a basic message that going to college is important not only for the individual students but for our tribal communities as a whole. If this is in fact the case, programs could expand on this messaging by creating a curriculum that specifically outlines the steps necessary to access a college education and dedicates time to walking students through the program. These steps could address the inevitable and occasional missteps on this path so that students understand that there

are multiple ways to achieve these goals. For example, it would be important to acknowledge the fact that sometimes a student will receive a less than anticipated or hoped for grade in an important college preparation course. Students need to understand that failing a course does not exclude them from opportunities in higher education and specifically, they need to understand how to correct course after a misstep like this. That may mean repeating the course in summer school or even at a local community college. The important message being that there is no one right way into higher education, that there are, in fact, multiple pathways. It is not enough to expose students to the idea of college or the general process of applying; providing very specific counseling and guidance to students all the way along the K12 path will be absolutely necessary to maintain a positive trajectory towards higher education. This more specific type of precollege counseling and guidance provided by these programs will have to cover a wide array of issues. Like other adolescents, Native American high school students can be derailed or distracted by peers, home life or boredom, not to mention the academic challenges they face. It would be wise for these programs to prepare to address all of these concerns.

It may not be in the purview of every program to provide these types of resources. In fact, in may not be a primary function or goal of every Native American enrichment program to support these goals. That is understandable and acceptable. However, because students made clear that each of these programs plays an important role in the lives of these young people, it could be beneficial – and manageable – for each of them to support students in this way if they cooperated with other programs

that could provide these resources to students. Program leaders and staff could

become familiar with other programs that focus on college readiness and preparation

and partner with them to bring these resources to their programs and their students. It

would not have to be an everyday occurrence to be meaningful, but collaboration

would demonstrate to students that the entire community supports their education and

their pursuit of college.

Second, if enrichment programs are unclear about how to promote a concrete

college going environment or unsure about the processes themselves, one strategy that

could prove beneficial would be to partner with local colleges and universities who

can provide expert guidance in this area. Sometimes a college or university campus

will have an office dedicated to supporting Native American students. Other times,

there may be an individual on campus who is directly connected to the Native

American community.   Presumably, these offices and individuals would have the

cultural awareness and sensitivity to best work with Native American students.

Additionally, these offices would have access to additional resources on campus, such

as the Admissions and Financial Aid offices, and have the ability to connect these

resources to the students. Developing a relationship between the enrichment program

and the college or university could also present an opportunity for students to visit and

tour a local college campus. These types of visits are important to help students

envision themselves as students on a college campus, literally and theoretically. Many

Native American students are also first-generation college students. As Engle (2007)

notes, "First-generation students need considerable support as they make the complex

academic, social, and cultural transitions to college. They need validation that they are not only capable of succeeding in college, but that they belong on campus as well" (p. 39). This need for validation and a sense of belonging is true for Native American students as well, many of who would be first generation college students as well. She continues, "early support through bridge and orientation programs can socialize first generation students to the expectations of the academic environment" (p. 39). While Native American students could also take advantage of these types of bridge and orientation programs, a college tour or visit with a group of Native American peers as part of their enrichment program can serve as an early support mechanism as well.

A third application of the findings in the current research would be to work towards bridging the gap between Native American communities and the schools. There are some programs that currently exist to foster these relationships. For example, Title VI - Indian Education exists in some of the schools represented in the current study. Title VI serves multiple purposes; it provides federally funded grant money to public schools to support special programs specifically for Native American students. Although there is typically a parent advisory component, the decisions are ultimately made by the school district. Based on the current research, it could make sense to provide opportunities for these culturally grounded enrichment programs to partner with local schools to provide training or professional development focused on best practices for serving Native American students, families and communities. The challenge they may face is whether or not schools, districts and administrators would value their expertise and their contributions. Even so, these programs know their

students best and could persist in offering schools in-service trainings that could nurture open communication between these two worlds that both help shape Native American student development.

Based on the data shown here, some enrichment programs that aim to work with school districts will inevitably meet up against resistance. That leads me to my fourth consideration for practice. This consideration is not necessarily action oriented but rather an exercise in self-awareness for the enrichment programs to develop an understanding of the areas in which they have control and the areas in which they do not. That is to say that without the cooperation of the school itself, these enrichment programs may have little direct influence over the experiences at school. However, this does not mean that the program cannot continue to have a meaningful influence in the students' lives. The student narratives studied made clear that the program leaders and staff have an opportunity to develop a deep understanding about the issues at school – as they often already do -- and often make concerted efforts to address or counter these experiences. Overall, enrichment programs could begin to see themselves as a linchpin part of the education system and strive to make meaningful connections between their work and the work of the school.

Final Thoughts

At this point, it is necessary to take a step back from the intricacies of the current research in order to analyze the purpose, the process and the findings of this project into a real-world context. As a Native American scholar, researcher and educator, I find it necessary to smudge the line between research and practice. For

indigenous people conducting indigenous research, it is critical we reflect on how our work is situated within our communities using our lived experiences in concert with the research. Though this practice may be considered superfluous or thought to have no place in an academic pursuit, it is one essential aspect that distinguishes indigenous work. As conveyed by Linda Smith (2013) in her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, "while researchers are trained to conform to the models provided for them, indigenous researchers have to meet these criteria as well as indigenous criteria..." (p. 235).

Throughout the dissertation process I have felt the familiar discomfort of forcing my rounded existence and experience into the rigidly square box of academic research. I have modified my language, censored my ideas and suppressed my instincts because of my determination to complete this trial. As Smith (2013) declares, "although our communities have a critical perspective of universities and what they represent, at the same time these same communities want their members to gain Western educations and high-level qualifications. But they do not want this to be achieved at the cost of destroying people's indigenous identities, their languages, values and practices" (p. 226). So, here in the last few paragraphs, I share my thoughts about the research and direction of our communities, unrestricted by the limitations of colonial methodologies, in my own voice, based on my own experiences and with absolute prejudice and passion...

One of the underlying assumptions in this research is the idea that for Native American students, the benefit of a college education outweighs the potential risks. In

Native American communities there is a persistent voice in the conversation that cautions "not all students will go to college" or "college isn't right for everyone." These sentiments are not inherently flawed -- of course not all Native American students will choose to pursue a college education--but the sentiments are in some ways inherently self-defeating. What if we started talking to our Native youth with language like, "when you go to college..." rather than "you can go to college, but it's ok if you don't, college isn't for everybody..."? There is never a question about whether or not our youth will be attending high school, even though some students never make it to high school or never graduate and others find high school to not be a good fit and graduate from an alternative school or complete a G.E.D. instead. We understand that some students will take alternative paths and in spite of the fact that we want all of our students to attend and graduate high school, we continue to love and support the students who do not without coddling our middle school students assuring them that "high school might not be for everyone."

Certainly, there are considerable differences between college and high school, but given the right opportunities and support mechanisms, our students are equally capable of successfully navigating both. I would even argue that the comparative freedom and flexibility of a college setting might well be a better fit for someone who found their high school to be an oppressive environment. We, our Native American communities can condition our students to view higher education as an assumed and even liberating next step in their educational paths. We can support the college going endeavors of all our students without providing a disservice to the students who do not

attend college or high school. And yes, the university can be a dangerous place for Native American students. Even the most academically prepared and institutionally acclimated among us will face fear, doubt and discrimination. But avoiding this discomfort in college will not shelter anyone from the fear, doubt and discrimination that must be confronted in the "real world". If anything, it can provide tools and strategies to handle these challenges in other situations and environments.

From all areas of the community, finally, we need to be working to dismantle the common misperception that "Native American" and "Academic" are mutually exclusive markers. Culturally centered enrichment programs are an excellent place to start because as these narratives show, they already have the attention of many of our youth. Students should not have to come home from college only to be berated for leaving home in the first place. Some of the older participants in this study admitted that they blindly followed their Native peers on a path of disengagement from school because that was how the Indian students "did" school. To be engaged in your education, to try hard in school, could potentially threaten your Native American identity. This is an example of the defeatist thinking that the community together needs to untangle; the cultural enrichment programs are already on this path. Together, students, families, tribal governments and cultural enrichment programs can lead this change.

Appendix I: Outreach Flyer.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Let your voice be heard.

American Indian graduate student at UC San Diego looking for Native youth (ages 13-25) and Native parents/guardians to participate in dissertation research study on American Indian education.

Participation includes a 1:1 interview (approx. 45 mins.); volunteer youth will receive a $5 Starbucks gift card, parent/guardian participants will receive $25 Walmart gift card.

Volunteers (youth) must be involved in or have participated in a Native-centered enrichment program (ex. Indian ed. Center, Native focused summer program, Title VII/JOM programs).

For more information or to schedule an interview please contact:

Elena Hood
kiichapoloov@gmail.com
(760) 580-2386

*Confidentiality and participant safety is a number one priority. All interview responses will be kept confidential, no names or other personally identifiable information will be shared. Questions and/or concerns can be directed to Elena Hood.

ASSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT (AGES 13-17)
Education Studies – University of California, San Diego

Experiences and Practices of College Bound Native American Youth
Principle Investigator: Elena Hood

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate at UC San Diego, is conducting a research study to find out more about how Native American students think about and plan for college. You have been asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a Native American youth participating in a Native American academic enrichment or tutoring program. There will be approximately 30 participants in this study.

The purpose of this study is to talk to Native youth directly, as well as their supporters, to learn more about their high school experiences and non-academic interests to try to understand how these practices might support students who want to pursue a college education. Learning more about these experiences and interests might help programs, colleges, and communities who are interested in supporting Native American youth in a variety of ways, including college readiness.

If you agree to be in this study, the following will happen to you:
- You will be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview in which you will be asked questions about your high school experiences and outside interests and activites. This interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 45 minutes. Again, no real names will be used in any writing.
- Your family (i.e. parents or guardians) may be asked to participate in an interview (approximately 60 minutes) at which you may or may not be present, depending on your parent/guardian preference. Again, no real names will be used in any writing.

Your involvement will end when your interview is complete. The study overall will take me about four to six months, depending on scheduling, but you will only be asked to participate in the interview portion.

Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. To make sure that does not happen, research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and will be stored in password-protected files on password-protected computers. You will be given a coded name to be used in place of your name in interviews and notes. A list linking participant names to pseudonyms will be kept in a separate hard drive, under lock and key in my home, accessible only to me. Interview audio-recordings will be transcribed and identifying information will be removed. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board. In the unanticipated event that information from this research study is published, your name and any other identifying information will not be used in any publication.

2. A potential exists for feeling boredom, fatigue, or minimal emotional stress during interviews. To minimize this risk, the interview questions have been pilot tested and reviesed based on feedback from my faculty advisers and fellow graduate students, as well as pilot study participants. You are free to skip any question(s) that you do not feel comfortable answering or to have a portion of the audio-recording deleted.

We will not tell anyone what you tell us without your permission unless there is something that could be dangerous to you or someone else. If you tell us that someone is or has been hurting you, we have to tell that to people who are responsible for protecting children so they can make sure you are safe. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

The alternatives to participation in this study are to not participate.

There will not be any direct benefit to you from participating this study. The investigator, however, may learn more about Native youth college preparation and society, in particular, Native communities and others interested in supporting Indian education, may benefit from this knowledge.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate at all. You may withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide that you no longer wish to continue in this study, you will be required to notify the investigator.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect you wanting to continue.

The investigator may remove you from the study without your consent if the investigator feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given you by the study personnel.

Students who agree to participate in this study will be given a $5.00 Starbucks gift card. Families who agree to participate in the parent/family interview will be given (1) $25.00 gift card to Walmart.

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate and Principal Investigator, has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Elena Hood at (760) 580-2386. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 657-5100 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

By signing below you indicate that you have received a copy of this assent document and that you agree to participate.

_____
Subject's Name

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Date

Appendix III: Parent Consent Form

PARENT CONSENT FOR CHILD TO ACT AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT
Education Studies – University of California, San Diego

Experiences and Practices of College Bound Native American Youth
Principle Investigator: Elena Hood

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate, at UC San Diego is conducting a research study to find out more about how Native American students think about and plan for college. Your child has been asked to participate in this study because they have been identified as a Native American youth participating in a Native American academic enrichment or tutoring. There will be approximately 30 participants in this study.

The purpose of this study is to talk to Native youth directly, as well as their supporters, to learn more about their high school experiences and non-academic interests to try to understand how these practices might support students who want to pursue a college education. Learning more about these experiences and interests might help programs, colleges, and communities who are interested in supporting Native American youth in a variety of ways, including college readiness.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, the following will happen to your child:
- Your child will be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview in which they will be asked questions about their high school experiences and outside interests and activites. This interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 45 minutes. No real names will be used in any writing.

Your child's involvement will end when their interview is complete. The study overall will take about four to six months, depending on scheduling, but your child will only be asked to participate in the interview portion. Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. To make sure that does not happen, research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and will be stored in password-protected files on password-protected computers. Participants will be given a coded name to be used in place of name in interviews and notes. A list linking participant names to pseudonyms will be kept in a separate hard drive, under lock and key in my home, accessible only to me. Interview audio-recordings will be transcribed and identifying information will be removed. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board. In the unanticipated event that information from this research study is published, your child's name and any other identifying information will not be used in any publication.
2. A potential exists for feeling boredom, fatigue, or minimal emotional stress during interviews. To minimize this risk, the interview questions have been pilot tested and reviesed based on feedback from my faculty advisers and fellow graduate students, as well as pilot study participants. Your child is free to skip any question(s) that they do not feel comfortable answering or to have a portion of the audio-recording deleted.

We may need to report information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If the research investigator has or is given such information, she may report such information to the appropriate authorities. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

The alternatives to participation in this study are to not participate. There will not be any direct benefit to your child from participating this study. The investigator, however, may learn more about Native youth college preparation and society, in particular, Native communities and others interested in supporting Indian education, may benefit from this knowledge.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate at all. You may withdraw your child or refuse to allow your child to answer specific questions in an interview or on a questionnaire at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are entitled. If you decide that you no longer wish your child to continue in this study, you will be required to notify the investigator. You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect you wanting to continue.

The research investigator may remove your child from the study without your consent if the investigator feels it is in your child's best interest or the best interest of the study. Your child may also be withdrawn from the study if you or your child do not follow the instructions given you or your child by the study personnel.

Students who agree to participate in focus groups will be given a $5.00 Starbucks gift card. Families who agree to participate in the family interview will be given (1) $25.00 gift card to Walmart. There will be no cost to you or your child for participating in this study. If your child is injured as a direct result of participation in this research, the University of California will provide any medical care your child needs to treat those injuries. The University will not provide any other form of compensation to you if your child is injured. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 657-5100 for more information about this, to inquire about your child's rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate and Principal Investigator, has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Elena Hood at (760) 580-2386. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 657-5100 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems   By signing below you indicate that you have received a copy of this consent document and that you agree to allow your child to participate.

_____
Child's Name

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian signature   Date

CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT
Education Studies – University of California, San Diego

Experiences and Practices of College Bound Native American Youth
Principle Investigator: Elena Hood

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate, at UC San Diego is conducting a research study to find out more about how Native American students think about and plan for college. You have been asked to participate in this study because you or your child are or were a participant in a Native American academic enrichment or tutoring program. There will be approximately 30 participants in this study.

The purpose of this study is to talk to Native youth directly, as well as their supporters, to learn more about their high school experiences and non-academic interests to try to understand how these practices might support students who want to pursue a college education. Learning more about these experiences and interests might help programs, colleges, and communities who are interested in supporting Native American youth in a variety of ways, including college readiness.

If you agree to be in this study, the following will happen to you:
- You will be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview in which you will be asked questions about your familiarity and/or your thoughts regarding experiences and practices of college bound Native American youth. This interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately 45 minutes. No real names will be used in any writing.

Your involvement will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will end when your interview is complete. The study overall will take me about four to six months, depending on scheduling, but your involvement will only include one interview. Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. To make sure that does not happen, research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and will be stored in password-protected files on password-protected computers. Participants will be given a coded name to be used in place of name in interviews and notes. A list linking participant names to pseudonyms will be kept in a separate hard drive, under lock and key in my home, accessible only to me. Interview audio-recordings will be transcribed and identifying information will be removed. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board. In the unanticipated event that information from this research study is published, your name and any other identifying information will not be used in any publication.

2. A potential exists for feeling boredom, fatigue, or minimal emotional stress during interviews. To minimize this risk, the interview questions have been pilot tested and revised based on feedback from my faculty advisers and fellow graduate students, as well as pilot study participants. You are free to skip any question(s) that you do not feel comfortable answering or to have a portion of the audio-recording deleted.

The alternatives to participation in this study are to not participate. There will not be any direct benefit to you from participating this study. The investigator, however, may learn more about Native youth college preparation. Also, society, in particular, Native communities and others interested in supporting Indian education, may benefit from this knowledge. Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate at all. You may withdraw or refuse to answer specific interview questions at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide that you no longer wish to continue in this study, you will be required to notify the investigator. You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect you wanting to continue. The research investigator may remove you from the study without your consent if the investigator feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given to you by the study personnel. You will be compensated with a $5 gift card to Starbucks for your participation in the study interview. There will be no cost to you for participating in this study.   If you are injured as a direct result of participation in this research, the University of California will provide any medical care you needs to treat those injuries. The University will not provide any other form of compensation to you if you are injured. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 657-5100 for more information about this, to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Elena Hood, Ed.D. candidate and Principal Investigator, has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Elena Hood at (760) 580-2386. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 657-5100 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems

By signing below you indicate that you have received a copy of this consent document and that you agree to participate.

_____
Participant's Name

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix V: Student Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol
45 minute Student Interview

1. I'd like to start by asking - what do you think about when you hear the term, college bound? What do you think it means and who do you think it describes?
2. Some students think of themselves as college bound and some don't. What about you – would you describe yourself as college bound? Can you tell me a story about when you started to think of yourself as college bound (or not)?
3. What about your friends – do you think they would describe themselves as college bound? Why/why not?
4. Where do you imagine yourself in 5-10 years? Can you tell about something that you are doing right now that will help you reach your goal(s)?
5. Tell me about some of the classes you are taking.
6. Tell me about a memorable experience you've had with a teacher or a counselor or another adult in a similar role.
7. Realizing that teachers don't necessarily know everything about their students – what do you wish your teachers knew or understood about you?
8. Tell me about some of the activities you are involved with at school. In the community.
9. What has been one of most challenging classes you've taken so far? What was challenging about this class and how did you handle the challenges?
10. What about outside of school? Talk to me about other challenges you've faced - how did you handle these?
11. Tell be about an accomplishment that made you feel particularly proud.
12. Describe a typical school day – from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep.
13. Describe a typical weekend day – from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep.
14. What is a typical summer like for you?
15. Some people think going to college is important, others don't necessarily agree. What do you think?
16. Do you think education is an important priority to your tribe? Why/why not? How do you know?
17. Can you tell me about someone you admire or look up to? What is it about this person that you find admirable?
18. What advice would you give to another Native student starting out in high school about how to succeed in school?

Appendix VI: Parent Interview Protocol

Parent/Guardian Interview Protocol
45-60 minutes

1. I'd like to start by asking a little about your family – how long have you lived (in this town)? Have you ever lived anywhere else?
2. What is your tribal affiliation? I've heard of Native people referring to themselves in other ways; for example, Urban, Rez or Traditional – what are your thoughts about these labels?
3. Let's talk a little bit about school now. Can you tell me about a memorable experience you had in school?
4. (In terms of schooling) how are things different for your son/daughter compared to when you were in school? Are there some things that never change? Tell me about that.
5. People sometimes have a particular teacher that stands out in their memory – can you tell me about one of your teachers that really made an impression (good or bad) on you?
6. Realizing that teachers don't necessarily know everything about their students – what do you wish your child's teachers knew or understood about him/her?
7. Tell me about a time when you were especially proud of your son/daughter.
8. Tell me about one of your most recent (or memorable) interactions with someone from your son/daughter's school.
9. Parents/families have lots of different dreams for their children. Can you tell me about some of the hopes you have for your son/daughter?
10. What would you say to your son/daughter if they came to you and said they wanted to go to college? What if it was a college far away?
11. Are there any questions you were hoping we would address (or thinking I might ask) that haven't been asked yet? Tell me about that.

Appendix VII: Program Director Interview Protocol

Program Director Interview Protocol
45-60 minutes

1. Tell me about something about this program that you are most proud of?
2. I've done some reading about the history of your program, but I would like to hear from you, what would say was the impetus behind this program?
3. Tell me about the evolution of your program.
4. I've heard of Native people referring to themselves in other ways; for example, Urban, Rez or Traditional – what are your thoughts about these labels?
5. Let's talk a little bit about school now. Can you tell me about a memorable experience you had in school?
6. (In terms of schooling) how are things different for your students compared to when you were in school? Are there some things that never change? Tell me about that.
7. People sometimes have a particular teacher that stands out in their memory – can you tell me about one of your teachers that really made an impression (good or bad) on you?
8. Realizing that teachers don't necessarily know everything about their students – what do you wish your students' teachers knew or understood about them?
9. Tell me about a time when you were especially proud of one of your students.
10. Communities have lots of different dreams for their children. Can you tell me about some of the hopes you have for the students in your program?
11. Are there any questions you were hoping we would address (or thinking I might ask) that haven't been asked yet? Tell me about that.

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