

DISSERTATION

CRITICAL NARRATIVES OF MULTIETHNIC WOMEN FOCUSING ON THEIR
INDIGENOUS ETHNICITY: NAVIGATING THE
SCHOOLING SYSTEM FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD
THROUGH MASTER'S AND BEYOND

Submitted by

Phyllis Chacon

School of Education

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Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: William Timpson

Sharon Anderson

James Banning

Roe Bubar

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ABSTRACT

CRITICAL NARRATIVES OF MULTIETHNIC WOMEN FOCUSING ON THEIR INDIGENOUS ETHNICITY: NAVIGATING THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH MASTER'S AND BEYOND

This qualitative inquiry into the completion of a Masters and or Doctorate degree by Native American women is the result of 25 years as a student and professional in the field of education. Within a nation that claims to provide an equal and fair education for all its citizens, the stark underrepresentation of indigenous women in higher education is a topic that needs to be reconciled. This study examined the lives of four multiethnic Native women who obtained advanced degrees. The study examined the lives of Native women who have been scattered across the land. Today, many indigenous women are multiethnic living in two cultures. Many have held on to their birthright and cultures while adapting and persevering into the dominant culture. Nine themes emerged from interviewing the four women for this study: (1) self-determination, (2) cultural oppression, (3) racial/ethnic identity (4) social environment/economics, (5) marginalization, (6) violence, (7) love of learning, (8) family systems, and (9) educational systems.

Recommendations for further graduate inquiry based on the schooling of Native women include:

1. Expand the study to Native women being educated on the reservation vs. Native women being educated in suburban and urban schools during their K through 12th grade education.
2. A qualitative and quantitative study on measurements of services; tools such as computers, support programs, gaps in test scores and graduation rates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey to doctorate has been one of trial and error, including many challenges and personal struggles. In this, I am not alone; we all endure our own by being human. I am especially grateful to the women of the study who persevered to complete a graduate degree. I want to thank you for sharing your stories and the painful memories that were once again brought to the surface. You continued to persevere navigating through the trials and inequities of the educational system. Each woman is an inspiration and role model to Native American women of multi ethnicity. Indigenous women fought to keep their homes, family together, their land, and way of life. It was during the time when children were pulled from families and forced into boarding schools. Sometimes they were separated from their family and blended into the dominant culture, never to return home. Indigenous identity was taken, yet they continue to endure racial discrimination and cultural oppression. They were forced to compromise values and mores to survive in a capitalistic system. Indigenous people were caring for the planet, Mother Earth when their way of life was taken. The industrialized nation grew; we have come full circle to the near destruction of the planet. It is the lives of our ancestors that endured and persevered that I give acknowledgement. It is the Indian woman, the full blood and the multi ethnic indigenous woman today that continues to hold her family together and is not afraid to stand up to keep the history and values of the culture alive.

The four women who were willing to share their stories openly for this study embody this tradition. They are all actively engaged in the system of higher education and would like their story to make a difference for others. I want to thank each of them for sharing their time and stories that made this study possible.

The professors in my committee have pushed me forward as well. My advisor, Dr. Timpson, has been supportive and given me the freedom to write and express my voice in the research. He has been my mentor since I began this doctoral journey. Dr. Banning thank you for giving me the support and extra time with the methodology. Thank you for your continued support and belief in me. I cannot express my gratitude of your support during this endeavor, especially the trials. Thank you to Dr. Anderson who agreed to be part of my committee and continued to remain supportive through the challenges. I will not forget.

Special thanks go to my dear friend & colleague Dr. Guadalupe Salazar. Lupe and I met during this journey; we were our own cohort. She had not forgotten me and continued to make a point to ask me: Have you been writing? How is your literature review? Are you keeping up with your references? Did you fill out your study calendar for this week? She remained a support when obstacles continued to present themselves. Her continued support & friendship are priceless and is greatly treasured.

I thank you for your participation in my accomplishment of achieving a life long goal. I realized there would be obstacles and those who will not have what it takes to honor the profession of education equity for all students. I realize that students regardless of what path or year in their educational goal may encounter bias. It is a testament to the work that lies before us as stewards of educational equality.

Thank you to Evelyn Swiss for her help in the final edits to move the document forward. You are most assuredly one of the angels on campus.

DEDICATION

This study is a dedication to my grandparents, Daniel Chacon and Eloisa Garcia Chacon, born on the Jicarilla Apache reservation in Clayton, New Mexico. I want to thank them both for their time and patience with me. They shared their stories of life on and off the reservation, and tried to teach me their native language. While I could not appreciate the value then, these memories have been my motivation. I also dedicate this study to my grandparents, Esquipula Trujillo and Josephine Cordova Trujillo, decedents of Spanish and Cherokee who left this world too early.

To my parents, who persevered through the trials of an educational system where they were asked to sit at the back of the room; and then struggled in a language they did not know. They persevered through their own tenacity to succeed. Neither graduated from high school, however, at fifty years of age my mother did receive her GED.

Ultimately, I want to inspire my children, Daniel and Amanda to dream, have faith, hold fast to family values, to each other, believe in yourself, and recognize the courage instilled in you by a Higher Power.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The land is sacred. These words are at the core of your being.

The land is our mother, the rivers our blood.

Take our land away and we die. That is the Indian in us dies.

-Mary Brave Bird

Theoretical and Pragmatic Basis of the Study

This qualitative study was designed to explore the resiliency and perseverance of four Multiethnic Native American women who have completed their master's or doctorate degree. The researcher's interest in exploring this topic was the personal and educational experiences as a Multiethnic Native woman. The interest was to explore the plight of Indigenous women through the years of colonization: education then and now. How did they perceive their experiences in the educational system? This prompted an examination of the history of Indigenous women before the settlers arrived, during the transition of colonization and the years that followed. From this research, an analysis of the heritage, perceptions of personal characteristics, and environmental conditions of these women became important to discover possible contributing factors for their completion of master's or doctorate degrees.

This chapter begins with a background about Indigenous women before settlers arrived and the transition of colonization. Key to the discussion is the role women played in tribes throughout the Americas. This includes an overview of Native American life including: geography, history, culture, population, socio-economic situations, general health of the population, and the abysmal changes upon the arrival of the settlers. Also, it describes the cultural deprivation, loss of land, and the impact to homes and families when children were forced into boarding schools.

The chapter contains the research purpose and the significance of the study to the perseverance of Indigenous women. The vulnerability of Native women at the hands of the dominant Euro-Americans, who brought in guns, gun powder and whiskey, bringing down the Native way of life. The literature and professional experiences indicate a gross underrepresentation of Indigenous women in leadership positions or institutions of higher education. According to the Institute of Educational Sciences, in 2012, 0.6 percent of Native Americans were awarded a Master degree and 0.7 percent received a Doctoral degree. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the study participants and their characteristics, and support for the importance of conducting research on Indigenous Women.

Researcher's Perspective

After my grandparents left the Jicarilla Apache reservation they became farmers doing what was necessary to acculturate into Western society. My family became devout Catholics who attended church every week, while I also attended catechism. I remember standing in the basement of my home as a young child after the shooting of President Kennedy; I asked God why would He create a world of differences and cruelty towards people. I wondered if there was really a God? I asked God: What was my purpose, why was I here. Where did we really come from? I will never forget the feeling that came over me. It was nothing I had ever felt and I have never felt it again. It was a deep disconnect from my body, which only lasted for a brief moment. That night, I had an epiphany; I knew it was my destiny to work with others that were struggling. What else could it possibly be? That was the only rational purpose that made sense to me. The only answer to justify my existence.

From that time forward I have always been searching for the meaning in humanity and the social injustice that surrounds our lives. In our society Education is thought to be the

equalizer. Research has shown that it is failing. I have pursued this research in the K through 12 system. This inspired my interest to focus on women that meet the criteria of social injustice and statistics on the achievement gap.

The following quote from the words of Chief Seattle Suqwamish, in his speech from 1854, resonates with what the researcher felt that day as a young child, “All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth” [The speech was recounted and not written until 1887 by Dr. Henry Smith (Furtwangler, 1997)]. She came to believe that regardless of differences, we are all connected, and that she had an obligation to work for the empowerment of others.

This revelation had a profound impact on my life and has directly led to the current research, which would not be possible without this early understanding. It was a search for the truth that leads to a path of inquiry. It led to the question Why? Why life existed, why were there so many differences among people? Why was there a God? My parents’ answers did not satisfy my wonder. My teachers could not gratify nor quell my questioning to the depth I wanted.

During my youth, I asked too many questions, questioned authority, and sometimes talked out of turn. I was reprimanded repeatedly until I finally kept to myself, realizing I was the one who was different. The early years lead to awareness that people were different and not everyone liked individuals that were different than self. One difference was in the color of skin, where you lived and how much money your family had. This awareness I learned was discrimination and the social classes was a harsh awakening.

I recall my world becoming a new reality of differences where students were grouped by similarity. My schooling experiences became an environment of encounters that were not always pleasant. Encounters of being forced to choose friendships; a refusal to do this led to threats,

gang fights, being cornered and forced to fight my way out. During those years I lived with fear always looking over my shoulder while discovering my place in our society.

History: Systematic Deculturalization

Prior to the settlers' arrival, Native women were equal in their tribal communities. The role in many of the Native Nations reflected a matrilineal culture (i.e., children born were received into their mother's family lineage). The right to property and to hold office also went through the mother's family. The Iroquois and Cherokee shared powers and were referred to as a clan (Green, 1992). History was passed down and remains in the oral stories of indigenous survivors.

Many women also played a significant role in leadership that was rooted in their spirituality or guided by their interrelationship with the natural world (Tsosie, 2010). Some women elders made decisions about who would become chief. Many women throughout the Native Nations held roles of spiritual healers, and were knowledgeable of medicinal healing; these women took care of tribe members during illness. They were also midwives during pregnancies. They knew about plants and how to grow and cultivate many varieties. Women were valued and respected members of their societies who fed and nurtured their people. There were women who constructed their own homes: hogans for the Navajo, wickiups for the Apache, tipis for the Plains people, chickees for the Seminole, and mud into bricks in Pueblo society. Today, many Native women have retained the skills of their ancestors and are skilled craftspeople (Green, 1992).

Ella Deloria, a Yankton Dakota, eloquently summed up life prior to European settlement:

If you looked into a tipi of the past as I am talking about, you might see only the surface untidiness—the unavoidable dirt, discomfort, and inconvenience incident to primitive life lived on the ground. Those would be the obvious features, and you might come away thinking that was all. And that would be a pity. For underneath that surface, lay

something very wonderful—The spiritual life of a patient, unselfish, and courteous people, who disciplined themselves without letup to keep the tribal ideal at all costs. (Deloria, 1991, p. 45)

Stiffarm and Lane (1992) discussed the beginnings of genocide in the Southwest, starting in 1540 to 1542, with Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's invasion. This was the beginning of the Indian wars, federal genocidal policies, and attempts at extermination of Natives over the next two centuries. One example is about a Pequot village on the Mystic River (Linwood & Daniel 2007). When the English arrived on the shores of the New World, the Powahatan nation embraced them with their friendship only to be betrayed. Chief Wahunsenecas' daughter, Pochahantas was kidnapped and used for bargaining to take more land. Pochahantas was taken to England where she died. The English no longer needed the assistance of the Powahatan people and became more aggressive and wanted more land. During the same time in the same area, an invasion occurred. The British surrounded one of the villages and all "had been burned alive or shot during a half hour massacre" (Stiffarm & Lane, 1992, p. 34). The remaining tribes then fled Plymouth Rock to Virginia. Thus began the time when colonial power and genocide began to show no boundaries.

Some early legislation was passed to protect Native populations; for example, in 1715, the North Carolina Act of General Assembly, decreed "all lands belonging to Native Americans be protected from encroachment by law. All Native Americans be given equal rights and protection by law. There is also an exemption from all taxes" (Moseley, 1715, p. 159). This eventually failed and the government constructed treaties with various tribes only to break them later. By 1825, the U.S. government established formal Indian territories west of the Mississippi, while claiming all lands east of the Mississippi for white settlers. President Andrew Jackson went further in 1830 with the "Indian Removal Act," officially claiming the lands west of the Mississippi for the American Indians (Zimmerman, 1996, p. 24).

The settlers did not want to understand the ways of the Indigenous people; they believed their own was the *right* way (Fitzgerald, 2005). Before the arrival of the French Jesuits, a group expressly dedicated to educating Indian children “in the French Manor” (Noriega, 1992, pp. 111-138), Indigenous women taught the children. After the arrival of the Jesuits, women began to be treated as second-class citizens. Women suffered greatly when the Europeans brought in whiskey and gunpowder, and pushed their beliefs about possessions and the European patriarchal system. The division of labor in Native households, which was equalized in the past, became unbalanced resulting in an entirely different communal structure. The Indigenous women’s burden increased, while her influence decreased. Indigenous families were systematically split and forced to do outside labor.

By the mid-1800s, federal genocidal policies had nearly broken the backs of Indigenous populations. One case in point is the Sand Creek massacre, which occurred during the time of the land wars. The Cheyenne and Arapahoe were being pushed further off their land. Chief Black Kettle agreed to meet with Evans, the governor of the Colorado Territories. The agreement was for a shrinking parcel of land in return for his people’s safety. Cheyenne and Arapahoe were betrayed and in November 1864, another faction of soldiers attacked while the village slept and everyone was slaughtered. In 1896 another treaty was created yet not upheld. The Fort Laramie Treaty, which required the government to protect Lakota lands from white intruders, was another lie. The federal government worked to directly protect the miners in the hills, rather than honor the treaty and protect Lakota lands. With the mining of gold by 1876, the Lakota and others were driven from their land and forced onto reservations; many were killed during this time. These were just two examples of the numerous encounters of atrocities and wars against a people being driven from their homes (Shoomp Editorial Team, 2008).

Cohen (1942) researched the early legal history with Native populations. The history was traced back prior to the institution of the United States Government. The laws of discovery and conquest entitled Europeans to take what they wanted and use the indigenous as slaves. The Europeans propagated this idea and the solution to the “Indian problem” was created.

In the early 1500’s, Francisco de Vitoria, a Spanish theologian, concluded that the Indians owned the land and it could not be claimed through discovery. The European Nations did not agree on all aspects of this proposal, but tribes were recognized as reasonable creatures, capable of dealing with the European nations (Cohen, 1942). Therefore, some Europeans did choose to deal with some of the Indian tribes from North America by treaty.

Devon Mihesuah (2003) spoke of the effects of colonialism where words like “holocaust” and “genocide” can be used to describe the atrocities that occurred. Yet, Mihesuah also showed how people were able to adapt with the aid of non-Native individuals. The high regard for the roles of women and culture were decimated in some tribes. However, Mihesuah noted, “Many Native groups are vocal and active in their concern for keeping those traditional female roles and ideologies alive” (Mihesuah, 2003, p. xii).

In spite of missionary attempts and government policies to assimilate Natives, confine them on reservations, and force Western education on Native children, tribal spirituality has survived. Native women have also survived, despite the good intentions of various women’s reform groups such as the Women’s National Indian Association and Women’s Home Mission Circle. Native women continue to fight against being abused and having their cultures appropriated. It is also recognized today that some non-Natives look for opportunism at the expense of Natives, ignorant of the true history of colonialism and the role that it has played. Some non-Natives do this through their expressed support for Native groups and from writing

stories about Native life. Taking part-truths and hearsay without clear research from Native voices, then selling these stories for a personal profit without benefiting the storyteller, whom the story was about.

Native scholars began personal narratives directly from the voices of indigenous individuals who lived through the changes and have stories that were passed down by their ancestors. The following example is from the voice of the woman who survived the boarding school, in her own words, telling her story to Lee. She is from the Mdewankanton tribe. The Mdewankanton are one of seven tribes now regarded as the Sioux. This woman survived the boarding schools and described her life in an interview. The woman discussed how the world had changed, “Well, I have learned to live in the modern world. I do things differently now. I go to the store to buy it rather than make it” (Ross, 1998 p. 113). Ross (1998) discussed how this woman “had been a forerunner for women’s achievements; in 1929 she was the first in her family to attend college and in 1931 she was one of the first American Indian women to graduate from college” (p. 213).

While not every native culture treated women equally, it is safe to say that colonization brought the oppression of women. Through colonization, the lives of Native women were forever changed. Pressure to adapt to Anglo-norms was only the beginning of the oppression and suppression of Indigenous women. Women’s leadership roles were stripped and only males were recognized in leadership roles by the Anglo culture, this directly and forever changed Native culture. Dunway (1997) recorded the women of the Cherokee Nation (matrilineal). There was strong opposition to the changes of white society’s imposed male dominance on ownership of their land. Cherokee women had also been in control of marriage, divorce and all matters involving children.

The onset of missionary force instilled the hetero-patriarchal and patrilineal European norms, making men the decision makers of family matters. The French Jesuits were the first to instill Christianity in Indigenous women and their families. As the British and Spanish arrived, they too began the same process of indoctrination.

With the vast expansion and ever encroachment of settlers onto Native lands, which were conversely being reduced, American Indians were forced to live on appointed reservations. This greatly altering the social and economic structure of Native American tribes. By 1818, many Native women leaders saw this occurring and spoke out, proclaiming:

We have raised all of you on the land which we now have ... Your mothers and your sisters beg of you not to part with any more of our lands, we say ours {for} you are our descendants ... Therefore, children, don't part with anymore of our lands but continue on it ... Hold out to the last in support of our common rights. (Mann, 2001, p. 36)

One of the biggest impacts on breaking up Native cultures and the influence of indigenous women was the forcing of their children into boarding schools (Childs, 1998). Historically, Indigenous women were the educators of their children from birth. Whereas the female child stayed with the mother all the way through development years, the male child, who then would go off with their father to learn the ways of the clan. The intent of the boarding school system was for the young generations to reject their traditional native dress, language, and religion, and choose to abandon their culture and identity. It was at the boarding schools where the children received religious and Western indoctrination. They learned English, adopted Christianity, and studied Western subjects. This occurred throughout the United States and Canada. The children would often stay at the boarding schools until adulthood. A shockingly high number of children died in these schools. Many of the children who survived were successfully assimilated into white society and adopted the Euro-American culture, but many were left with a confused identity, caught between two cultures (Zimmerman, 1996).

In the eighteenth century, missionaries in the New England area proposed a more formal education for Indian girls (Priest, 1969). After the Civil War, even more emphasis was placed on domestic and vocational education, as the federal government used this on Native girls as a means of forced acculturation. From 1878 to 1920, an effort to educate Native girls at non-reservation boarding schools was made by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. According to Child's (2000) day schools, boarding schools, and industrial schools were created in an attempt to eradicate the Native cultural heritage and replace it with the Anglo-American culture. The schools' curriculum was to teach the girls how to be wives and do domestic work, referred to as Domestic Science.

An example of the attempt on eradication of native culture was the Hampton School. The school was run by the military, had strict supervision and the girls were forced to wear uniforms. Those who did not follow the rules endured corporal punishment. Many girls stayed with white families to acculturate into a "normal" family and were told to take back what they learned to their own families. It was believed they needed mates so that they would not back slide, and that girls needed to learn more than the boys, such as cooking, sewing, and all other domestic duties, while boys only needed to learn a single trade (Trennert, 1982).

Trennert's (1992) description included the beginning of systemizing the Indian schools in 1890: There were rules, textbooks, and military soldierly routines, which included uniforms and officers. A drill at five a.m. taught patriotism, obedience, courage, courtesy, promptness, and constancy. The boarding schools continued the domestic science program and academics were ignored. A lack of emphasis on academics could be the reason that many students were not graduating from the eight-year program. Trennert stated that students might have learned just enough to know what they were missing. Administrators were saying that Indians were incapable

of learning more, and one superintendent said he did not consider “his literary graduates capable of accomplishing much in a white society, another educator called them a ‘child race’” (Trennert, 1992, p. 281). The Indian Commissioner at the time, Thomas J. Morgan, was still under the impression that females were servants in their own homes and believed that properly run schools could remove them from “degrading camp life,” (Trennert, 1992, p. 281). Morgan had stated prior that literary instruction be included in the students’ training. His department was sending messages that “higher education in the sense ordinarily used has no place in the curriculum of Indian schools” (Trennert, 1992, p. 281).

At some point, the boarding schools found financial trouble and began using the students as laborers. Many were not getting even the little amount of academic training offered because they were forced to work on only one job, such as laundry or some other commercial trade (Meriam, 1928). It was reported by the matron of a boarding school in 1886 that the girls were not getting the training they needed (Mayo, 1886). One partial exception was the Haskell Institute, which in 1896 was providing basic skills such as stenography, bookkeeping, typing, and nursing.

Reynor and Edor (2004) described young teachers with classrooms of thirty-six to fifty-two students in a classroom at Wahpeton Indian School in North Dakota. A young Shoshone woman, Esther Horne, who graduated from Haskell in 1928 went back to teach first and second grade at Haskell. She later transferred to Wahpeton, stating that conditions were improving, but reported teaching from thirty-six to fifty-two forth-grade students in one classroom.

From 1890 to 1910, industrial schools had student enrollments comprised of forty to fifty percent women. Trennert (1982) discusses the education of Indian girls. Trennert gives the reasons they were the easiest to place into the schools. They did not need parental consent, had

fewer discipline problems, and could be placed out. They would be sent to work in someone's home, leaving the boarding school, being further isolated from students and friends they had made in the school.

The voices of Indigenous women were quieted but never silenced from the onset of colonization. Traditional roles, storytelling, and oral history were passed down; Indigenous women's status was not forgotten. While many may have gotten away from tradition, memories are long. In the indigenous world it is "reiterated that the destiny of the world depends on woman, that woman is the agent of morality" (Fitzgerald & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 70).

The Study

How have Native women persevered through the atrocities of history? Non-Indigenous scholars, and anthropologists have been doing research on different cultures. There have been very few indigenous scholars engaged in similar research; this may be due to a lack of Native Americans receiving graduate degrees (Klein & Ackerman, 1995; Smith, 1999). This research explores these questions and others using an indigenous lens: How have the lives of Indigenous women evolved up to today? What was their schooling experience and how did it impact their development at home, at school, and in the community? Did their schooling experience influence their self-identity? This study looks at how Indigenous women have navigated through the educational system.

Cultural Deprivation

Cultural deprivation theory is termed for a 'class' of people, who are underserved, underachieved, and has not received certain norms of attitude, skills, or behaviors of the dominant culture (Cole & Brunner, 1971). After this has been the case, the next question becomes: what can be done about it? Kozullin and Presseien (1995) discussed Vygotskys' work

about mediated learning experiences (MLE) and a combination of psychological tools that are needed for a population that did not receive these skills in their developmental years. The dominant culture has tried to close the achievement gap through various means using the tools of the white scholar. The most recent has been the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). It is time to look at and take back what is needed to educate children who have been culturally oppressed.

The collective of indigenous scholars who are looking at the educational and epistemological value of indigenous knowledge seek a larger inclusive effort to form a critical multilogicality. Instead of trying to squeeze into the box of conformity, the effort is to “seek an intercultural/interracial effort to question the hegemonic and oppressive aspects of Western education and to work for justice and self-direction for indigenous peoples around the world” (Kinchiloe & Steinberg, 1993 p. 135)

Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) addressed the cultural differences and the theoretical issue of “how to characterize commonalities of learning approaches for individuals of ethnic groups who have historically been underserved in U.S. schools” (p. 19). They stated a need for research efforts to understand “cultural deprivation.” Understanding learning styles and addressing their connection to culture is valuable when preparing teachers to teach for a diverse group of students. Teaching about differences rather than deficits is a win-win situation for both teacher and student. The authors concluded, “Cultural-historical theory leads us to expect regularities in the ways cultural communities organize their lives as well as variations in the ways individual members of groups participate and conceptualize the means and ends of their communities’ activities” (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003, p. 19).

Continued dominance of the Euro-American approach to learning has left deficits in many communities, as the achievement gap shows. However, it should be remembered there are

differences in learning, and opportunities to learn, not deficits. Research is opening the discussion of learning difference in cultural communities. One size does not fit all, especially with cases that involve Indigenous women. Giving watered down remedial courses is not the answer.

The cultural styles approach arose from the efforts of grouping students into watered down remedial courses. As researchers attempted to leave behind deficit-model thinking, in which cultural ways differ from the practices of dominant groups are judged to be less adequate. Judged without examining them from the perspective of the communities' participants (Cole & Brunner, 1971; Hilliard & Vaughn-Scot, 1982; Howard & Scott, 1981; McLoyd & Randolph, 1985; McShane & Berry, 1986).

Skiba, Knesting, and Bush's (2002) study attempted to "identify and remedy educational conditions that systematically disadvantage students of color" (p. 61). Skiba et al. also looked at how:

The extensive disadvantage based on ethnic and socioeconomic status raises concerns about social equity in America that reach well beyond special education. Children of color are more than twice as likely as white children to live in single-parent households or below the poverty line. (2002, p. 66)

More is needed than non-biased tests to make these assessments in the face of culturally incompetent testing and unequal educational opportunity. Dweck (2008) stated that teachers must create favorable learning environments for students to feel safe and not put them on the spot or feel awkward; this practice continues to elude some classrooms. Without safe academic environments, a student is labeled, which can cause devastating social and emotional impairment to an otherwise healthy intelligent capable child. In this case, the system is in fact creating the most disadvantages for the child.

Although every student will hear stories of encouragement and disappointment while at school, self-doubt will be their constant companion, when frequently the only praise they receive from the time of entering preschool is from white counterparts. They soon learn the difference of where they came from. In their article, Harris and Herrington (2006) discuss the “inequality of educational achievement across racial and ethnic groups” (p. 209). Education should be the great equalizer but has steadily shifted to being a “direct cause of socioeconomic inequality” (p. 209). For example, minority students might not have both parents or might live on the poor side of town, but more importantly, they do not have the skill set that their Euro-American classmates’ possess. The skill set that has been pre-determined by the dominant class as criterion for learning. This can lead to the children from minority backgrounds to be labeled as special needs, as they are assumed to have deficits and put into inappropriate classes without being given the opportunity to learn like their peers.

Traditionally, the achievement gap has been seen as primarily impacting only elementary and high school children. However, this study follows students into the higher education system. Data from an earlier study (Chacon, Salas, & Salazar, 2008) found that services, such as mentoring, for students of color in graduate programs across the U.S. were lacking. Recommendations included a need to pursue further analysis into graduate education for non-white populations. The data also gave rise to questions about the relationship between elementary and higher education in terms of the achievement gap.

The focus of this study remains on a quieted and ignored population, Indigenous women who have persevered and attained the achievement of scholarly success as defined in society. What can be learned from these women to help assist other students who have not made the connection in the classroom? This study asks the following questions of the pedagogies of re-

mediation for students who are traditionally put into remedial classes: (1) Did the achievement gap carry over for some of the same students from the time they left elementary school to when the same set of students entered middle school and again when they entered high school? (2) How did these participants manage to persevere and overcome the challenges of their early schooling experiences? (3) What were the challenges associated with being admitted into the higher education system? (4) Once admitted, what were the challenges of navigating the system? (5) Does the lack of cultural understanding prevent making the communicative connection that is missing in the classroom? (6) Could restorative projects be implemented that would sustain Indigenous culture, languages and histories?

Yet, many more questions remain, as McKeachie (2006) stated, “Knowing what to do is not enough, knowing how to do it is still not enough” (p. 311). If knowing what to do and how to do it is not enough, then what is? It is time to seek beyond the limited walls of academia where knowledge has been boxed, while creativity and imagination need no walls.

Problem Statement

This research focused on Indigenous women whose lived experiences are part of all life stories. Through the critical narrative lens, their stories are told, documenting personal journeys through the educational system, and the impact of living in two worlds. This narrative looks at the local level, where individual lives are impacted in their own environments. The stakes are high, as these women tell their stories, it is important to remember all of the voices who cannot speak, and the many Indigenous tribes and individuals who persevered through decades of war crimes and humiliation.

Martin (1993) commented on how Indigenous women were lost in the dominant version of history:

Most histories of dominance not only absented Native women, but even their simulations were comparatively infrequent in documents, making the women doubly absent. The histories of the stereotypical bloodthirsty savage or the noble Indian chief were accounts of Indian men by other men; much less attention was paid to Indian women. Christian missionaries did not acknowledge the presence and power of Native women or their stories. The stories that became history were the stories of men. (p. 36)

It is clear that the numbers of indigenous women in many academic fields needs to increase. Through this critical narrative, the researcher collected data from personal interviews to discover the personal characteristics and environmental conditions that may lead to the completion of higher educational degrees.

Purpose of the Study

This study addressed issues faced by Indigenous women. The study looked at four Native American women who have obtained a master's degree or higher. The study examined the successes and challenges these women faced while navigating schooling systems. In addition, the study looked at how these experiences affected their sense of self-identity, growing up in a system that conflicted, at times, with their Indigenous culture. The objective was to identify personal characteristics and environmental conditions that assisted in the completion of their degree.

Significance of the Study

The heart of this study focused on the stories of these women's educational plight living on and off the reservation. From the beginning of their experiences, as with Native American women over the past four hundred years, their challenges were many. They were robbed of their culture and tradition, and a foreign belief system was pushed on them. There were many injustices to Native Americans that forced their way into the nucleus of the Indigenous woman and her family from the earliest years. During the past four centuries, the history of North America has often been seen through the lens of the conquering culture, skewing the historical

view presented. More recently, within the past hundred years, the educational system has played a significant role in the lives of Indigenous women; how they have adapted and navigated to find their place in their ever-changing homeland.

As shown in Table 1, Native Americans, along with Hispanics, continue to have the highest dropout rates across all students. The question is why, and what can be done to change those numbers?

Table 1: 1999-2010 Colorado Dropout Rates (percentage) by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Instructional Program

Note: The Colorado dropout rate is an annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. In accordance with a 1993 legislative mandate, beginning with the 1993-94 school year, the dropout rate calculation excludes expelled students.

	99- 00	00- 01	01- 02	02- 03	03- 04	04- 05	05- 06	06- 07	07- 08	08- 09	09- 10	Percent Point Change 08-09 to 09-10 (Negative indicates improvement)
State Total	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	3.8	4.2	4.5	4.4	3.8	3.6	3.1	-0.5%
American Indian	5.2	4.9	5.0	3.8	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.1	6.4	6.8	5.3	-1.5
Asian	2.3	2.1	1.5	1.5	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.3	2.2	1.6	-0.6
Black	3.7	3.6	3.0	3.0	4.3	5.4	6.6	5.8	5.5	5.0	4.6	-0.4
Hispanic	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.6	6.3	7.5	8.2	8.0	6.6	6.2	5.4	-0.8
White	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.0	-0.3
Male	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.9	4.2	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.0	3.8	3.4	-0.4
Female	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.1	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.4	2.9	-0.5
Students with Disabilities	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	4.8	4.4	5.6	3.5	2.8	2.4	2.3	-0.1
Limited English Proficient	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	5.3	7.1	7.7	9.3	6.8	6.7	6.0	-0.7
Economically Disadvantaged	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.2	4.0	4.1	3.4	-0.7
Migrant	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	4.1	4.8	6.1	8.5	4.7	5.2	4.1	-1.1
Title 1	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	4.5	5.8	8.9	7.9	4.9	5.3	4.9	-0.4
Homeless	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	9.0	7.5	8.7	9.5	7.9	7.5	7.2	-0.3
Gifted and Talented	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.7	-0.2

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"I do not know why, but whatever the white people say, that is the way it has to be. I guess it must be that way." (Bataille and Sands, 1984 p. 81)

Mountain Wolf Woman

Mountain Wolf Woman's life spanned much of the twentieth century. She was born into the Winnebago tribe when they were forced to move many times over thirty plus years. She witnessed formal education, organized church, United States Local governments' impact on their lives. At one point the tribe near starvation reached out to the Omaha Indians for help. After years of moving they were eventually relocated and settled on a reservation in Thurston County Nebraska. Today the Winnebago's live divided: one group is on the reservation in Nebraska and the other group lives as non-reservation Indians in Wisconsin. Her story is one of resilience during the time of transition, her self-confidence to hold on to tradition during the challenges of the time.

(Bataille and Sands, 1984)

Introduction

A true review of literature of this type must include the personal experiences of the researcher. Long before engaging in this topic academically, I grew up listening to the stories of my grandfather and grandmother about life on the reservation and the history of our people. During the early years of education, I recall very little of this real history of our country and my ancestors.

Each participant came from a different tribe; many tribes have varied cultural beliefs customs and rituals. The common thread was that they are all "First People" of the Americas. Each participant remains connected to her ancestral heritage to some significant degree, and

seeks to understand and continue on a path of service leadership as reflected in her current projects and personal life.

The following are brief descriptors of the participants' tribes. It is not meant to be inclusive of all historical data and practices. The Apache are six clans, naming themselves to distinguish each other as they roamed the plains of Texas, Mexico, New Mexico, Colorado, and to the White Mountains. Their language is Athabaskan and they were a matrilineal society. According to Haley (1981), in the 1500's, the Apache and Spaniards engaged in fierce fighting and were called the "Indios Vaqueros" by the Spaniards (p. 24). It has been noted that the Apache tribes were warriors; their religion encompasses the universe and has remained complex to scholars to this day (p. 64).

The Cherokee people are one of five tribes with the Iroquois language. They are also a matrilineal society, where mothers' uncles also participated in raising the children. The Cherokee predominately lived in what is now the Southern United States. In the 1500's, they began alignment with the British against the French and Spaniards. Other tribes became involved in the conflicts with the European countries. The various tribes soon found they were fighting each other. This involvement would become the downfall of the Native American Tribes, as this tactic weakened each Native Nation. (Royce, 2006)

The Navajo (Dine, meaning "the People") are the largest tribe in the U.S. today, they are also part of the Athapaskan Family and speak a dialect of Athabaskan. It has been noted that they settled in areas abandoned by the Anasazis, primarily in Northern Arizona (O'Brien, 2011). Like the Apache, there are many clans within the Navajo Nation. Their choice was to live a pastoral or spiritual life. Navajo also follow the lineage of the woman, bringing her clan name to her new marriage.

The Alaskan natives are scattered across five different geographical areas (Ogunwole, 2010). They are divided into eleven distinctive cultures and speak twenty different languages. Three main tribes are the Athabaskan Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts, each have different cultural and linguist histories. The Aleuts' home is predominately the Aleutian Islands and they have a matrilineal society. Athabaskan Indians live along the interior Alaskan rivers. They call themselves 'Dena' or 'the people' and speak eleven different languages. They have a matrilineal system and the mother's brother takes responsibility for educating his sister's children. The Eskimo, also known as the Inuit and Yupik tribes, speak Inuktitut and they live in the far northern Tundra; in the past they lived in snow blocks called igloos (meaning shelter) in the harsh climate. Today they continue to live in modern igloos, which, consists of traditional housing with all the amenities of modern day life. The Nome Eskimo community lives on the Bering Straight. "Malemiut, Kauweramiut, and Unalikmiut Eskimos have occupied the Seward Peninsula historically, with a well-developed culture adapted to the environment" (State of Alaska DCRA, 2012). The population of Nome is a mixture of Inupiat Eskimos and non-Natives.

The last Native tribe for this study was the Salish (Kooteni, the people), which consists of three main tribes who were given the name "Flatheads" by the first White men. Their land spanned from Montana and Wyoming to the Pacific coast. Their language is Salish and they are also a matrilineal tribe. They had close families and tribes lived together in order to survive. They had an intertribal connection where they shared burdens and joys, through games, music and story telling. They continue to be a spiritual people, believing that all creatures and nature are connected. (Salish and Kootenai, 2005)

The first book I ever purchased as a youth was *Seven Arrows*, by Hyemeyohsts Storm (1972). It is simple in its delivery and does not come from an academic place. I have since learned that scholars question its content, but I in turn question their intent. His teaching began with knowing that the first teacher is the heart. He then writes about the seven teaching arrows, which are part of the Great Mirror:

The North, South, West and East symbolize four of the mirrors, which in turn symbolize Wisdom, Trust, and Innocence, Introspection and Illumination. These in turn are known as the four ways. The Mother Earth is the Fifth Mirror. The Sky, with its Moon, Sun and Stars is the Sixth Mirror. The Seventh of these Arrows is the Spirit. Among the People, this Spirit is spoken of as the Universal Harmony, which holds all things together. All of us who are Perceivers of the Mirrors are the Eighth-Arrow. (Storm, 1972 p. 20)

The book also discusses the power of the medicine wheel, the medicines, the circle, the story, and many other aspects of Indigenous life.

Another book that had an early impact was McLuhan's book, *A Self Portrait of Indian Existence*; the very first page struck me:

Many of the passages in this book represented the Indians' attempts to offer their ideas to the white man, either as a gift or in the hope that through understanding the white man would let the Indian be. As Indians' saw more of the white man's ways, their tone of voice became mystified, angry, desperate and finally, empty of hope. (McLuhan, 1971 p. 1)

As the tears ran down my face, I knew then that I too had to learn to fit in if I was to make a difference. McLuhan's book is controversial among some scholars, but it is one voice that I value and remains a part of my collection because "The pain of the Indian, as he experienced the death of his way of life, has not been fully understood by the white man and perhaps never will" (McLuhan, 1971, p. 1).

The literature review will expand across the arrival of the newcomers who will be named and dated. It will introduce the invaders who arrived, intent on claiming a land that was not theirs to claim. The people who called this land their home were displaced from a way of life, land, and

culture. Disease and genocide are also reflected in the literature. The history of Indigenous women and a way of life by many tribes will be explored. Much has been written about the changes brought by colonization and the era of forced movement, with children being taken from families to be broken from their Indigenous roots. And, increasing numbers of Native scholars have risen to reclaim some of this history and clarify red pedagogy from an Indigenous lens. The literature will also explore the critical narrative that gives voice to the native woman.

Indigenous Lens

Larry J. Zimmerman, regents professor of anthropology at the University of South Dakota, attempted a systematic breakdown of the life of Native North American people, from forced movement, dispossession, reservations, to foundations of the sacred, drums in the circle, and the two faces of history such as he represented by the Battle of Little Big Horn. According to Zimmerman (1996), the history of North Americans over the past four centuries has been seen through the lens of the conquering culture, skewing the historical view that is often presented.

For example, the Battle of Little Big Horn is also popularly known as Custer's Last Stand. The battle took place on June 25, 1876, on the Little Bighorn River in Montana. The popular telling of the event was that Plains Indian Warriors surrounded the U.S. Calvary, who were greatly outnumbered, but allegedly fought until only one man stood, and that man was General George Armstrong Custer. Zimmerman (1996) recounts this version of events and the 'legend of Custer as the last man standing' constructed by U.S. Army officers, officials, and historians. Euro-Americans accepted this official account, but other facts tell us that there were many men standing after the battle, and they were Sioux, Arapaho, and Cheyenne warriors, Indigenous women, and their children. These are the facts and accounts that have been left out of

United States mainstream history. Zimmerman accounts the two faces of history (p. 31) in Native North America.

In recent history, there has been a movement in academia to represent some of these left out perspectives, which will be referred to in this study generally as Indigenous Knowledge's. Indigenous researchers have developed a number of theories over the last decade that raise important questions, such as: Postcolonial, First Nation, Red pedagogies; post-post structuralism criticism; cultural critique; critical race feminism; Latino criticism/critical (La/Crit); critical pedagogy; critical race theory and Indigenous feminism to name a few. Included in the Indigenous Knowledge's are Borderland Epistemologies. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) describe a theory that addresses the assumption that the societies of the West are democratic and free.

One of these researchers is Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (2008), who wrote about the origins of Indigenous women, and both the historic and mystic journeys of indigenous peoples. She writes that the literature of Indigenous scholars clearly brings to light the stories of myth and truth in the tribal literary canons. The cannons are the stories of a tribe's history, along with the myths hidden in the journey of the narrative. One must remember, "You are going back to the origin" (Cook-Lynn, 2008, p. 329). In these histories is recognition of the importance of language, holy people, and mythical creatures that help with an understanding of the universe.

Another Indigenous scholar is Sandy Grande (2004) who wrote about the history of dehumanization and raised further questions for indigenous scholars. Grande's framework is a guide for thinking about indigenous knowledge as it meets critical pedagogy or red pedagogy. She writes that, "It begins with a statement of the problem or a tracing of the historical disconnect between indigenous education and western theory" (p. 244). Grande then stated the

problem as she saw it, “How this failure has severely limited tribes’ abilities to produce political strategies and educational interventions that account for the rights and needs of American Indian students” (p. 244). Grande then said that there is a need for “a new generation of indigenous scholars [to begin] to rework Western qualitative methodologies, epistemologies, and systems of ethics” (p. 244).

This research on Indigenous women crisscrosses these theories and tribal critical race theory interpretive practices. According to Grande (2008), this is also an examination of ethics, power, social justice, and truth. This study has a critical abandonment of emancipatory agendas, along with the struggle against capitalist exploitation that falls in line with the thinking of Marxist scholars.

Colonialism and Federalism

The history of Native American education generally can be categorized into three eras: Colonialism, Federalism, and Self-Determination (Carney, 1999). The Colonial Era started with the European discovery of the North American continent. According to Carney (1999) and Utter (2001), as Europeans migrated and settled in North America, they established educational systems similar to their home countries. These systems varied in form and style, but eventually a general goal of assimilating Natives into European culture emerged. Assimilation meant that Natives would convert to Christianity, learn to read and write, develop agricultural skills, and adopt European values. These values included the ideals of individualism (versus tribalism), materialism, competitiveness, and conquest of the natural world (Morrison, 1997; Utter, 2001). During the continuation of European colonial settlement, the development of colonial educational systems did address the education of Natives, but these did not initially focus on

forced assimilation (Carney, 1999; Utter, 2001). The Colonial Era concluded with the founding of the United States of America and the beginning of the Federal Era.

Federal government policy was ever changing in how it dealt with Natives in several areas, which can be seen as eras. The era of assimilation and eradication were two approaches to deal with cultural conflicts. Assimilation was recruitment and retention, which was favored by President Jefferson, and attempted to force Natives into accepting and living the alternative, which was life confined on a reservation. This alternative greatly eradicated Native American way of life, altering their culture and traditions. Both Presidents James Madison and Andrew Jackson favored eradication by attempting to rid the nation of its problems with Natives by ridding the nation of Natives (Carney, 1999). Eradication did not succeed and was phased out in favor of forced assimilation by the Federal government. This decision impacted the education of Natives by forcing them to attend and participate in institutions that focused on teaching American cultural ways. Forced assimilation persisted until the 1960's, when the federal government determined that Native Americans were capable of determining their own practices (Carney, 1999; Morrison, 1997; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Era of Self Determination

This policy and philosophical shift is known as the era of self-determination. This policy permitted Native Americans to return to self-government and re-instated to them the ability to determine what is right for their own people (Morrison, 1997; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). As Native Americans re-established their governmental powers, they eventually regained control over education practices via PL-93-638, the Indian Education and Self Determination Act, and understood that this control would bring a return of cultural practices (Morrison, 1997).

While at the beginning of the 1950's, the United States Congress was renewing efforts to assimilate Native Americans, in the 1960's; there was a joint effort between Native American and Federal governments to move toward the Indian Civil rights act. This was the inception of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and other Native activist groups that gave rise to Native American issues and brought about change.

Many groups were active in the 1960's battling for their own civil rights issues among the dominant culture. Ironically, during this time, white youth were protesting not to trust anyone over thirty, while most Native youth consulted with their elders for leadership and cultural knowledge (Ziegelman, 1985, p.4). The elders usually did not hold tribal leadership; middle-generation elders who had survived the boarding schools usually held this. These individuals may not have totally understood all of the traditions because they had been removed from their families at an early age. They did not always understand the youth and their interest in wanting to reconnect with their traditional heritage (Ziegelman, 1985, p. 13). It was a time of separation between Indians who lived on or off the reservation. Reservations were compared to the living environments of Southern African-Americans, while urban living was associated with the pomposity of influence groups.

In 1944, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was founded as one of the prominent Civil Rights group movements that were restricted to people with Indian ancestry (Hertzberg, 1971, p. 290). Ruth Bronson (Cherokee) was the first executive secretary of the NCAI and served in this position until 1956. NCAI generally focused on reservation issues, such as voting rights in state and local elections. Examples of lobbying victories influenced by NCAI were: the 1965 Indian Self Determination Act, 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act, 1972 Indian

Education Act, 1975 Indian Education Assistance and Self-Determination Act, 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act, and the 1978 Religious Freedom Act.

Researching Indigenous Populations

As more indigenous scholars began to surface, their voices became clear that stories needed to be clarified and must be heard from insiders. The speculative Euro-American historian or anthropologist is believed to have left out some key facts. In *Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) have created a handbook that sheds light on numerous topics relevant to indigenous peoples and brings the indigenous scholar to the forefront.

The work included theories about decolonizing inquiry, which were expanded and connected to feminism, indigenous knowledge in education, critical race theory, and neoliberalism, among others. The chapters then delved deeper into topics like moral activism, participatory inquiry, and Marxist humanism. The handbook addressed issues like methods and ethics at the global level. The crux of the handbook looked at indigenous methodologies and red pedagogy. One problem in red pedagogy, for example, is that the “miseducation of American Indians precedes the ‘birth’ of this nation” (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 235).

The researcher has been aided in the process of narrative inquiry by the book, *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society* (Duarte & Lightfoot, 2004). The introduction has an explanation of narrative inquiry and the developmental process. Part I included literary readings, and narrative construction such as identity development and imaging. Section 1.2 looked at self with a fictional study of adolescents in self-portraits. 1.3 examined cultural modeling as a framework for narrative analysis in oral and written context, i.e., what do groups of people deem important in the behavior of human relationships? The last part argues

that data are everywhere, but asks what makes data legitimate for narrative analysis? This has been discussed among social scientists. In terms of methodology, has it been too restrictive in how one goes about collecting data? Should the scope of narrative inquiry be expanded?

Part II included Social Relational readings covering topics of the cultural self in narratives, the use of cultural genres in stories, telling's and identities. The next section went into the dilemmas of storytelling and identity. Whether a discursive psychologist, a social psychologist or social constructs recording these stories; each would interpret what someone says about his or her identity or another's identity differently. This was noted in the chapter as an 'ideological dilemma' (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, & Radley, 1988).

The basic question is: How should a narrative analysis be conducted? It is not a simple answer when addressing a *critical* narrative analysis, which is non-typical analysis. This study's answer will be unfolded in later chapters. Speculation abounds and it remains obviously unclear what does and does not qualify as a narrative (Mischler, 1995). There are tangible meanings, and some, as Bell (1994) points out, are used as an "Illustrative analogy" (p. 172). Mischler (1995) placed narrative analysis roughly into three categories: (a) narrative reference (the relation between events and their representation); (b) narrative structure (textual coherence); and (c) narrative function (the work done by, or problem-solving function of narrative strategies).

Bataille and Sands (1984) explored the stories of American Indian Women in *Telling Their Lives* through narratives, which included the study through an anthropological approach and biography of individual lives. Many of these stories were autobiographies collected by anthropologists following the patterns of ethnographic data collection in the early part of the century. In this form, the researcher takes historical data and tries to make sense of it for non-Indian audiences. But, what is lost in translation when the material is adapted to an audience?

Autobiographies can lose voice in translation; however, Bastille and Sands demonstrate in their book that despite styles and differences in writing, there are a number of creative works that clarify the plight of indigenous women.

Albers and Medicine (1983) published a collection of papers used for a symposium that reviewed the role and status of Plains Indian women. These papers included the review and critique of various anthropological studies. The papers covered various topics and tribal groups from 1978 to 1982. The focus was on various tribes and cultures including the Teton, Blackfeet, Comanche, and Pawnee, to name a few. Their book dispelled the Euro-American stereotype images of the Indian in the nineteenth century. The book also dispels the passive roles that indigenous women played, as described in accounts by missionaries and explorers who ignored the roles of women “considering them too insignificant to merit special treatment” (p. 3). Historians and anthropologists have also ignored indigenous women in twentieth century writings as well; the literature is meager according to Weist (1980).

In Mihesuah’s (2003) book, Indigenous American women, decolonization, empowerment, and activism are divided into three parts covering four to five chapters. In part one, the author warns about merging feminist and indigenous studies. The caution is that many writings are lacking Native voices, with little that connects the past to the present. This leaves a biased history, which is incomplete and serves little to assist in empowering native peoples. Half-truth writings only serve to provide “entertainment and to further careers of the authors” (Mihesuah, 2003, p. 1).

Mihesuah also points out non-Native authors who publish and receive recognition for their portrayal of indigenous people. Writing with inaccuracies is actually foolish, and with little research from indigenous scholars or reliable academic work, some authors use opinions from

actors who have role-played Natives. Other non-indigenous authors who have a passion and care for the plight of Natives will also write about certain topics, such as the abuse of Native women by the hands of native men. While well intended, these authors fail to give the complete story and a false impression often results about tribal life.

The information presented in part two covered colonialism and native women, which include disempowerment, racism, and culturalism. The defacing of a culture was rapid with the overkill to near extinction of bison and furbearing wildlife that many tribes used for sustainability. In the 1800's indigenous people continued to be seen as inferior and treated as such. Many Native women who had been taken in as wives by Euro-American men were mistreated and abandoned when the white women arrived. The mixed bloods were sent off to boarding schools (p. 53).

Activism and feminism is described in part three, which included interviews with indigenous women. The authors concluded that many differences remain among Native women with respect to cultural ideologies, appearances, social, and moral values. No one feminist theory explains a Native woman's thought completely. There are differences of opinion among Native women, and only some have a "feminist" (p. 159) view. Through personal narratives and Native women stories we find the differences and similarities among the women.

The book also explores racial identity: is it a biological race that one claims, what about in a multi-racial heritage? Can an individual claim all or one and "be biologically mixed blood or full blood and still have no exposure to the cultural mores of an American Indian tribe, connected to his or her group only by virtue of genetics" (Mihesuah, 2003, p. 177).

The literature cited in this chapter are works that reflect history, scholarly review, and indigenous research covering a range of material, which all assisted in delving deeper into this research and developing this study.

CHAPTER THREE: QUALITATIVE POSITION

“The term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.”

Linda Smith (1999, p. 1)

Indigenous Methodology

Chapter three will give the reader a basic understanding of how the research process will be carried forth, and the researcher’s goal. This will be accomplished by asking a series of questions throughout the chapter. It is also important to look at the theory behind the research methods. This will be followed by a descriptive outline of the process choice with brief similes.

Indigenous methodology, as referenced by Denzin et al. (2008), is where discourse is found, and where theories of interpretive practices, pedagogy, and performance come together. What remains are “theories of power, truth, ethics and social justice” (p. 5). Denzin wrote that Indigenous research is local, critical in theory, and is guided by these questions: What research do we want done? Who is the research for? What difference will the research make within the educational system? Who will carry the research out? How do we want future research done? How will we know it is worthwhile? Qualitative vs. Quantitative? Who will own the research? Who will benefit from the research?

These questions help to serve as a moral lens, interpreting key indigenous principals, and shaping the “moral space that aligns indigenous research with critical theory” (Denzin et al, 2008, p. 10). Each question looked at per formative issues of gender, race, class, equity, and social justice; each one developed its own understanding of community, critique, resistance, struggle, and emancipation (L.T. Smith, 2000, p. 228). It is also important to note, according to

Sandoval (2000), that Indigenous teachings are focused in an oppositional consciousness that defies “neocolonizing postmodern globalization” (pp. 1-2).

The analysis for this study was conducted through field notes, narrative memos, and transcription processes that captured the story of each participant. The emergent process required looking at when, where, and how terms were used and how events and objects were actually categorized or classified in specific situations. Also, the connective terms are used in construction of the cultural self when completing the narrative (Nelson, 2003b).

Qualitative Method of Inquiry

It is through the testimonials of Indigenous women that this study is presented. In the remaining parts of this chapter, an examination of the inquiry design, and rationale for this research will be explained. It was the plight of the Indigenous women and their educational achievement that led to a qualitative design and methods based on the Advocacy/Participatory approach. This approach is based on social issues of marginalization, oppression and a need to address empowerment. These are both the philosophical assumptions of the study as well as intersections of the researcher’s own identity, which with this research project (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research allows an exploration of social issues affecting individuals or groups in society. This type of research involves open-ended questioning of individual’s stories, building on emerging themes from general to specific and making interpretations of the data collected (Creswell, 2009). An exploration of the individual’s stories in this study was done through an emerging process of critical narrative that incorporates reflective questioning. Emerson and Frosh (2004) position the critical narrative analysis in “context of psychosocial studies to historicize and engage with a range of theoretical and methodological debates affecting narrative research” (p. 4). Thus, the approach allows for consideration of meaning in interpreting the data,

as it is uncovered when analyzed. This researcher considers cosmologically how different race/ethnicities may enact the idea of multiple realities: those that I found for myself, those of the readers of this study who may not consider the harm caused to a people in research contexts, and those of the readers who do consider these realities. This research is connected; it is understood in numerous ways by different readers, depending on their own ontological assumptions (Creswell, 2007).

In summary, the qualitative approach for this study is a narrative approach, which engages in the story of the life of the participant(s). Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) explain the approach by using a metaphor of a storyteller, “Narrative analysis involves explaining psychological phenomena as meanings that are ordered from some theoretical perspective, like that of a storyteller, and consist of information and comments about the significance of that information” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. X). Critical narrative analysis serves to link accountability and ‘moral identity.’

Indigenous Methodology and the Critical Narrative

Critical and Indigenous Methodologies (Denzin et al., 2008) provided the foundation for grounding the methodology at the local level of this study. The call for indigenous knowledge is a call to action, to provide self-sufficiency and social justice. Denzin et.al. (2008) stated, “Such an effort seeks an intercultural/interracial effort to question the hegemonic and oppressive aspects of Western education” (p. 135). The goal of this study was to seek indigenous knowledge, to collect the lived stories of consciousness into all domains of human endeavors. The authors’ book also presents a concept of multilogicality, which has been deemed central to the understanding of indigenous knowledge, “In this recognition of complexity, we begin to see

multiple causations and the possibility of differing vantage points from which to view a phenomenon” (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 138).

The use of the narrative for indigenous studies is well supported by Kovach (2009), who pointed out the usefulness of story. There is an elusive quality to narrative, organizing life in some order, and providing space and time for events to tell a story. It is structured with frames, which can be altered to reflect the complexities of one’s memories. Traveling back through time, revisiting past events, real memories or implanted memories, I must be able to allow the participant to reflect and process in order to capture the most accurate account of the event.

The narrative is also developmental; it can be used as a cultural tool to keep the script or story going. Narrative tells the story of the participant’s life, integrating the secular and moral representations, and is used to explore how people perceive and evaluate their lives in religious or spiritual qualities of folklore. Personal reflection of values, morals, self, family, society, humanity and higher order thinking, as Vygotsky (1978) described, in collaboration with those already familiar with the way to do and know things in the culture, allows for the development of the cultural self to occur and break through; where the significance of time and events are remembered and recorded.

There are developmental issues in narratives related to power that emerge in research interviews. Ideological dilemmas are theory-based units of analysis as proposed by Billig et al. (1988). They can arise in the academy from research interviews, expressing tensions between faculty and students. There are multiple and recurring cultural models that often creates difficulty and conflict. The critical narrative serves:

To bring indigenous knowledge to the academy, linking it to an educational reform that is part of a larger sociopolitical struggle. Critical narrative advocates for indigenous knowledge delineate the inseparability of academic reform, the reconceptualization of

science and struggles for justice and environmental protection. (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 137)

A critical narrative approach shares its connection with the psychosocial (part of the larger poststructuralist) research enterprise, “Examining the conditions for knowledge out of which disciplinary power arises, it offers critical leverages on psychological theories and practices” (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p. 4). Hoggett (2008) questioned how ‘crucial’ or perhaps ‘heuristic’ (Jefferson, 2008, p. 4) the difference between psycho and social is today (p. 6). The critical narrative looks at this struggle and takes it seriously as a problem of psychology. Piney (2000) sees the “narrative approach as being recognized as a means for examining the ways in which individuals make sense of their lives in a socio-historical context” (p. 27).

Personal narratives are rooted in time, place, and personal experience. The narrative approach has complexity and offers different ways of conceptualizing cultural and institutional, with individual and psychological perspectives. Emerson and Frosh (2009) stated that all psychological work requires constant examination for what it reveals in relation to power, privilege, dominance, assumptions regarding ‘human nature’ and the distinctions between what is considered to be ‘psychological,’ and what is not.

During the past quarter century, society has evolved. There have been advances in medicine, travel, communication and technology, all in one modern lifetime. To interweave the generations, our life stages, and cultures to include our social and political ideologies Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) discuss narrative methodologies used to look at the “unmet challenge of integrating culture, person and change” (p. viii).

Narrative inquiry seeks to clarify: injustices around issues of educational inequity, racial and gender discrimination, oppressive situations in response to conformity, agency in institutions, mental health in areas of sensitive issues, and the identity and development across

the lifespan and citizenship. It is framed as a metaphor, which explains its place as emotional-phenomena. Like that of a storyteller, the meanings are well thought-out from an academic perspective.

Indigenous women were at the center of many tribes before the settlers arrived; these women kept their families grounded. With the coming of the male dominant culture of the Euro-American, the Native woman was not recognized as a leader in or out of her home. The Native woman's voice appeared to be silenced, but this was not the case. They kept the family traditions and culture with stories told of their loss of home, loss of children and way of life. As the tribes faced genocide, many were scattered, to live on and off reservations, and marry within and outside of their tribes. Many living indigenous peoples are now of mixed blood; these stories are created from these realities.

The narrative relies on themes, drawn from a story that has time, truth, beauty, personality, and conflict. It is also a genre that reflects, "culturally developed ways of organizing experience and knowledge" (Dauite & Lightfoot, 2004, p. x). The narrative discourse moves the researcher to find the story in terms of social relations, interpretations of the past, and plans for future events. It is through discourse that meaning is found; the discourse is human communication in all of its forms, including non-verbal, the discussion between two people. The narrative examines phenomena and individuals' lives holistically. Thorough narrative discourse social histories that influence identity and development can be examined. The third incentive of using narrative discourse is the interconnecting forces that shed light on connections between the self and society.

Within this study, I met with the participants and talked with them about their stories, and then looked at the stories and the multifarious ethnic traditions and meanings they attached to

their experiences. The complexity and oppression that has been systematically enforced for so long calls for the stories of struggle, perseverance and success to be heard. It is time for the academy to set the history books straight.

Data from these dialogues were compiled and given a critical analysis. The focus was on the participants, their stories, their meanings, and the various interpretations in which indigenous knowledge was imparted. Critical methodologies addresses the issue of indigenous knowledge, removing the word ‘research,’ which is linked to European imperialism and colonialism (Smith, 1999, p. 1) Indigenous women from across the globe have lived in the natural world, living sustainably within their environment, passing the knowledge of generations through language, culture and heritage. Battiste, Henderson, and Youngblood (2000) have noted Indigenous knowledge of science, philosophy, oral literature, art, and acquired applied skills that have helped to sustain the indigenous peoples and their land for millennia.

Constructing narratives does not simply mean letting someone tell their story. In this case, recordings were made and notes were taken, and it was necessary to determine how intrusive additional questions should be while the participants were talking. This required clarity with each participant, before starting the session.

I asked these self-reflective questions before starting the sessions: How do I distinguish between thinking like a historian, and trying to understand at an emotional level the stories that are shared? How do I understand what happened and why it happened? How do I find the context, which did what, and what assumptions led them to do what they did? Seeing like a future policymaker who predicts a course of action that hopefully brings improvements, how do I dissect the true history and its shortcomings to see policy with open eyes before making critical decisions and recommendations?

Purpose Statement Introduced in Chapter One

The purpose of this critical narrative analysis is to give voice to the stories of indigenous women, particularly focusing on how they navigated and persevered through the educational system. Their stories illustrate how they overcame barriers and social injustices, and arrived at a place of self-actualization in the dominant culture, ascribing to the real world while reaching educational attainment. Personal narratives reveal memories and reflections that surfaced, which provide the context for understanding resistance and resiliency as a function of a cultural condition (Creswell, 2007).

Research Questions Introduced in Chapter One

These are the primary research questions for the study: How did indigenous women navigate through the educational system? How did the schooling experience influence their self-development and self- identity in the school system? Was there a time of oppression, either outward, internalized, or both? Was there an option to access opportunity as their white peers, or was there denial and closure?

Participants and Sites Introduced in Chapter One

The selection criteria for participants in this research project include female graduate students who have completed a master's degree or above. Participants were recruited from Colorado and New Mexico. Recruitment and advertisements were distributed through diversity offices at colleges and universities, and regional powwows. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and coded in the established conceptual framework.

Participants gave me personal email address and phone number if they were interested in participating in the study. Finally, participants were chosen through a purposeful sampling procedure. The participants were selected, “because they are believed to facilitate the expansion

of the developing theory” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 65). The goal was to interview four Native American women who have or have not lived on the reservation, but are related or connected to a particular tribe. The participants must self-identify and be unambiguous about their tribal identification. Each participant was interviewed and recorded separately. The critical and indigenous methodologies established by the conceptual framework were served by the experiences of each woman as they shared their individual stories of navigating the schooling system. The background of the project was explained to the participants prior to the start of the interview process. The critical narrative was inclusive, covering the participants’ earliest memories of their educational experiences, while integrating culture, personal experience, and change, telling their stories in a comfortable open environment, giving to their voice and story.

Once a participant was selected for participation, each was given a consent form to sign to confirm their selection. The form included a more detailed description of the project as well as a confidentiality statement.

Data Collection

Prior to the start of the data collection process, approval was secured from the Human Subjects Committee at Colorado State University. Each participant was interviewed a minimum of two times to ensure that rapport was established. Time was used to thoroughly investigate the stories being told, integrating the culture, individual, and change, while offering critical reflections on what they have done and experienced.

The structure of the interview was an open-ended questioning design that allowed participants to tell their personal story. Every interview was audio recorded with permission, professionally transcribed, and coded in iterative cycles to insure accuracy. The qualitative process also allowed for emerging thoughts, ideas and meanings to intertwine the many stories of

each individual into the web. The analysis continued as data collection was gathered, with emerging themes coming to the forefront. This was unveiled as the web unfolded through the qualitative process.

Data Analysis

Interviewing in qualitative research means listening to how people describe and perceive their experiences in their own terms. It is the strategy of choice to gain in-depth information about how people make sense of their own lives. The next step, a critical narrative analysis, details social histories that are important themes to identify and influence development. This was the approach used to make multiple intersecting story lines. Contextualized historical thinking was the thematic approach, this was obtained by providing: (1) background knowledge, (2) asking guiding questions, and (3) explicitly modeling contextualized thinking. Anderson (2005) notes the importance of the years of research and prior knowledge that help people make inferences. This was accomplished through background knowledge of historical events. The basic chronological order of the moments and awareness's about key developments are essential to piecing this web together.

There were various ways of referencing in the narrative that pointed to literal and figurative meanings. Those were: (1) ‘referential’ meanings pointing to objects, people, places, events and other phenomena in the physical world, and (2)‘evaluative’ meanings that indicated why the story was being told (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Critical narrative analysis is reflective. It alludes to an ethical dimension, with data analysis processes that build questioning and numerous units of analysis that address ethical questions about the supposition of narrative. There was continuous reflection and added questions for each individual story, with checks and balances of ethical validity to ensure that each participant’s story reflects her truth.

Meeting places, and an understanding of being recorded, were determined prior to each meeting. The first interview was described to participants as a conversation with a purpose. To gain rapport and a comfort level with the participants, an in-depth discussion of the project goals, outcomes, and the relevance of their participation and their contribution to the study were performed. Once the initial introduction and project goals were understood, the individual's personal story was fleshed out.

The richness of the participant's story was heard, and meanings, along with truth and understanding, emerged. This 'local' level, the telling of a personal story, reflected the personal voice and the language reflected historical context, while light was shed onto a world that has often been clouded by half-truths and myths.

The researcher continuously asked (self) if the individual's story presented a holistic picture of the phenomenon under investigation. To further clarify the narrative content, a focus on the exemplar models of 'what' was being said was used, to take ordinary events and work cautiously and methodically to unveil how sociological concepts could apply in everyday life. As Creswell (1998) contended, qualitative researchers declare a set of beliefs and assumptions to be addressed prior to determining the methodology for the study. It is obvious that the researcher's beliefs and assumptions play a significant role in this study, from the very first conception of this project, to the beginning of data collection and the final write up.

Creswell (1998) also stated five assumptions that were considered:

1. Ontological: deals with questions of reality
2. Epistemological: deals with the relationship between the researcher and the research topic.
3. Axiology: deals with the values of the researcher

4. Rhetorical: leading-using first person
5. Methodological: defining the process of inquiry and emergent or inductive method. (p. 16-19)

To classify and organize the analysis, the process of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Ziblar (1998) was used. They wrote that “two main independent dimensions emerge: (1) holistic versus categorical approaches, and (2) content versus form” (p. 12). All of these dimensions were used: first, looking at the individual’s story and life as a whole; second, looking for the phenomena in the social issues of their schooling; and third, looking at the substance of their stories. Keeping sight of the form of each participant’s life story, deeper meanings and connections to the current reality were sought. Narrative inquiry should not be limiting. The most important factor is to get the participants’ voice. If the participants’ family members read what they said, the family should hear that individual’s voice.

Once the materials were received from the transcriptionist, they were reviewed; the participant helped to fill in words or phrases that the transcriptionist was unable to translate. Sending a hardcopy to the participant for approval the hard copy was then returned, so that it was easier to augment the notes made during the interviews. At that time, ideas about emerging themes and possible relationships among them were noted. To ensure that their story was complete, a second interview with follow-up questions was conducted.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is an aspect of quality control within the research design that speaks to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the research. Ely (1991) stated that being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at least that

the process of the research is carried out fairly, and that the product represents as closely as possible the experiences of the people who are studied (p. 93).

The following strategies were used to establish trustworthiness in this study: (1) two follow-up interviews were conducted; (2) member checks, giving the complete transcription to each participant and asking them to review for accuracy, was performed; (3) peer review was used by asking committee members and colleagues to review the transcripts and field notes to ensure reliability and validity of the content, and also to review the writing and ensure that the participant's voice remained; (4) Self-reflection was used, this was done by utilizing a support group of peers who have years of experience with research and writing about Indigenous women's issues. During the process of analyzing the data and identifying themes, the peer group provided guidance and support.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND THEMES

WOMEN HAVE POWER. Men have to dream to get power from the Spirits and they think of everything they can, hoping that the spirits will notice them and give them some power.

But we have power, Children.

Can any warrior make a child, no matter how brave and wonderful he is?

Maria Chona, Papagp

Introduction

Chapter one described the study and its significance to the researcher. It provided a brief history of indigenous women, systematic deculturalization, cultural deprivation, and the content and scope of the study. Chapter two covered the literature and history of Indigenous women, how their people perceived them pre conquest, during the transition of the conquest, and post colonization. In Chapter three, the research design and methodological framework were discussed.

Chapter four contains a presentation of the findings and each participant's story. The purpose of qualitative research as it is relevant to this study is reviewed as well. This chapter explains what personal and environmental characteristics contributed to the completion of a master's or doctorate degree by these four indigenous women. It also explores whether their navigation through the schooling process had an impact on their self- identity, and their culture, at home and at school. This qualitative study was designed to explore the resiliency and

perseverance of four Native American women who have completed their master's or doctorate degree.

Perseverance

Part of the importance of this project is to show how women of Indigenous ancestry have persevered. Native women were the centers of their families throughout the past. They persevered through colonization, and the loss of freedom to roam the land. This is just a small fraction of a bigger story, with similar stories being told by others. These stories need to be heard from the mouths of those who are descendants of the first peoples. Indigenous people have been scattered like the embers in a fire, and much has been lost. We have lost much and we have been scattered like the embers in a fire. Many are now multiethnic, as families were separated and marriages took place between settlers, soldiers, and tribes by free will or force. Despite this, many hold within the fire and spirit of their ancestors burning. They have not forgotten the struggles nor will they let their children forget. The true history and ancestry will be remembered through this way. While the researcher is multi-ethnic, being a Native woman with Jicarilla Apache, Cherokee, Spanish (Spain) and Italian ancestry, however, it is the Native identity that is first and foremost, and also the deepest.

Tribes

The women of this study come from different tribes living on and off the reservation. They are resilient women who learned how to navigate the educational system. Collectively, they have experienced identity crises, oppression, marginalization and success. Individually, they have embraced their indigenous identity and pursued a degree in higher education, overcoming educational and personal obstacles. The women of this study come from different tribes but are

united by the indigenous race. According to geneticist Andrew Meriwether and colleague Robert Ferrell (1995), the history of this indigenous race in the Americas goes back a long ways:

The scant evidence available from archaeological sites suggests it could have been anywhere from 15,000 to 33,000 years ago. One widely held theory, based in part on linguistic analysis, holds that the migration occurred in three distinct waves, related to three well-defined groupings of Native American languages. (p. 411)

As the theory goes, this migration began when a land bridge connected North America to Asia, which was a continuation of the migration begun so long ago from Africa. The studies and time frames are controversial and there are now believed to be two migrations according to new genetic evidence. While this history is not a focus of this paper, it remains noteworthy and an interesting area of study. Despite maintaining cultures for thousands of years, when the Euro-colonizers arrived, they judged Indigenous peoples to be uncivilized. This was based on assumptions towards what they did not understand, and based on a difference from their own way of life. Columbus and the other explorers did not understand the behaviors of the Native peoples; they just assumed they had encountered an uncivilized culture that needed to be changed, even though Columbus did not know where he was.

Many indigenous tribes were matrilineal and took names from the mothers' family. But it was not true for all. For example, the Ojibwe was a tribe where children were part of the father's clan, although the women remained part of her family's clan (Child, 2012). With over 150,000 different indigenous tribes before the arrival of the colonizers, there were many cultural differences among the tribes. However, generally speaking, while Indigenous tribes had different belief systems, they all differed from the settlers' own Christian belief system. Jesuit priests were the first to arrive and begin the conversion of Native peoples to Christianity, but they were only the first wave that lasted into the twentieth century. Columbus and the other explorers did not understand the behaviors of the Native peoples; they just assumed they had

encountered an uncivilized culture that needed to be changed. Columbus did not even know where he was but that is another story.

There are many other U.S. women writers of color who share in the use of cross processes of personal and collective stories on female ethnic voices. Aurora Levins Morales, a Puerto Rican writer, has been a lecturer and social activist deeply concerned with issues affecting third world people, especially women. Her mother is a U.S. born Puerto Rican and her father is Jewish. She has dealt with her Puerto Rican identity from a global perspective. Being a member of the Latina Feminist Group, her essays are about sexual abuse and racial discrimination, but also ecology and social justice. She exemplifies the passion of the researcher's research.

As a Native woman with Jicarilla Apache, Cherokee, Spanish (Spain) and Italian ancestry, I have multiple ethnicities. However, my Native identity is primary. *Cuentos y testimonios* are the researcher's way of presenting the lived experiences of the women in the study in an artistic story presentation to create an alternate understanding of identity and community. *Cuento* is the art of telling a story and *testimonio* is used as an expression that comes out of intense repression or struggle, where the person bearing witness tells the story to someone else, who then transcribes, edits, translates, and publishes the texts elsewhere (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 13).

Part One: Introduction to and Interview with Each Research Participants

There were four interviews, one with each participant in her own voice telling her story. The goal is to identify the critical themes of each story and isolate the common threads among the participants. All participants' names have been changed, and place names, tribal affiliation, academic institutions, job titles, and names of family members have also been removed or changed to protect the privacy of each participant.

Interview with Emma

Our first interview was at a public library halfway between her home in the city and my house in the country in my small rural community for the study interview. There had been an early evening storm, with lightning, hail, light flooding and all of the nuances a summer storm would bring. Luckily, the storm passed before it forced the cancelation of the meeting. The storm causing traffic to slow down provided time to contemplate the interview.

I met Emma at the spring powwow earlier in the year. Emma was in the city during summer break working with her brother, who was now a successful attorney. She had just finished her first year at LSU where she is pursuing her doctorate degree in education. Emma completed her master's degree at a private college the year before. Due to some unpleasant experiences, which will be discussed later, she chose to complete her doctoral program at another university.

Emma was born on a reservation. She was the youngest child with a brother eight years older, and a sister four years older. When she was one and half years old, when her family left the reservation and they moved. The next move was in time for Emma to attend Kindergarten. After a year, they moved again to another state where she attended first grade. Emma remembers her kindergarten experience:

I remember my teacher, her name was Amy, and she was really generous, very kind, very loving. It was a half-day kindergarten. I was the only Native American in the classroom, the only minority. At that point, I didn't notice any cultural differences; in fact we had to do a self-portrait and I drew a blond-haired, blue-eyed girl and didn't have any real understanding of Native American or any other identity. I just found myself in my peers. I think is how I would describe it.

When I really started to realize I was different from everybody was when we moved to the new state. Again, I was the only minority in the classroom. I began to realize there were racial differences between people.

There were Latinos, Mexicans and Spanish classes; Spanish was the language, which her new classmates spoke:

I remember asking my mom and dad if we were Mexican. I was defiant in saying we were Mexican, and them trying to teach me that NO, we're Native American'. I didn't really have any type of grasp of what that was.

That year during winter break, they moved back to the reservation to care for her ailing grandmother:

This is the first time that I really remember, and recall living on, the reservation or even going to the reservation and kind of getting an understanding of what American Indians were and just understanding that there's this racial group that's more closely aligned with what we were.

Before leaving the state, the connection with the other group that looked like her brought awareness of differences among people. The Spanish language was different from the language her parents spoke at home, which was a Native American dialect. However, her parents used their native language only when they wanted to keep information from the children. Emma learned to use a Native word at school, which her classmates would not understand adding to her confusion. Now attending school in a new city there were white students who attended the school who were also learning Spanish. (This was in the new city) Emma identified herself with the Mexicans who were there. In the textbooks there were brown people and she had brown skin:

I began to realize that I had brown skin and I had brown hair and all that other stuff, so I associated myself closely with that. Even on television I'd see Latinos and Hispanics and say that "oh that's me," I was just closely aligning the two together.

It was after her grandmother became ill that her parents made the decision to move back to the reservation. This is when Emma got the biggest cultural shock:

I was in a classroom with all Native American students and yet there was that cultural gap because my cultural identity was very much white, because I was around white people all the time, I was very white. And so, the other Natives in the classroom ostracized me. They called me 'apple'. They called me all of these derogatory names and so I really didn't like school at that point and, in fact, I had to be carried onto the school

bus. I kicked and cried every day I had to get on the bus, and it was just an awful experience, because I was getting bullied by my classmates.

There was never this type of hostility or anything from my other classmates at the other schools. But, I think at that age you're just too young to really...I mean you're just beginning to familiarize yourself with race at that point, and since I was the only minority in the classroom, I think I was the only other... There was no other interaction with anybody else, so they just thought I was normal. They accepted me and my parents had the social capital to make sure that I was included in things like, I took ballet lessons, I took piano lessons, and many white social events and stuff like that I participated in. I participated in all aspects of the lifestyle that everybody was living in.

Emma was six years old when she moved back to the reservation and started school in the second grade. This began a time of many challenges in and out of the classroom:

I think one of the things that really separated me from my classmates was that I was also much accelerated because most of the material I had in the other schools was more advanced. So in the classroom I was bored all the time and so like I'd ask teachers, 'is there anything else for me to do?' The students would make fun of me and call me teacher's pet because I would be the first one done with an assignment or something like that. Or when we had to read, I'd be able to read without any real issue or real problems, so that also separated me from my classmates. My teachers became more frustrated because I was so hyperactive that I began disturbing the class because I'd be done with the assignment and I'd be bored sitting at my desk, so I'd start being hyperactive and disrupting the rest of the classroom. So they placed me in Special Ed class thinking that I had ADHD. I was there for like a month and then my parents found out about it. They went to the school and were furious.

After this, the school did some testing on Emma and found out that she did not have ADHD; instead she was special, just not for special education, but as in gifted and talented. At that point the principal of the school said, in Emma words:

He just basically said "you need to keep your daughter busy cause she's disturbing the classroom" and all this other stuff.

Her mother purchased puzzle books, and extra books to read at school while the other students did their regular work. She described the time,

"It wasn't the happiest moment in my life."

This is how Emma life at school was maintained until fifth grade, when she met a teacher named Mr. Hansen who understood her needs:

He kind of realized my talent and kind of made it a special case to give me extra assignments that would suit my level of need and all that other stuff, and also rewarded me. He had his top one and two percent of the classroom and he would give out books and stuff like that for rewards and treats for the classroom. So that was definitely very helpful. I also met a very good friend, her name was Ella, and she kind of kept the bullies away and at bay. She wasn't necessarily the most gifted, but she understood what I was trying to do. So she often asked me for help on assignments. It was the first time that I began realizing that I could teach other people and so, at that point I'd help her with her homework and stuff like that. OK, she would ask me to stay in on recess and we'd work on math problems or something like that. And so I began kind of tutoring her through the process of her education as well. We maintained our relationship until about eighth grade.

During Emma sixth and seventh grade, her level of achievement began to drop. The bullying hadn't stopped in spite of her friend's efforts. Her grandmother noticed the change in Emma and asked her one-day what was wrong:

I told her I was tired of getting bullied and all of the other stuff and I didn't think I wanted to go to school again. My parents literally had to drag me onto the bus again; I would cry before the bus came in the morning, she was asking me to interpret because she only spoke our native language with very little understanding of English. She shared with me that what I was trying to interpret was Looney tunes to her and at one point she started crying. I asked her what was wrong and she said in our native language something along the lines of 'not understanding and not knowing, the world hurts the heart, so I envy you because you can understand this world because I feel lost every day and nobody's there to interpret to me the world. It's like there is something special there at that school that I wish I could have.' My grandmother shared this story with me before I got on the bus. And so at that point I realized that there was something special about getting an education. There was something important, this idea of schooling and knowledge, and that I needed to figure out how to grasp it.

But at this point, I had a very aggressive attitude toward my fellow Natives because they just didn't...my peers would go to class and... I'd often be disruptive and they just didn't seem to care, or all they cared about was basketball, and they'd bring alcohol to class and then drink it in the corner and stuff like that; just normal teenage stuff. And so I became very anti-tribal and so I was like, 'OK, if I am going to do this, I can't be connected to the tribe at the same time.' And so I also lost a part of my identity when I did that and so, along with that, came my decision to attend a private school.

Before the ninth grade, Emma's grandmother passed away. She remembers the story and the lesson:

So the lesson she taught me when she shared that story, and just watching her struggles all throughout her life. The doctors were telling us that 'if she would only tell us that there was something wrong, then we would have been able to treat her a lot earlier and a

lot better'; and so along with that came me not wanting to learn the language because it seemed as a hindrance and something as a barrier.

When she went to the high school there was praise and being smart was a good thing:

I fell back in love with school. I fell back in love with knowledge and everything else along with it. I had great teachers and great access to a whole slew of all the resources I could possibly need.

Then there was college and another culture shock tested Emma's identity:

I was no longer the Native girl who pretended to be white; I was just the Native American girl who nobody knew. No one had ever reacted to me that way. My first year in college, I was just like saying 'No, I'm just,' I was just really frustrated when people asked silly questions like, 'Are you related to Pocahontas?' And very absurd, racist comments, made me so frustrated I didn't understand, I wasn't accepted by my own people and I am not accepted by you, so who am I accepted by? I had these conversations with a lot of other minorities, and I realized I wasn't the only one, that all of us had these stereotypes attached to our skin color and to our race; the reason that people were reacting so negative to me on the reservation was because I had socioeconomic privilege.

Emma began grappling with the whole idea of oppression and privilege and understood why those on the reservation did not like her, "And there are a whole slew of others like me who have haunted them," she said.

According to Emma, there were others she met like her with socioeconomic privilege. In her second year of college, she met a mentor, who asked her important questions like:

What is so wrong with being Native American? What is so wrong with being Native? Like, 'you have an identity that is so great, and you have persevered over so many oppressive acts, you should wear your identity with Honor.'

And so, at that point I began trying to uncover, and trying to understand, why I was so negative toward my tribe. It wasn't necessarily because there was something... I was hurt and I needed to...

She was asked, "Were they oppressing you?"

Exactly, she said, and so I was hurt and so...

She paused, seemingly lost for words. Again the researcher said, "That hurts, when your own people oppress you." Her response was simply, "Yes."

Emma spent the next year going through much healing, reliving experiences of the past. All she wanted was an education, but was haunted by the past and continually questioned herself, asking:

What's wrong with me? I didn't want to be just Emma the Native; I was still trying to navigate my identity. My mentor knew I needed to heal those wounds and the only way to do that was for me to understand who I was.

Emma lived in a multicultural house during her second year of college. This was recommended by her mentor, a safe environment where she could explore her real identity, heal her wounds, and understand who Emma really was. Her mentor encouraged this living environment, suggesting that exploring one's identity alone can do more harm. He had told Emma this after drawing on his own personal experiences in college.

She began exploring the literature on identity by taking sociology classes. Her first epiphany that her experiences were not unique and she was not alone was when she took an Enrichment Elating Quality class. It was the beginning of conversations and she asked herself:

Why is there this barrier around something, around race? It's not all in my mind because, in a lot of sense, when I talk to my family members and all the other stuff, they used to tell me "Ooh don't worry about it, just leave those people alone. You don't need to deal with that."

It was hard for Emma to have conversations with her sister and brother, who were both older. They did not have similar experiences on the reservation. They were both successful, and neither had to go back and attend classes on the reservation, and feel oppression from their own people. Emma had thought there was something wrong with her. However, research showed her something different, and that is what began to instill confidence in her.

It was by living in the multicultural house during her sophomore year that Emma grew and expanded in her perspective. Having a roommate who was her opposite played a role in her growth. Her roommate was a Chicana who looked white, had blue eyes and blond hair, but was

very open and proud of her heritage, with all of the cultural characteristics and prides that Emma lacked.

I looked exactly like any member of my tribe and could pass for every other Native woman. If you lined us up, you probably couldn't tell the difference. We mirrored each other; my cultural identity was kind of shaky because I didn't feel like I have a cultural identity. Learning from her, that it's okay to be proud of who you are and be proud of where you come from, and being proud of the heritage that is so rich of your racial identity, because I've also thought that race was bad. I didn't want to talk about race. I didn't believe there was racism in the world. Ya know we live in a world where people don't see my skin color and this other stuff. So in my head, I began to tear apart all those myths that we live in a race-free, colorblind world and nobody sees race and all this other stuff.

Emma learned from her roommate and became more involved in minority student affairs. She was elected president of the multicultural house the second semester of her sophomore year. During her senior year, she became president of the Native American Student Alliance. If you asked Emma when she entered; who she had become was much different than who she was freshman year:

I probably said I'd never do anything like that. We put on a powwow so I thought it was pretty big considering the school was a predominantly white institution. In fact, the two people that helped me do it was a Mexican male and a white girl who had never been to a powwow.

Emma says she was grateful for her time at that institution and for the people who gave her the resources to say:

It's okay to be who I am, and giving me the tools to be able to tear away, and to better understand why I felt that way, and why there's this system built to protect the privileged and to oppress others, to guard privilege.

This experience changed Emma career choice. She originally wanted to become a high school counselor, because of her own struggles in high school. During high school, she experienced the onset of her mother's illness, the passing of her grandmother, and with her dad working outside the home; it meant that the burden of taking care of her mother was left to her. She felt that this seemed to be a typical scenario for many high school students. She said,

Because there's this whole other world that doesn't end with 8 to 5 classroom schedule that a student has.

She felt that these students needed help 'navigating the emotional life that happens during and after classes'.

Because I also felt like, with my high school counselor, he was very involved with my after school life, which nobody has ever really cared about. And so, just having somebody to go to say like 'this isn't anything school related, but it's affecting me' was very helpful in getting me through high school. That's why I decided to become a high school counselor.

After going to college and gaining a better understanding of privilege and oppression, she decided to slightly change her career path:

I also wanted to help students navigate the higher education system and just realizing that there's other things external to academics and intellectual conversations that students need help with, and it's being ignored.

Unfortunately, Emma had a negative experience in college with the only advisor she had that was also Native American:

She was really bad at her job. When we proposed that we wanted to do a powwow, she laughed in our face and told us that it couldn't happen; and that she didn't want to do all the work, so we better make sure that we can do it; and she wasn't going to fundraise with us so we better find out how to do it.

To, Emma this was disturbing, that in a:

Rich environment like a college campus, not having somebody who looks like you and understands where you came from and the whole cultural aspect, not willing to lend you a hand of support was beyond my understanding. And so I wanted to be that point person.

After Graduating and finishing her undergraduate degree, Emma moved from her private Liberal Arts College to a larger private university. This university had a higher education program that fit the criteria that Emma sought. Being a Native American, and coming out of a private liberal arts college, she was recruited heavily by this private institution. The professor that recruited her actually influenced her decision to go there. However, she was very disappointed when she arrived because the professor was no longer there. The second

disappointment was that the funding for her graduate assistantship was cut. She still had a position, just not the one she expected. She was assigned to work in housing, in apartments, an area where she felt she had no qualifications. Before having to take that position, she received an email announcing an opening for an American Indian Support Services Coordinator position at the Center for Multicultural Services. She gained the position, but also gained something else:

I met my next mentor, AJ, who definitely held my hand throughout the entire process and helped me...not only gave me the reassurance when I was shaky and thinking I couldn't do it, (because I still didn't feel like I had that strong cultural background to be able to relate to students,) and just feeling that, at the end of the day, with all my privileges, I'm not typical in any sense of the way, so how am I supposed to help these students through something I don't know. I didn't want to become a façade and pretend that I knew, and that I understood, because that can be equally as damaging, especially with as goal-oriented as they are. And going to a university so far away from home, I didn't want to become just this fake person that is lying to them and failing them.

Emma then started talking about her roommate and their similarities, of both having college-educated parents and coming from minority backgrounds:

Just feeling that, ya know, you kind of feel that you're still a two-faced person because you have all of these privileges, at the same time you're still a racial identity and there's nothing you can do about it. Understanding you can change your privileges and use it to help other people, and just helping me understand that there is something beneficial of my cultural identity, and also not being so worried about sharing that with students and saying, 'I do have privileges, but at the same time I know how to help you and I can help you do this.' So that was very beneficial in helping me through the process.

While working on her master's at this university, Emma spoke of only having two professors the entire time she was there. :

I became very frustrated, not having the intellectual support to help me do what I wanted to do, because I wanted to tap into American Indian support services. When I talked about publishing some of the work I'd been doing with the students that I was working with, the professors pretty much told me that they didn't have time. I began looking at other institutions.

Emma decided to stay for her second year, not because of academics, but because her parents had just relocated to the area, and her brother and sister both lived nearby. Her sister had a three-year-old daughter and her brother just had his first child. About her decision, she said:

I was like my family is here and my entire world is really in this area, so I'll stay.

The decision to stay at the university was a bit of a compromise to her academics. Emma found the literature in her area lacking and wanted to publish, but found no support. She was also still working for housing, an area she did not particularly want to be. At this time, Emma was still working for housing and she was also deemed the Diversity Committee Lead. This led her to being required to fill out the university's Diversity Assessment:

They told me to do all this stuff. I was like, well if you're going to tell me to do this; I'm going to tell you the problems with your department. The director was very aggressive, a very chauvinistic man and he'd call a couple of the coworkers derogatory names and everything else. It frustrated me and upset me, and I told him that. And I was told to put that in the document, just tell us what you want us to do and all this other stuff.

There were individuals who asked Emma to take the lead on the Diversity Committee. She was asked to create a survey and submit it, but they would not let her see the results. This became an issue for Emma because she was forthright and honest in her assessment, but did not feel she was being treated mutually:

So I was like 'OK,' we'll just let that go.' "So I did the case study on the sole purpose of understanding the diversity initiatives and all the other stuff. Then they said, 'Well since you are already doing this for class, you can turn it into your teacher. I turned it in and gave a copy to the director of my area of the department.

According to Emma she was then asked to do a case study on the housing department. After she turned in the results of this case study, to Emma's surprise, she was called in to the director's office:

She was furious for at least three minutes. I got one of the worst yelling's I've ever received in my life, telling me that I was unprofessional, unethical and that this required the conduct review board... "I'm going to get you kicked out of school, you're never going to work in Higher Education again if I have a say in it' and all this other stuff. She just unloaded on me.

She didn't understand what she had walked into, nor did she think she had done anything wrong. Emma went back to her professor and asked if there was anything wrong with what she

had done. He clarified all concerns, pointing out some areas that were harsher than others, but he said that in a Diversity Assessment it's going to be harsh, and that no one will achieve one hundred percent on a Diversity Assessment. This became the last straw for Emma. There was no support for her professional endeavors, no support to publish and now in this situation, when she solicited the faculty for help, she was told:

Well we stay on our side, and they stay on their side. The professionals stay over there, we work over here." And so I said well that kind of defeats the purpose of studying Higher Education and having a job in a Higher Education Institution.

It was around one or two a.m. when Emma submitted her application to the next institution of higher learning, she was admittedly:

Frustrated with my experience and just feeling a lack of support for what I wanted to do. I was really questioning whether or not I really want to do this, if this is the environment that is often created when you approach these issues. Am I really the person to do it? So I submitted, and then I got a phone call from Dr. T., director of the American Indian Leadership Program at the institution I applied to. He said, "If you're in the neighborhood, stop by, I'd love to talk to you in person; I'd love for you to come to school here.

During spring break, Emma had a trip planned to that part of the country and decided to meet Dr. T. They met, and had a four-hour conversation about American Indian education, Emma educational experiences, and her goals for leadership programs for minority students. The meeting solidified her decision and she knows that she must do this for herself. She knew her mother would continue to regress and she knows that she would need to be a caretaker at some point in time. But until then, her opportunity was for her to go across the country and experience life and learning. No other members in her family had moved far from home, so she was the first.

Through the transition, Emma begins to reflect that even in her undergrad experience, there were maybe three other Native Americans:

But I also bumped heads with them all the time and I couldn't really understand. I was like 'what am I doing wrong that I am not understanding?

She realized that the more she looked at the privilege and oppression models, the more she felt there was something wrong with our leadership styles in the United States; minorities aren't getting the tools they need to go back to their communities:

Why is it such a big transition for people who receive an education to go back home? And then, I was thinking about when I moved back to the reservation, how different I was in just the way I acted, and I'm very outspoken and all this other stuff, where they don't ask questions in the classroom, there's just this culture in the classroom and this school culture that is not...there's a difference between what I experienced and what I consider a classroom, and what the culture teaches you.

These were the topics that filled the conversation with Dr. T. She was excited to start this program. However, she experienced another setback.

Emma said this was much of the discussion she had with the director:

And then he got a job at USC; pretty much the same thing when I entered my Master's program, the professor who heavily recruited me leaves before I began the program.

She did not find out that the director of the American Indian Leadership Program had left until she arrived on the first day of orientation. The new director was also new to the program, so there was a learning curve for both Emma and her new advisor:

She's okay, but we don't have the instant spark I had with the director. Just her getting used to the new directorship this past year and all these other hats that were thrown at her at the last minute because her co-director just completely left without notice. I wasn't the only one left hanging dry. So the new advisor and I kind of bonded in that sense, we were both kind of abandoned in that intellectual academic sphere. I still don't really have a close relationship with her and so right now I'm kind of in this...all of my ideas of what I wanted to do for my dissertation and everything else is kind of in hiatus because there's a lot of questions and I don't really know where to go with it. With the American Indian Leadership Program I was looking forward to having a professor for when I say, 'This is the American Indian education issue that I want to address,' and not be given this funny look or told, 'Look, you go play with that, but I can't really help you,' which was often what I got from my professors at my last school. 'Ok you go play with your theory over there, and then, when you're done with it, we'll stamp an A on it because you thought of something that nobody else has. But we won't support you in getting published.'

At this point Emma realizes that her ideas needed to be rethought:

I had to be supported, as I thought I was, in kind of a myth because with the new American Indian Leadership Program had been there for forty years, and so I was like

'Ok, the professors in this school must be familiar with it. It's been there for forty years.' But I've also realized that they kind of carved out that type of area that I was talking about-'you go play with your Indian education over there.' They carved that into the school. That's frustrating, but at the same time, I've also been able to create relationships with classmates and everybody else where it's like 'no, this space isn't appropriate,' And sometimes, in some classes, people will say that, and it's like 'this isn't an Indian education class, why are you bringing up Indian education?' And it's like, 'because it's education and because it's important to the conversation, and if you so happen to have a chance, or you have an Indian child or an Indian sitting in your classroom, I want you to be prepared so they don't have to experience what I've had to experience.'

It is important as a researcher to open a conversation that is inclusive, and take the opportunity to use a teachable moment. Emma goes on to say:

So that kind of changes the conversation. I've become very creative in turning questions and frustration into...kind of like I said...(she pauses)...you have to be patient.

Emma was reassured that she was heard by the researcher, 'Yes I understand, being patient and knowing how to turn a conversation, making it fit into a larger context.'

And also making it, I want to say swallow able, but that's not really the word I'm looking for. But not being so defensive, where they actually listen to you. I have been in a conversation where I've been very heated and that's reached nobody. They stop listening to me and that's not what I wanted to happen.

The researcher then stated her belief that as a native it is important to know when to stop and let others take in the words, when to be silent and allow time for reflection, to know when to speak. Her response was:

That's where our Nativeness and our Indianess come in.

Yes I keep small pocket books of Native women and Native men, leaders, anonymous quotes of wisdom, spirituality, silence, listening, mother earth, sky moon, harvest, animals and all that is sacred. I read and I listen to the voices of the past.

My grandmother used to get frustrated with the 'Golden Rule,' 'treat others as you want to be treated,' she's like, 'NO! You treat people how they want to be treated, not like you want to be treated.' It's like yeah, who are you to say your feelings are the only valid ones. Maybe you like green and the other person involved doesn't like green, so you need to treat people like they want to be treated. That's something that I always found interesting.

Emma then began reflecting on her schooling experience, she felt comfortable in the classroom; it was the playground that frightened her. She could figure out the problems that were brought to her; it was the social environment that was the challenge. Emma was navigating who she was, but was uncomfortable with her identity:

I think now I have had to become more comfortable with challenging my peers whereas before, in my earlier years, I was terrified to do that. So I think now I've become more comfortable in whom I am as a person and just being proud of being Native American. As my friend Sky told me, 'there is a huge honor of being here today, to be able to survive and to overcome and adapt to a changing world that's so drastically different, and being forced to do it, and having to sacrifice liberty and land to do it is, I think, a huge distinction that we need to teach our children to do.'

Emma struggled after her first semester of graduate school because of her earlier experiences, not wanting to return to college, but still wanting to become an educator. Her mom asked her if it was academic problem, but no, she got normal grades. Her first struggle and concern; she really didn't know if she would fit in. She felt that there were still so many silly questions that had been asked, such as 'are you related to Pocahontas?' Her mother did not know what to do, so she drove her around town and showed her the alternative to school. "I have nothing for you," she told Emma, as she drove her to the Wal-Mart. She told Emma, as Emma remembers it:

You can work at Wal-Mart, but there is nothing here for you, there's no resources. Look at the children. They're the same age as you, there's depression in their eyes. I need you to go help them because there's sadness that exists here that doesn't exist anywhere else.

Emma had been fearful of the social environment, but this drive to Wal-Mart with her mother opened up a new reality for her:

Just understanding with my privilege and everything else, I want to be able to help them understand that it's okay to be who you are. I feel like a lot of times they go to school and they're being told they have no value because 'you need to learn this Euro-American culture and history' and all this other stuff, 'your culture is of no value; who you are is of no value,' well I'm going to turn on you; you're of no value, because I'm succeeding, and not necessarily being told that I had no value, but knowing that I didn't exhibit any of the characteristics that the other students did.

Emma then remembered in a social context from grade school, of what was acceptable and what wasn't, and her frustration with the other kids telling her she wasn't Native, and of her wanting to tell them it's okay.

Emma then recalled her dad's experience in college, when he wanted to become mainstream. He told her about the other Natives in his class, who wrote about making 'fry bread' in his anthropology class:

He told his peers, 'That's not going to earn you a good grade because that's not something that's seen as having value to the professor because it's irrelevant.' I think just from hearing him talk about stuff like that, and when we would ask him words in our native language or why we didn't know our own language, he would say, 'In mainstream America it's not going to get you anywhere. You need to master the English language.' My father also made reference to one of the great Native American chiefs; he talked about climbing the ladder of education and using the white man's word as a weapon. So for him, it's like your culture is one aspect of it, but if you're going to succeed in this world, and dominate the world, you need to fight the battle with their tools. So it was also that type of thing, of knowing that the weapons that are associated with Native American culture are not going to get you anywhere, you need to master the other tools that are not of our culture.

For Emma disassociating herself with the things that were Native had been part of her family's role. The Native American was invisible:

So I think that was also a way that I learned that lesson, but not necessarily directly. Like, you have your Native American week and all that other stuff, but it's something more playtimes and something extracurricular or co-curricular it's not necessarily anything within the curriculum; it's rarely discussed so it's not something... It's something that's kind of subliminal, messages that you're getting from your dad and from school in general. The only times you talk about Native Americans in class is a little excerpt here and there. And it was often associated with an activity, so I associated that with playtime. It was like well, that's not really of any importance so let's get back to the real stuff.

Native Americans are associated with playtime from the Hollywood westerns of cowboys and Indians. "They talk about Native Americans in historical times, it's usually, you cross the Bering Strait and that was it. And every once in a while you talk about the Mayans, the Incas and maybe the Navajo code talkers when you go to WWII, but really you don't talk about Native Americans. And when the teachers would bring it up in class it was more like, we're going to do this little venture, but we're going to get back to it, so it wasn't real important stuff.

They were just brief short stories or little adventures about Native Americans. Emma parents had attended college. Her father has a bachelor's degree in accounting, and her mother has one in Biology and works with the health-industry. Her brother works in the field of criminal justice and her sister has an MBA; they were all born on the reservation. The only one that had any schooling on the reservation, however, was Emma's family does not appear to understand her academic desires. Emma has found a passion to return to her Native roots and help others pursue their academic goals. She has been writing and would like to publish. Emma's family does not appear to understand her academic desires:

But even with my brother and sister, and just not understanding what I go through in classrooms and stuff, or asking and pushing my classmates to understand why this is important and being told 'this isn't important constantly.' I had an argument and debate with my sister a couple of weeks ago because I was telling her that I was writing a paper and I was hoping to get it published by the end of the year, and she's like, 'Oh publishing doesn't mean anything, it's not of any value, are you going to get paid for it?' Everything's about money, do you know what you're going to get paid and all this other stuff, and just having that disconnect of really understanding that. I remember telling her, 'This is important, I'm offering a form of knowledge that nobody is touching, I'm really excited about it.' It's completely over her head. And it's like, if you're not going to support me then don't say anything because I go into classrooms and I'm told exactly the same thing over and over again.

Emma then shared an example from her first semester at LSU with her sister, when she wanted to do a research project on American Indian students and the professor told her that the population was too insignificant:

Just being told that is like, well, that my sample size is too small to be significant. So I was telling my sister, 'You're telling me exactly what people are always telling me every day, so it is really frustrating when I hear it from my own family members that they don't support what I'm doing.'" "She was like, 'No, that's not what I'm saying!' "Then rephrase what you're saying cause it sounds exactly like that." She really didn't have an answer. So she is just like, 'I don't understand it.' So maybe that's where I'm coming from. It's like, 'I'm sorry, I can't help your ignorance, but you don't want to listen at the same time, so I don't know what you want me to do.'

I sense the frustration, of family disconnect it seems to be a familiar nemesis. Emma begins talking about her brother:

I have a brother who we've been at an impasse because he is just doesn't relate to anything I'm doing. So then, we do get back together and he's telling me all these things about what's going on his life. So then, I start sharing with him about my research and what I'm doing, and he just tunes me out. I don't know that he's tuned me out until he starts going 'oh yeah' and he's over there talking to someone else and I'm here talking. Oh you weren't even listening to me, I'm thinking. I'm like, "He wasn't even listening to me.

She gave another example of a disconnection and trying to reach out: Emma calls her mother who was not available.

So I called my sister and was talking about 15 minutes explaining a story and then, I was like 'are you there?' And I was like, my phone probably blacked out or something. She's like 'Yeah, yeah, yeah,' and so I ask, 'What do you think?' and her response is 'hmmm,' and I say, 'you weren't paying attention were you? She says, 'No I'm sorry.' My response is 'what are you doing?' She was on Face book! I understand if you are doing work or something but you are on Face book! I was so disheartened because I had a hell of a day. I got in an argument with one of my classmates because, at one point in the argument, he said (we were talking about the importance that the Bureau of Indian Affairs plays in Indian education so we can't just send the federal dollars back when they tell us that we need to follow the standards of No Child Left Behind) 'Well what happened hundreds of years ago, we're no longer talking about that.' I was just so frustrated with him and I got in this huge argument with him and we were just going back and forth. I was trying to explain it to my sister and then I was just like 'I don't even get support from my family, what am I doing here? Is this really not where I'm supposed to be, because nobody understands what I'm talking about?

"Yeah, I know," the researcher responded with alliance and understanding, 'But we can't give up. We can't give up because there are people out there, those people count on us.'

"Exactly," she responded.

Interview with Julie

A name was given to me through a colleague; I sent an email to Julie telling her about the project. Less than a day passed before a reply was received indicating her interest. A call was quickly set up and the details of the study were discussed.

Julie reserved a room on the campus.

It was my goal to get there early, but was earlier. After the greetings we began discussing the project and the protocols. As soon as the paperwork was read and signed I turned on the

recorder. Julie is a member of a tribe. Julie was born and raised in this area, and moved further west in 1987. That was the same year she had her first son.

Julie works at a State University in a research department. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, with a specialization in Archeology. Julie received her master's degree in 2006 in cultural anthropology. She had a book published from her research. She is currently seeking a second master's degree in creative nonfiction writing. "I love going to school, let me make that clear," she said, "—I love going to school." This appears to be a common theme to all of the women involved in this study.

The interview began by asking about her earliest so take us back to your earliest school experience:

My earliest school experience was in a small town where I grew up, at four years of age. The teacher at the one room schoolhouse said I could come up and I could attend classes. I guess maybe there were eight kids in that school, and the school went up to eighth grade. In 9th grade, they went to the high school in a larger community 90- miles away. Back at the school house, while everyone is doing their school work, we just learned how to sit still and listen to instructions, and kind of manipulate the world around us. We did a lot of small motor skill work, like gluing, turning a stick figure into a two dimensional doll. I felt it was a really nice introduction to school. In first grade, I had a wonderful teacher; I used to talk a lot in class. I used to get in trouble all the time for talking in class. One time she said, 'Julie I need you to come up here and sit by me at my desk.' I went up and sat by her desk. I'm doing something and somewhat embarrassed, but I'm not terribly embarrassed, and I started chatting with the teacher.

The next year we moved, and I went to kindergarten at age 5. Kindergarten was just an introduction to school, I think it's what pre-school is now. We just learned how to sit still and listen to instructions, and kind of manipulate the world around us. We did a lot of small motor skill work, like gluing, turning a stick figure into a two dimensional doll. I felt it was a really nice introduction to school. In first grade, I had a wonderful teacher; I used to talk a lot in class. I used to get in trouble all the time for talking in class. One time she said, 'Julie I need you to come up here and sit by me at my desk.' I went up and sat by her desk. I'm doing something and somewhat embarrassed, but I'm not terribly embarrassed, and I started chatting with the teacher.

She began giggling as she recalled the events:

She just looked at me and started laughing, at one point she just said, you know, you're really a pleasure to have up here. When I looked back, I thought, what a nice way of

getting into trouble. It really didn't define that I was a horrible person because I couldn't be quiet in class.

Julie said she had a good first year in school. However, in second grade, when the teacher she had was very harsh and she remembers being yanked by her hair. The teacher was walking down the aisle while two girls were talking, she remembers the teacher grabbing a lock of both girls' hair. She doesn't remember much more about that year in school:

In third grade my teacher's daughter was in my class and I always seemed to be in trouble there. I was still talking a lot, and the teachers were getting irritated with me. Up until that time I had been doing traditional math. That year they decided to bring in the concept of *New Math*, which is very abstract thinking. In first grade I got an A, in second grade I got a B, in third grade I got a C and went home in tears.

Julie recalled her frustration with the new math, and in fourth grade she began to dislike school and, she disliked her teachers. Her math grade dropped to a D, even though she did well in her other classes:

This time was like a perfect storm I just didn't like the teachers; I didn't like how I felt in the classrooms. There was nothing anyone said overt toward me; it was just how they acted toward me, which was dismissive at best. It wasn't until much later I wondered how much of a role that being native played into it. Indians in this area, in general were considered dirty, thieving, stupid, alcoholics, immoral and government subsidized. In general, we were a thorn in the side of the law-abiding white folks that lived around there.

I remember when I was in second or third grade and a kid who was probably hyperactive, very impulsive and ran away from school. He was going to get in trouble for something so he ran out of the school and off the school grounds. I saw a teacher take a belt out of the closet and put it behind her back. She told his kid if he came back he wouldn't get in trouble. I am watching this and thinking if he comes back he is going to be in so much trouble. That was the first time I remember thinking, you know, teachers lie.

In fourth grade I had a nice teacher, she was caring and calm and I was sad when we moved. We moved when I was going into the fifth grade. I went to another rural school. At this school the principal was also the teacher of my fifth grade class. On the first day of class we were filling out paperwork. We were living on the coast, where Native people lived up and down the coast. My teacher asked me what tribe I was and at the time I told him. He asked me how to spell it; I had no idea how to spell it. Years later looking back I thought, he was surrounded by the language group and did not know how to spell their name. That says a lot about how really invisible Indians were. I think the school I went to in a town nearby, there wasn't a big Native population.

I remember riding the bus one time, and there was a big Indian kid who sat in the back. He never talked; he didn't interact with anyone, just sat in the back and kept to himself. On one of the long bus rides home one kid started giving me a hard time. The big Indian kid said, 'Leave her alone.' The other kid says, 'What do you care, blah, blah, blah.' And he's like, 'I'm telling you, just leave her alone.' I looked at him and smiled and he did not smile back. I just remember thinking; you know he was really scary in just the way his world was going to be. And so I always kind of wondered what his experiences within that community were, because he didn't seem to want to align himself with much of anybody.

Now that we were on the coast, I recall being the only Indian kid in the school. Then they switched me back to traditional math because they hadn't adopted the new math yet. At that point I had no idea what type of math I was learning because the two concepts do not go together. I feel that you need a strong foundation in one math or the other. By that time, I had given up on math and concentrated on writing. I had been writing stories, I had been writing poetry, for years, and that seemed to be where I was going to excel. I do not recall negative stuff during that time. In seventh grade, I think is when the negative stuff started. You don't know if it's associated with race or if it's just associated with you. I broke up with this one kid and he told his friend, he said you tell her not to walk anywhere near the buses by herself because I'll rape her. I don't know if that was said to any of my white friends. I don't know if that would have been said at all and we certainly didn't talk about it.

Soon after, Julie's family moved again, to where she attended eighth grade:

When I was in eighth grade, we had moved to this town and I began attending a really large school in an urban environment. It was so artistic, it had geometric classrooms, and carpeting and the classrooms were open where you could wander in and out of rooms. You could go down into the library and listen to music. This was the newest school in town. It was the school that none of the traditional folks wanted their kids to go to. It had base kids going there from a nearby air force base. That was like the best thing that happened to me. You had kids whose parents had been stationed in England, or Ireland, or Spain or Japan. You know, you would talk to these kids about what their experiences were, which probably weighs into why I became an anthropologist. I found their experiences absolutely exciting.

I had a science teacher who I had a good relationship with; he was a really nice guy. I'm not an athletic person, but I decided to try out for track. I guess I thought I would run across the country or something like that. You had to run around the school fifteen times to make a mile. The coach just sat there watching, and every time I went by him I caught his eye and I would start laughing, so the fourteenth time around I burst into laughter and fell to the ground and cracked up; I didn't go out for track. You know, he thought that was pretty funny. My math teacher was a great guy also and by this point I am consistently getting D's and D minuses in math. This is the part I don't understand, why don't people look at a transcript and say, 'Why is Julie excelling in all these other areas, why are her math grades so low, like, what's going on?' But everyone seemed to be okay with the fact that my math grades sucked and everything else was fine. So it was the same

thing, I knew he was frustrated because I just wasn't getting it. School mattered less than the social environment.

It was another year and, another move, this time to a small town, where Julie began ninth grade in a tough school:

I kind of turned into a tough kid, just because if you were that, people left you alone. I really don't remember a ton about that school except in math class (laughs) this is like definitive you can tell in my world. There was this Indian kid in there and he was a member from a nearby tribe. He and I would always talk, and the teacher had placed me in front of his desk and George behind me. So George and I always talked. George was maybe like a normal boy, I don't know but he had sex on the brain all the time. I was just appalled at a lot of the things he said. He wasn't offensive towards me. It was just what he tends to talk about was offensive most of the time (laughs). So anyway on the other hand, I was mildly interested because it was such a taboo subject. It was just me and my parents that was my family. There was no sex talk, there was no anything. But I remember the teacher was just really kind of creepy. I would sit there and he would always check me out every day and see what I was wearing, if it was a scoop neck his eyes went down to my chest. If I wore a short skirt, you know, it was just creepy. There were fifteen kids in the class and two natives, George and me.

So in tenth grade I went to a bigger High School, but with school consolidation, there were fewer and fewer native kids. There weren't many to start with, and even though the reservation was relatively nearby, they had their own high school. So if we got kids, it would be the urban Indian kids, and a lot of the time the urban Indian kids would go to the other high school. That's where people on the lower socio-economic ladder went. That's what I think is interesting, you know there is a lot of people that work for the BIA and places like that, where did their kids go to school? I don't know that they went to my high school; there just weren't that many kids. You know George , the other native kid? I don't know what happened to him after ninth grade.

There's another thing I should mention, 'I'm adopted'. I am a Native, but a white family that took me out of the environment and adopted me. I lived a very different lifestyle, and was told by my white family not to interact with Natives. They had taken me out of the environment and they didn't want me to find my way back in. That was a really strong semi-spoken statement (laughs). I didn't interact with a lot of Natives, or the few that went to my classes.

In tenth grade, I started taking a writing course and I really liked the writing course. I was on a college track. That was I think my parents went to school and told my teachers I was on the college track, which meant I had to do my last year of required math. Geometry was the required math and was a little easier to grasp just because it was spatial. I remember the teacher coming by, there was a square grid and one of the questions was; would it be faster to walk down one side of the square and across the other or would it be faster to go diagonal? You look at it and think if you straighten this out you're going to be here. He came by and said 'Wow, that is really good,' at that point I realized he just

thought I was a moron, because I thought, this is easy to see. I couldn't explain it, I couldn't do any of it in a formula, and I couldn't do any of that. I started to realize that I was seen as some kind of moron in the schools. At that point in tenth grade is when I started feeling, I've got to go up and beyond in everything I do. And at that point everything I did I put a lot more work into it.

I took Spanish class and I loved the class. The woman was from South America, she had a wonderful sense of humor and I liked it. There were two American Indian girls in the class and I was able to talk with them. There was another kid who was Hispanic, he had blond hair and bright green eyes, but he had a different way of talking about him that the other kids didn't have. There was a Hispanic kid in choir. I mean I really liked going to these classes and seeing another brown person, even if we weren't going to be friends. It was just so nice to see another brown person.

In 1975, I worked up in a National Park for the youth conservation corps. There were sixteen total, eight girls and eight boys ages fifteen to eighteen. We were there to build trails, and fix things at the park. It was manual labor for the park service and to get an experience away from home. One of the gals up there was also an adopted American Indian. So she and I really connected and talked about what that experience looked like. She was the first person that was honest enough about how difficult it was to live that life, of being physically Indian and culturally white in this area. There's a lot of pressure on you, you know, to be one or the other. To be able to know things you would have no way of knowing, or to deny things that you can't deny because that's been your life. I mean there's a lot of pressure put on you when you're on that boundary.

Julie was asked about her adoption. What age were you when you were adopted?

I was eighteen months when I was taken away," she said. "And you know, I graduated high school." She made the comment about high school, which appeared random but just as quick as she made it, the conversation quickly changed and moved back to the continuation of the story. I did not interrupt Julie at that point. Reflecting back and rereading the story, was she really rescued?

I had strong science skills with the exception of math. I had taken a chemistry class, and I enjoyed chemistry and I had enough maths to get through. I got a C in chemistry. I talked with the teacher and said, I'm on the college track and I have to take physics. What do you think of that? He said I think you'll be fine in physics; you'll just have to put your mind to it. I told him, I'm pretty nervous about it; he said, 'It'll be fine.' I signed up for physics and two things happened. In November, the teacher told me if you drop the course now I can guarantee you a D. If you continue on I cannot guarantee you in this class at all (laughs). Okay, I'm out of here [(laughs)]. You don't have to ask me twice.

I think by that point my mom also realized how much I was struggling. She signed me up for remedial math class, but I tell you this, there was no way in hell I was going to be a senior in high school in remedial math class. I didn't care what I was missing, so I signed up to be on the swim team which met at the same time as the remedial math class. I made the Junior Varsity team (laughs). By that point I really had a math phobia. I was heinously embarrassed. I would rather try to do anything than try to do math.

So [(laughs)] then I went to college! That was, I limped along for three or four quarters and then I failed out because my mind was so not on college. My mind was on everything else. I did the party circuit. I did the party circuit heavy, and I had a great big social group (laughs), and I had a lot of amazing experiences that don't add up in the academic world. I knew how to pack a pack for a ten-day trip. I knew how to bike race. I know how to take my bike apart and how to put it back together again. I knew how to boulder and how to rock climb and this is all with a group of people I would have never met if I weren't in the party scene. But that wasn't what school was about, so I left school and went to work at Yellowstone for the young adult conservation corps.

I did that for nine months, I hated how I got treated there. I was the only Indian. It was all manual labor, tough manual labor. I hadn't been raised for manual labor; I had been raised for academic success. I just really started bucking heads with my bosses, and before long I was cleaning the latrines. My mom found out about that and she called my dad. My parents were divorced by that time. My dad worked with a federal agency; he was sitting on the Equal Opportunity Commission. She said you call them and ask them why their daughter who has a year of college under her belt is cleaning toilets and she happens to be the only Indian on that campus? I got moved immediately (laughs).

I went through the summer and then transferred to a state university. I didn't know anybody, which is what I wanted. I didn't want to know anybody, because if I knew people, I was going to start a social group. That was the first semester I was on the Dean's list. It felt pretty awesome. However, what I didn't tell you is when I went to the other state university (the first college), I met with my advisor. He was some guy in economics—like how ironic right? He had my transcript, he had everything sitting right in front of him, and he asked, so, what are you interested in? I said, well I've got a lot of interests, I like science, I like writing, I like music, and he said so what are you thinking about doing? I'm not sure, I said the only thing I know is whatever it is, it cannot be heavily math based, 'why not?' he asked, I'm not good at math. At that point he did not mention why don't you think about creative writing, or dance, or a degree in music. Instead he looked at me and said, I don't think college is the place for you. I think you need to go to VoTech, I think that would be a far better fit than anything we can provide you. I was so angry because where I lived the Indian kids went to VoTech. That was the end of the conversation.

And you know you sit there and think surely it can't be that easy; it's that easy.

Not long ago, I was talking with one of the tribal members who is also a lawyer, I told her what he said. She said of course that's where they sent all Indian kids. Indians didn't go to college then. When you look at the numbers it was very few Natives that went to

college in 1977. So at that point I just thought, son of a bitch, I'm getting a degree. And really that's what pushed me. It just took me a little longer than normal. The second quarter at the state university I started getting to know people. I started running into the same type of things I ran into when I first went to college. They didn't get to the point that they had at that time. I went into Anthropology because it was one of the sciences that you didn't need to have a lot of math in. In fact, you didn't need to have any. I just needed to have statistics, which I got a D in but it was passing.

While at the second state university I did really well in Independent studies. I didn't feel like I needed to be in a school to explore my interests, like a classroom and a formal setting. My first independent study I wanted to learn more about fossils. I talked to the botany director and told him what I wanted to do and asked if he had anything for me to work on. He said, 'yeah, I do. Have you ever used an electron microscope?' No I haven't. 'Well I've got these things I'm trying to figure out what's going on with them. I'll show you how to polish down the fossils until they're transparent. I want you to look at them and write something up for me at the end of the semester.' He liked what I did and he liked what I wrote, and asked if I was interested in getting a degree in botany. I asked him does it have any math and he said well actually yes. And I said, ah, I'm not interested (laughs) but thank you. I did two semesters of botany.

The most meaningful independent study was working with a linguistic professor. We had a big Hmong community; the Laotians had come in and stated settling in the area I lived in. I had developed a friendship with the secretary that oversaw the Hmong cultural center. I realized that there were certain people that came in and spoke English. There were certain people of certain age groups that came in and spoke broken English. Then there was a certain age group that did not speak English at all. I thought why is there an active resistance on one hand, but they have high expectations for their kids to learn English. I was wondering how English was looked at in the Native community. I took three credits and conducted interviews with people in the Native community and people in the Hmong community. In the Native communities there was resistance because of the boarding schools, and they did it because they had to and they hated every aspect of it. In the Hmong community they really expected their youth to learn it, and their young adults to learn it. The Hmong had a choice they choose to move here. They know to achieve certain stature, learning English was just part of it. Where you saw the resistance was in the elders. They also felt it was imperative that the young hear their home language, so they actively did not speak English.

Really, it was the independent studies that catapulted me into thinking that I was not the moron that some in the community felt I was, you know based on very little information. It took me a very long time to go back and get my Master's degree. I raised two kids and was a freelance writer. I was still trying to deal with the adoption stuff. The adoption stuff had played a bigger role in my life. I had met my birth family and I had a lot of questions. I went to a counselor; the counselor had all of this Indian stuff up in her office. I looked at it and mentioned you have all of this Native stuff. She said 'Well yeah, I'm a 16th Cherokee and I'm really proud of that. I'm trying to get my name on the rolls. I'm very very proud of my Indian heritage.' I said yeah, I'm Indian too. (I say it almost as a self-defense mechanism. You just get that out otherwise people just kind of wonder when

they look at me. ‘Are you, she asked? Then she asked are you proud of being Indian?’ Well, where I come from you got beat up for being proud of being Indian. We’ll I’ll be honest, it’s not really that I’m not proud or that I am proud, I am what I am. It’s taken me over forty years to be okay with that. She said, ‘You just stick with me and you’ll be proud of being an Indian.’ I thought, she doesn’t get it; she doesn’t get what it feels like.

Julie appeared relatively calm while sharing this part of the story.

That’s when I marched over to the Department and sat down with one of the professors and laid out what my research was going to be. Which is, why am I feeling pressure to be something, or if I go back to the Native community, why do I feel pressure, like I’m not good enough to be back? That’s what my master’s thesis was about. I’m carrying that on and doing a second Master’s thesis that looks at the same question from a personal standpoint in the form of a memoir. It took me a long time to say, ‘You know what, I am really capable, and I have something to add to these conversations and don’t discount me because I don’t fit into your idea of what I should be.’ That took me to my forties, in my forties I got angry (laughs). I got angry at being marginalized.

At this point, the interview was resumed Julie seemed ready to stop for the time being, we took a break. We met a week later. Initial questions were about her transition from traditional math to new math in the third grade. This was the time that I asked Julie if we could clarify some questions starting in the third grade with the transition from traditional math to new math. That was the time Julie began to dislike math, the teachers were mean, she began to dislike school and it made her feel bad:

It was so long ago, I don’t know if it was all connected or things that happened at the same time. It was kind of the perfect storm. With regard to the math, that was the first time I was ashamed of not being able to achieve. I had taken a lot of pride in my grades prior to that. I also think there was some slippage in some of my other grades as a result. I went from A’s to B’s. That ties in with an experience I had in college in 2000. I attempted to get a teaching certificate; I was going through all of the classes and had to take a lot of the prerequisites. My degree from 1980 hadn’t required many of the courses that the teaching certificate required for my specialty, which was going to be social science. One of the classes I was required to take was a philosophy class. The introduction to philosophy is very specific in its language, in its process, in its...it is very concise. I am not a linear thinker. That is the one thing that has come through to me in all my years that I am not a linear thinker. I am a very abstract, and so for me to be as concrete as what that class required me to be, it was almost impossible for me to do that. It is very similar to the steps in mathematics. In mathematics you have very specific processes that you have to go through in order to achieve something. It was very difficult for me to nail down those processes in their exact form.

I was now forty and the same thing began to happen, I'm sitting in the philosophy class and I'm thinking, I'm never right, I'm never right. Whenever he called on me or whenever I say something, it's never the right answer and I have to be corrected all the time. I think I was in there a week, maybe a week and a half. I remember that day, I'm forty...and that day he asked me to say something. And then he said, 'Okay, that's not correct. Can somebody tell Julie how this is supposed to be said?' I remember sitting back in my chair and my face flamed, it was like sitting in math class again and I was furious.

I walked out of class and over to my advisor and just said I need out of this class. It's destroying all of my other grades, I'm so tense with what I'm not doing here that I'm starting to lose confidence in all of these other areas. The areas where my strengths are, I can think, and how can I say, that I can connect the dots really well; it's just not in the process that they required within these two realms to do that. Going into the philosophy class put me back into every math class I had ever been into since third grade.

Back in third grade is when everything changed, the teacher was just mean. She was a mean teacher. She was harsh. I got the distinct feeling that she didn't like me. There were legal issues that came up with her family and my family where that really became an apparent feeling in there. And at that point I just, I just really started hating school (laughs). I had two teachers in third grade; one teacher had her daughter in the class. Mrs. G I had for some classes and then I would go to Mrs. M. for other classes like music and maybe another class for science. I didn't feel that either of those teachers were supportive of me. I felt that they didn't like me and I was singled out for whatever reason. I know Mrs. G ridiculed me, maybe not in the class but outside of the class. Mrs. M was the one with the family legal stuff, but neither of them was supportive, nor did I feel appreciated in that classroom. When I went up to fourth grade that was different, and even though I didn't have a close relationship with my teacher, at no time did I ever feel like I was a burden. School was one of those things, I was never going to completely hate school because we lived so rural, that was the only time I saw friends. I always looked forward to going to school, just not maybe for academics (laughs). That's something that educators need to keep in mind, they're not just a teacher of things. They are a provision of social interaction and how one is supposed to get along in the world and thrive in the world. I believe now that education is a teacher of things. If you can't sit in a classroom and sit still and be quiet, you're interrupting other people's learning of things.

Julie was then asked to reflect on the interview so far. Was there something she remembered in high school or college she wanted to revisit?

I know in college I had an advisor, I know she was really frustrated with me and that's where world's collided. My dad was a science person and that was the only language that mattered to him. It's where he felt most comfortable; it's where he really enjoyed his life. I had written my whole life. I was a storywriter, I wrote poetry. I had notebooks filled with just my writing. When I went to college the first year (before I flunked out), I really tried to do the science thing and I failed miserably. My mind wasn't on college; it was on the social aspect of growing up. When I went to the local university I wanted to be in the

creative writing program. I mentioned to my dad that's what I wanted to do and his reply was, 'You'll never make any money at it. It's ridiculous don't do that.' So you know, I could only go so far in science because of my math limitations and I knew that. So I tried to figure it out, what's going to be scientific enough but allow me a creative approach. I realized anthropology would give me those things. You know it's a very abstract way of looking at people within societies. But it was considered a science, a social science.

I put writing by the wayside and concentrated on that. You still have to fulfill all of your requirements; I aced all of my anthropology courses with the exception of a cultural specific course anthropology course. I should probably go into that a little bit. I took the cultural anthropology class with a woman who at the time I didn't realize was as respected in academia as she was. She was quite knowledgeable about several tribes who she did her research on. So I thought that taking a class on the cultures of North American Indians would be interesting. I hated that class! You know I did not really feel comfortable. This other stuff was just a little bit too flighty. It's been interesting to see my thought process as I have come of age (laughs). So I took her class and I got a C in it. A 'C' is general. That's like the baseline of where everything goes. About three quarters of the way through the class she called me into her office and asked me what my major was. I said it's anthropology and she replied, 'You have no business in anthropology'. I said your class is the only class I'm receiving a C in. She said, 'I think you need to find another discipline, this is inappropriate for you.' So I was hurt, angry and confused about where this had come from. I went to the lab and I had two friends that worked up there and one was a grad student. I sat down and talked with him--this is what this professor said to me, and I retold the event---he rolled his eyes and said, 'That's just who she is.' I said what do you mean, that's who she is? He said, 'She hates Indians.' I said, but that's her research focus, he said, 'Indians are great research subjects but they are not really worth anything else.' And it was just kind of like; I mean it was just common knowledge around the department. So when you experience things like that, just active resistance to you being who you are, it feels personal. You know it feels just like an assault all the time. WOW. This is the institution of higher learning (laughs). You know I have never forgotten that. I've just never forgotten that. While I was at that institution I did the course work, I did all of that. Outside of that department my grades were all over the board. I got a lot of A's and I got a lot of D's there weren't many of the mediocre grades. This is similar to the ADD, which I was battling at the time also. I think that is what made me a good writer; I could go into Julie's world very, very easily. I could see things and manipulate things, the opposite of what you do in class.

I went to see another advisor trying to plan out my next semester. She asked 'Why you are in here?' I said I love anthropology, and she said, 'Well you do pretty well in classes; you excel in your writing classes, they're always A's. And you excel in your music classes, those are always A's. Why aren't you following the things that are easy for you? Why are you doing these things that seem to be a lot more difficult?' I shrugged and said you know between my dad... [Julie pauses] well I didn't have a lot of choice. If I went home and said I was going to be an ethno-musicologist, my dad would have flipped [laughs]. You know if he thought writing made no money... I realized a little bit later that my whole philosophy on education came from my dad. If you're getting A's you already know this stuff and you are not challenging yourself. If you're getting C's you're getting

challenged and that's where you need to be. So it had nothing to do with gifts. In my mind everybody could do music theory, write a story. I know it's not true now [laughs]. At the time, I think my dad really hammered in my head that if you got A's that's a waste of time you're not learning anything. So I had a transcript filled with A's and D's. When I came to graduate school, actually when I tried to get into graduate school; it was really difficult because that transcript followed me all the way into my forties."

Then the conversation shifted to remembering a note in her file that she was not meant to see:

I shouldn't have seen the note in my file, 'It looks like this person, well she's flighty'. The note goes on 'This person is unpredictable in her studies; it is possible that she will not successfully complete this program based on her prior experience. She will have to be carefully monitored and she will have to be supported.' I just sat there and I thought whoever put that note in my file, forty something years of age, didn't ...

Julie was flustered as she looked for words to express how this made her feel:

There was nothing in there that would say 'She's great, she's an awesome person.' I published a book because of that research (laughs). You know, you cannot look at a file and say this person will make it and this person won't. It has followed me my whole life, perceptions are made about me based on that information and that's what makes me angry. It really makes me angry there. It made me angry when that person, when I told them that I wasn't good at math and I would have to be. I told them I would have to think carefully about what I wanted to go into. I was immediately filed into VoTech. You know it...it infuriated me. Again when I told both of my boys this, do your best in college because those grades never, ever leave. They will follow you to the ends of the earth and you will have to prove every time that you are capable. I just get tired because it's never anybody sitting down and talking to me. It's everybody behind you know the veil that are passing judgments on things that are quantitative bullshit. And the GRE, I had to take the GRE and I annihilated the math. It doesn't matter that I do not need math for Anthropology; it doesn't matter that I do not need math for anything that I'm interested in participating in. But because my score was so low, because it is something that counts so much, I was put under a microscope. I'm really irritated.

The topic was changed to Julie' two sons. They both identify in school as Native American. Julie is proud of her heritage and wants her sons to represent their heritage:

Abe always struggled I think he was severely hyperactive, he is my older boy. There was dyslexia that wasn't getting picked up on the traditional tests that they give. I am proud of my heritage; they will represent (laughs). I mean they will, unfortunately represent a lot of statistics in a lot of cases and it's made me really consider what came first, the chicken or the egg. You know, is that who they were prior to the representative label, or did they become that way because of societal pressures because of the representational label. And I don't know, I don't know. So Abe always struggled. He had difficulty in reading; it

didn't come together for him until fourth grade. In the meantime he had two years of, he's got to read, he's got to read, he's got to read, he's going to fall behind, he's going to fall behind, he's going to fail. I mean you might as well stick a fork in Abe as far as being a productive member of society if you can't read by third grade. It really made me angry, we did do the medication and it helped. But Abe got subsumed like, who he was. His spirit just ceased to exist and he became this robot that did well in school but there was nothing left. I really hated that. But if that was going to be the only way to get him through the school years then ...

Julie' voice faded, her frustration was clear:

I mean, you just have to fit into this little box, and anybody outside the box is a bother. Well, it's the norm that says, sit down, be quiet, learn this stuff, you have no value as a human being until you get educated, then we're going to let you into society, and then we're going to recognize you as a contributing member of society. So these kids basically aren't useful to anybody until they're twenty-two years of age. We then expect them to stand up and pull themselves up by their bootstraps and step in and run the world.

You do crush the spirit, and it's only certain people that run the schools. You know, it's only the certain people that are the class president, and it's only the certain people that can go out for choir. I mean, Abe tried out for choir in fifth grade and sixth grade; he was one of three kids that didn't make choir. You cannot convince me that did not have an impact on them. And in sixth grade there were several more, but I mean still, come on, fifth and sixth grade, I don't know that you need to try out for choir. You've got your whole life to try out for stuff. Why are you telling these kids at such young ages, you're not good enough? Why do you have to start your kids on football or soccer at five years old so they'll be good enough to be on a team? Why? I mean I have so many issues with the education system because my kids are not part of that tiny little square. But I am so proud of who they are. They have, you know, beautiful things that they do contribute. They are kind, they are sensitive, they are compassionate, and they are helpful. But none of those values seem to be anything that the schools want to see. They just want to see straight A's; they want to see bulky kids. They want to see the school stars. They want to see somebody who is going to make the school look great. I just, I, I...

Julie took a breath as she struggled for words:

So Abe struggled, and he tried, but finally he got to be in tenth grade and by that point he had just given up. You know, he just became difficult in the classroom because everything else seemed to not be working. We went in to meet with one of his counselors because he refused to take the standardized CSAP tests. The counselor got me there because she's thinking that she and I are going to be on the same team. That Abe is going to take the CSAP. I said, I don't think he needs to take the CSAP. When I would not agree she stopped talking to me (she laughs). She said to Abe, 'Abe, this is the thing, when you take the test, that information we use it to provide services for you.' He's in tenth grade, he's fifteen, and his reply to her was, 'I know you don't provide services for me. I requested service and you would not put me in there.' He then said to her, 'These

are numbers for you; they make this school look good; they make the teachers look good. All they are to me are an albatross around my neck. I totally get it.'

So you know Ben, Ben is probably a little bit OCD. He would take hours to do his work every night. He got straight A's but he checked and rechecked his work. That is the other thing education does, it takes these kids that could be moved around in society pretty normal, but they become so obsessed whether or not they do well. If they get any of these tendencies, man, it puts them over the edge. Finally when Ben got into seventh grade, [Julie's husband] said, 'Gosh Ben, you can back off your homework, go enjoy yourself, this is like painful to watch you.' Well Ben just got to be at the other end of the spectrum and he just stopped doing.

And Abe just fought with his teachers I was really concerned. One of Abe's teachers, bless his heart, I think it was his tenth grade teacher; Abe would go toe to toe with him. This guy was tall; he was a big guy with a big booming voice. I remember I was intimidated as an adult when I met him. He and Abe would scream at each other out in the hall, and the kids in the classroom would just quake. Abe would come home and say in a questioning tone, 'He thinks he can stop me? He can just try.' It was so awful, I would try to work, and I would try to be the go between, and try to find a bridge where it worked. It was so much work. I liked this teacher as a person, and I liked Abe as a person. I could understand where the difficulties from each of these perspectives came from, but I didn't know if there was a way to ever make that okay. I didn't have to worry about it because one day this teacher called me on my cell phone. He said, 'you know, (it was at the end of school) I just want you to know something, I get Abe, I totally get Abe. He's got more spirit than any kid I have taught in a long time. He's made me angry, and it's been frustrating, I have a son just like Abe. My son dug himself quite a deep hole. When he hit eighteen he kept digging, there was nothing I could do. But at twenty-five he woke up and he realized I don't want this life. I want a different life. He went back and got his GED and started through and got his associates degree. Now he works with at risk kids. I'm ready to tell you, Abe will make it.' I'm telling you that are all I needed to hear. I just needed to hear a person tell me the truth instead of what an awful kid he was. With Abe's hyperactivity, I have always made friends with Abe's teachers.

The conversation then shifted to Julie discussing being labeled as a single Hispanic mother who could not control her children while living in Fort Collins:

I would walk in, because the Hispanic kids lived in the trailer park, that's just a given, there is no other place in town they could possibly live. They all lived in the trailer park, where I, where we lived. There was such economic disparity, you know between the Hispanics kids and the other kids, between the trailer park and everybody else. I mean the trailer park kids got blamed for everything, I mean everything! And I know (sigh), when I would walk into the classes Abe would give his teachers such a rough time. And then I'd walk in and they'd look at me, it was written all over their faces, 'This is the single Hispanic mother who doesn't know how to control her children.' I was just like.... [Another deep sigh] So I mean I did everything I could to dissuade that, because I didn't

want to become how, how they dealt with Abe as being this ethnic minority that came from this, you know, labeled thing.

Julie elaborated on individuals making decisions about education:

They have no clue about being human. These kids are not robots. You cannot program them to come into the classroom and learn. Learn, this is what you do, this is your job, you learn. I mean it's that industrial gear mentality. They have to manipulate their world. Boys have to do that a lot more it seems like than girls. You know, girls can sit there a lot earlier than boys and do the abstract thinking. The other piece of education that infuriates me is we have denigrated the trades. I mean the only thing that has any value in our society is that you go to college and you get a college degree. And it just kind of like, I looked at Abe because by this point, by the time Abe was sixteen he hated school. There was nothing about school, none of it made him want to be there. That desire was killed a long time ago. So what are his choices? He could be stupid and go into welding. Or he could be an idiot and go into automotive. Or he could, I am just sitting there and listening to what some of these kids are saying, and I'm listening to what the teachers are saying. This is the thing now, that's the top down thing that educators in college need to think about.

I went to my advisor this is when I was getting my teaching certification. I asked my advisor, why aren't there trades? He said, 'We got rid of tracking a long time ago.' I think you and I are talking about two different things. He said, 'Well like what?' I said ok, I went to school in a large town. In tenth grade you took all your classes; in eleventh grade if you were in the college track, you stayed on campus and take your classes. But, if you were on the business track or professional track, you would spend half-day on campus and the second half at VoTech. VoTech was more than welding, and automotive, it was fashion design and business classes, it was accounting, horticulture and agriculture. It was much more a hands on environment. He looked at me and said, 'Well let me guess, that's where all the dumb kids went.' I said you know some of the smartest kids in my school went there. My best friend had a 4.2 grade point average; she wanted to be a fashion designer that was her passion. He said 'But how would she get there?' I said it wasn't just the teachers making the decisions. It was the student and parents also, sitting down and coming up with a plan. It wasn't tracking it wasn't just dumb kids. You are making these kids that don't want to go to college, when fifty percent of them don't want to go. What choice are we giving them? He was like a big wake in the education department. So what you begin to realize, he was thinking what society was thinking.

Julie looks at how the trades are looked down upon in a subliminal way, by promoting

and pushing the high-test scores and college prep:

We really started denigrating the trades back in the 1980's, when you could make a lot of money. Trading if you were a finance person, or if you were an MBA, or if you were, you know, another college educated computer whiz, that's where the money was. The more you did that...the less you know, (sarcastically) come on, you're a plumber? Well believe me; plumbers make a lot of money (laughs). They make a good living for their families;

there is nothing to be ashamed of. Believe me, can I go in and plumb? No, I cannot go in and do plumbing that requires a certain level of knowledge because pretty soon the gases are going to come up and you have got to know what you're doing. These jobs are not going to be outsourced to India. It's going to be you. You are the one that has the knowledge to take care of the plumbing and the electrical outlets here in this country. I think we have a long way to go.

Because when Abe left school, he dropped out before graduation. He had failed three classes. One teacher told him, 'Look, just turn in all your stuff and I'll give you a D...that'll be fine.' Another teacher said, 'Just come to school' (laughs). 'Just come to school this last week, you know, do your homework and I'll pass you.' The third teacher said, 'You didn't do anything, I'm not giving you the grade.'

Julie had much to say about the teacher that did not pass Abe:

Now what good is that person doing for a kid who didn't want to be there in the first place? And now, she's going to make him be there again because he didn't do something? I mean, it's like, by that point you've lost your ability to control the situation. Just get him out, get him and let him move on to a different portion of his life. So, because she wouldn't do that, he just walked, and he had to take those three classes at a transitional high school in order to get his diploma, which he did. But it was just like, now we're just rule following. And rule following is going to get you nowhere. I mean I was just like floored when I heard that. Let him out of here. So you already know he's not going to do the work, and he's not going to do it the next time either, especially if he has you [laughs].

So he went into automotive, that's where the kids who flunk go. He had no interest in cars. But even he had bought into this stupid idea of, you know, now, what you're faced with. Well, he got in there and he was three quarters of the way done, he had a 3.8 grade point average. He'd never had anything like that in his life. I mean he floored himself with what he was able to accomplish and how people were now interacting with him as an adult person. There was no more of the heady, you know, punishment that you get in high school. It's just like, man this is on your shoulders, in your favor. Abe took the ball and ran with it. So I said he got about three quarters of the way through and his fiancée got a job somewhere else. They left and went to another town. There wasn't a similar type of program there. Abe would have to do a lot of other things down there. In the meantime Abe has been a manager for a pizza place and done some automotive work. He realizes that he doesn't really like it, it's okay but it doesn't really challenge him. Now he is in the process of filing out an application for a university. It's nice because he has those credits from a community college a to prove that he can do it, he can.

In the meantime, my younger son says. 'I can't do school.' Well he can, it just takes him so long and he puts so much effort into it. He's so ultra-careful that is, it's just not...good. Between my education and my kids' education, it's, (deep sigh) I have a slot of feelings about education. I believe we're doing a big disservice to a lot of the kids.

There was a teacher in Abe high school that wanted to get funding to start an intramural team. It never dawned on me that the high schools didn't have intramural teams, because we did. I was never going to play in volleyball; I was never going to get a scholarship. I'm not a track star, I'm athletic, but I'm not star quality athletic. So in my high school, you went out for the intramural teams and it was fun. You got to play against yourselves and sometimes they'd put together teacher's teams. It is just where you would learn the game, you'd learn the rules and you got pretty good at it. And it's just like all of that went away. What happens to these kids? You're not good enough to be on this team so, you know, you can go to the rec league, which is as competitive if not more so. We had Ben in Little League until sixth or seventh grade, the next year he was going to have to try out and he said 'I'm done.' Like, I think that's heinous. Give the kids something where they can just enjoy something. What happened? What happened in our society where we can't enjoy doing something because it's a good thing to do? You know, we have to achieve, achieve, achieve, and I'm just like fed up. So many of the schools I went to were rural schools, which meant that they needed everybody. If they wanted to put together a football team then you needed to play football, or be in the choir, or trying out for the school play. I think in the rural school you got a far better well-rounded education than you ever do in these big consolidated schools. In these large schools you start falling through the cracks and you get lost, and nobody needs you for anything.

What makes me angry is that there were very few teachers, and they were far in between, that liked Abe for who he was; he was a nice kid. He did get to the point of, you show me respect in the classroom and I'll show you respect as a teacher. That is how bad it got. They really wanted it the other way around. You respect me as a teacher and if you do everything that I want, then I'll respect you as a student.

The researcher said that there are ways to work with students without the power struggles:

I know there are ways to work with students and avoid the power struggles. The teachers that worked with Abe knew that. The last two years of high school Abe took Tech Ed, they don't call it shop anymore. I dreaded the parent-teacher conferences because every single one of them was what my son didn't do. There were a few teachers that said Abe was awesome, he's a great kid I don't know why he doesn't turn in his homework (laughs). Here comes this guy, he's abrupt and I'm thinking oh geez here he comes, he walks up to me and says, 'Abe is your son?' I said yeah, and then he said, 'he's awesome!' Then I said Wow, that's really good to hear. What's going on, I asked him? He began explaining a project to me, 'I told the kids that they were going to build a three-quarter scale car from ground up. If you want to do this project you need to get out there and find the materials, you need to find service in kind, and you need to find donations, so get going.' He said that Abe had brought in \$3,000 worth of either donations or services in kind. He said Abe is heading up because he puts the kids together and they jockey for who's going to be the lead guy, and Abe is you know what this is and what you're going to do. Abe had a plan of how these things needed to be carried out; he really showed his leadership skills. It was just a class where there were no other options for him. That class allowed that. In my experience, and in Abe's experience, you have to

have something where you just shine. It doesn't have to be for the school, it doesn't have to be to get your name in the paper, it doesn't have to be like the crème de la crème, but where you feel like, Wow, I have a purpose here.

Ben didn't find that. Ben really struggled. You know, he got himself into a really sketchy crowd and he really checked out. He's doing great now, once he got out of this school system that is supposed to be the best in Colorado. I have friends; six and seven years later and we still get together and talk about how the school system almost destroyed our kids.

Interview with Anika

My first meeting with Anika was at a Native American Cultural event. She had recently received her PhD at that time in 2009. She is currently a researcher at a university. She is from another tribe.

Ok, well I grew up not on a reservation and unfortunately, in this area, particularly when I was growing up, it was not okay to be anything but white; so it wasn't good to be black, it wasn't good to be Native, it wasn't good to be any ethnic minority. So if you could pass, you passed as white. After learning of my heritage, I started understanding more and it started making more sense about why my grandfather was the way he was and why he looked the way he looked. He looked a little bit darker and he had different features in his face than we did. It was like, 'Oh we're Native, well no wonder he looks a little different and was a little darker.'

But I just grew up thinking I was white. We didn't really discuss it, so most of my childhood I didn't even know of my heritage. My first schooling experience was in preschool that was right next door to my grandmother's house, and my mom was a teacher there. That's why my brother and me went to school there. So it was preschool, and there was four or five levels of preschool; you have the baby room where the kids don't do anything and then you go up to the kindergarten stage. So I went there and my brother went there and the reason my brother and me went there is because my mom was a teacher and that's where she worked. And I don't think there were any minority kids, and again I thought I was white so I didn't have any oppression or anything like that.

My next school experience was elementary school. It was a private school. The reason we went there was because my mother got a teaching job there. So she was always with us and always around us, until the eighth grade when I graduated. There weren't any native kids in the private school. From time to time there would be an African-American child that was in school there, but it was mainly a white private school. I didn't experience any discrimination or anything like that because of course I thought I was white and I'm in a white school and it's a private school. Then I went to high school, which was a private high school. There it was a much more integrative experience because we had probably sixty percent white, thirty percent black, ten percent other minority, give or take a few percentages, but primarily a white and black student population. That was a great

experience; I mean it was great to be around people of different cultures. Some of my best friends were people from different ethnic groups. And again, because I lived most of that time not knowing I was Native and thinking I was white, I didn't really experience any oppression or whatever and I would say, overall, not that there wasn't any racism or whatnot in school because there always is, it was really a good school. There weren't people harassing the black kids or being mean to other people of ethnic minority status in school. We all pretty much got along. I know that the minority students didn't feel totally accepted as the white students, but I think for a high school in this area it was a really good experience.

Upon further discussion, Anika clarified any signs of visible racism during high school.

Anika does not recall any overt examples but feels that there was some level of oppression.

During lunch, many black students sat together apart from the white students. She would sit sometimes with the black students and sometimes with the white students. After people would eat their lunch they would go out and mingle. She said further:

I know that those students, individually and collectively, experienced some level of oppression and discrimination, whether I saw it or not, because they are still a minority in a majority white school; more like thirty to seventy percent, they were still a minority. There's still some level of knowing you're different.

If Anika was in high school and still did not know she was native, when did she find out?

Anika recalls sometime in high school when her mom had a conversation with her and her siblings. Something had triggered the conversation about heritage and school. She needed information from her parents, and that is when it came out:

I was surprised to know that I was native. It was like okay, sit down; we're going to tell you the truth. It was more kind of like casual, and I'm like, whoa, wait, I'm Native, hold on. Because I guess my mom, oh by the way, and then it was like what? and she said, yeah, and don't say anything to pawpaw about it cause he'll get mad you know. But I can't really remember the circumstances because it wasn't like a formal, sit down we're going to tell you now. It was more like, oh by the way, yeah, you're native and I'm like whoa, whoa, whoa, what?

Although Anika does not recall the event clearly, it made an impact then and now. Prior to that time, the only family discussions around Anika's heritage were about her dad's side,

which is Irish, German and English; or her mother's mother' side, which is French and German.

They never mentioned pawpaw:

It was pawpaw's great grandfather that was a leader. So before this, I never asked like, where's pawpaw's family, because they just kind of said, 'Oh we're French and German, and we're German and Irish and so on. I didn't think enough about pawpaw because I assumed they meant mamaw and pawpaw were French.'

So then, after that, I went to college and it was a big public land grant institution, again, majority white. We did have African-American students and international students, somewhat a diverse campus, but still a very white campus. And again, I was aware that I was Native American, and I would tell people that if it came up in conversation. But I never felt discriminated against based on being native or anything like that. I think my educational experience overall was positive, and I'm going to talk all the way up till college and then I'll start another story, but I would say from pre-kindergarten through college, overall, I had a positive experience.

I was never the brightest, most brilliant student that was VERY clear. Yaw knows I'm not the smarty-pants kind of person that gets everything the first time. There was people a lot smarter than me. I had to work really hard. I'm one of those people that, that the grade that I made, it's because I worked for them. I worked very very hard. Had to study, had to push myself. So school wasn't easy for me.

Oh and I should go back, what changed as far as my grades and my school motivation was my junior year. I was seventeen years old, it was the summer, and that's when I figured out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I realized then that I wanted to be a psychologist, and I wanted to get a PhD, and I wanted to do therapy, and I wanted to make a difference in the world. So starting my senior year with this new purpose in life identified, I was able to push myself. I was able to work really really hard. I was on the honor roll for the first time in my entire life all four quarters and I was so proud of that. And because I had that purpose in life, I was able to do the same thing at college; I was on the Dean's list, I got in Phi Kappa Phi, Mortar Board, all these thing nobody in my family had ever been in, and because I had that extra motivation I didn't really have before. That was a big difference for me, figuring out my purpose in life and learning how to use that. So I would say that overall, my academic experiences were positive.

Anika grew up in a white culture without feeling any type of discrimination. Did this attribute to her ability to identify her choice in career path and follow it through completion?

After entering college, knowing what I wanted to do, I was like an outlier. The other kids wanted to be a psych major but didn't know what they wanted to do with it. They maybe wanted to teach, maybe a therapist, but they had no clear career direction. Everything that I was doing was very strategic in order to get me into a good grad school and move me into a positive direction. I was involved in a lot of activities, I did a lot of research, and I did therapy with kids and adults. I was a rape counselor and worked at the crisis center.

All these things, because I knew I had to prove myself and show that I could be good in grad school, because I am also a horrible standardized test taker. I hate it, I resent it, and my brain is not a smarty-pants so I suck at it. And the stupid GRE, I knew I had to take it and I'm like, I have to build up all this other stuff because I'm not going to be able to compete with these other people. I know it; I'm not as smart as them. I don't do that well. I think it's a terrible measure anyway. It has no real predictive validity and now I'm going to go off on my tangent about that but... it's a bad test and people think it's an IQ test. And so, I had to be strategic on finding all these other ways to prove that I was a good student other than a GRE student because I knew that I would be bad at that. I'm just not...my brain is not put together that way, like other peoples are. They can just sit down and get the best score on the test. I can't. I would say at college, even though I was clearly an outlier, but even though some people thought I was weird or whatever, I thought it was good, because I knew my purpose in life and I was working on it and trying to find ways to use my strengths to serve the world. And so, I thought it was good to be an outlier, I didn't really mind it. And I've always felt, as a side note, I've always felt very different than other people. My whole life, even when I was a child, I always felt very different. I always felt like on some level, I don't fit into the world. I've always felt that, and the reason I didn't say that earlier is it's not really tied into academia. But even in academia I was an outlier, so I didn't fit because I wasn't like everybody else. So overall it was positive.

It was interesting when I graduated, my initial plan was to take a few years off, and then go to grad school in child clinical psychology. I'd worked with kids a lot so I was going to be a kid person; I was going to do that. But I had to take a break from academia because I was so tired and burnt out from all the work I'd done at college. So, I moved back home and applied for a job as a substance abuse counselor with zero experience in substance counseling. I applied for that job; somehow by a miracle I got an interview. I go in and there's a stack of interviews this high [Anika holds her hands apart to describe the stack] on the guy's desk. I'm thinking, there's no way they're going to pick me. They had people with master's degrees; they're not going to pick me. Good experience to have the interview, they're not going to pick me. They totally picked me, out of all these people. So, I start working in the evening program with ethnic minority men. We had three parts, we had to do the psych-ed classes, and we had to do individual therapy and group therapy. So I go in and, of course, immediately there's pushback because I look about... I was what, twenty-three at the time. I looked about twelve and I was white looking and I never was an addict. So what the hell do I have to offer any of these people, right?

Anika expressed her frustration when she began her job; being young, and looking younger and white, and never having experienced many of the issues her clients had lived through, the clients immediately begin letting her know they were aware of her vulnerabilities:

'You're not an addict, you're too young, you're privileged, you've had an education, you have a degree, and you can't help us blah, blah, blah, and you're not a minority,' whatever, it didn't matter that I told them I was Native. They didn't care because the

majority of them were African-Americans. So you're not black, you don't know what it's like to be black in the South. So it doesn't matter whatever percentage I was of Native blood, that didn't matter because I looked white, and you can pass so you don't know.

I worked there for a year, but working there was probably one of the best experiences of my life and because I was able to be so creative, I was given a lot of freedom, so I was able to create these classes because they had this huge curriculum and the twelve steps in it and then they had things like anger management. Some classes were good, when I would get up and teach about the twelve steps, people would zone out and fall asleep in class. I'm like this is not working. So I started thinking, okay what is going to work? And I would sit in my office, and I say that my ancestors were the ones that did all this. I'd sit in my office, because I'm 23, I don't know anything, I've never done this before, I would get these amazing ideas about, 'You should teach this.' So, I'd just write 'em down, because it's not like I feel like I can take credit for thinking of them. But I started getting all of these ideas, and this led to what I did for my dissertation.

I started listening to their stories, about their substance use and that kind of thing. And it didn't matter what drug, it could be alcohol, marijuana, pills, cocaine, crack, it didn't matter, they all talked about this emptiness that they had, and I kind of conceptualized it as a circle, like a hole. They all talked about this emptiness and that there drug of choice, or maybe it was much more than one drug they would use to try to fill the hole, but I never was full because they would keep going back for more. And so no matter what drug it was, everybody talked about the same thing. They talked about no meaning in life. They talked about no relationships that were healthy. They didn't feel like they lacked competence in things. They didn't have skills. They didn't have things they were proud of. They had no freedom because the drug trapped them, and some were trapped by socioeconomic status, ethnic minority status. So, you put all of these different layers and you have no freedom. There's no upward mobility, there's no way to change your life, and you're just depressed.

I was like, why don't we talk about that, because THAT is the problem. Not that you're smoking crack, because crack is the symptom. We have to get to what the problem is, and if we can get to the problem, then we can fix it, right? I'm 23 and there's no way I was smart like this. Right? So I'm thinking and I'm writing this down. I'm going to call it a needs class. We're going to talk about our needs, and so our needs were the meaning, and our relationships, and coping...And so, I drew this pie on the board and made little pieces, five pieces, whatever it was. And I said, 'What I want you to do,' and then they thought I was crazy because the next thing I did was pull out some crayons and paper. Then they all went, 'Can we have a pen?' I'm like, 'No, because you don't color enough and you need to color.' They thought I was nuts, but I'm like, 'Too bad, crayons and paper and we're going to color. The reason I want you to have colors is because I want you to color each pie piece a different color, and I want you to tell me... color in the percentage that is full. So, meaning in life, if you totally know what your purpose is, if you're living your purpose, the whole pie piece can be full. But if you don't know, you have to color in the proportion to how much of that need is met.' So I have them do this and then I said, 'Now, hold it up and show me. I want to see everybody's pie. Just hold it in front of your face; I want to see your pie.' No one had more than half of a pie total.

Most people had about one fourth full, if you added all pieces together. I added, ‘That’s why you’re using fill in the blank: alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, cocaine, and pills. That’s why you’re doing it, because you have this emptiness that you don’t know how to fill, and you’re trying to fill it in this way. So these pie pieces are what we need to fix, not whatever else we’ve been doing. This is what we need to do.’ It was amazing to see the light bulbs go off in these guys; they were like, ‘Oh!!!’ It was also concrete, they realized, ‘Oh, I do need a purpose in life, I do need better relationships,’ this gave us a road map for treatment.

Anika reflected back on this creative time. It was a catalyst that sparked many creative outcomes in her future:

The whole time thereafter, I had a good education. I kept getting inspired by these creative things. Like I had another class, I talked on masks, and again, sitting in my office late at night, getting inspired by my ancestors on what to teach, because we all wear masks. We all do. And they’re not all bad because right now you and I are having our professional masks. We even have our friend one on. A friend will be when the recorder is off and we hang out. But we all have different masks. And they’re not all bad, but some can be very destructive. If you have a very fake, inauthentic one, and you’re never able to be who you are, that’s not healthy. And if you’re very mean, hateful and full of rage because you have your addiction mask on, that’s also not who you really are, because you want, on some level, for the mask that you wear to represent your authentic self. But people with addiction never do that. They’re always wearing the addict mask of manipulation and lying, and not being able to be vulnerable, and afraid and all of these things. So I taught a class on that and I said, ‘Draw your active addiction mask. What does your mask look like?’ I made them still use crayons. But now they wanted to, because they’re like, ‘Oh this is red, and this is black, and this is yellow,’ and then they could tell a story about what the colors meant and really share their experience. So I did all these super-creative things.

I don’t want to be pessimistic about my future, but for that year I think I was the best I could be. Even better than I am now, I’ll tie that into my graduate education. That was my full authentic self, with the good education I had gotten, but still let that creativity I had gotten, but still let that creativity come through, and let my ancestors speak through me, to connect to these people and make a difference. Because with my pie thing, we talked about in individual and in group and the psycho-ed because we’d revisit it, and then I’d have people work on their pies.

I’d have people come back to say, and tell me, ‘My cravings are reduced. I have better relationships. I can keep a job. I have a purpose in life now.’ All these things we were working on, as the pie got fuller, their symptoms reduced. They weren’t using. They weren’t relapsing. Their life was improving. And so that’s when I was like, ok, I am onto something big because this is working better than the 12-step stuff that doesn’t work, and this is actually teaching people how to change their life. It was exciting but I was also scared because I was like, how did I come up with this? I didn’t come up with this; I’m

not this smart. I'm just a channel for my ancestors to lead me and direct me and help me use my gifts to improve people.

That's when I changed, and decided I wanted to go to grad school and not work with kids and I wanted to work with adults. I wanted to work with substance abuse, and I wanted to work with ethnic minorities. I had such an impact on these people. I ended up having to leave, not that I want to get into the details, but there were a lot of unethical things happening at the center. It was mainly from the higher administration, some counselors too. Although the clients didn't know about it, it became very stressful to us in the back end, because people were getting fired and there were lawsuits and it was not a good place to be. I was like, 'I can't stay here and do this. I love my clients, I love my work, but it's not healthy for me to stay.' I ended up leaving. I will tell you to this day, having to tell those clients I was leaving was one of the hardest things I ever had to do, ever, because I was making such a difference in their lives.

Oh and I didn't tell you this, that first day, when I was getting all that push back about you're white, you're privileged, you have money, you're not an addict, we hate you and so on. This one guy had tried to cross the room and attack me. We went from that to them crying and begging me to stay. They threw me a party, which nobody had ever gotten a party. I got a plaque, and I'm like 24 years old asking myself 'how's this happening?' You know what I'm saying? But then I knew also this was a reflection...the power that I had, not because it came from me, but through my ancestors. The power I had in that moment was because I WAS living my purpose in life. That's when you get the power and the energy and all of that. Not when you're doing something you're not supposed to be doing.

It was so hard for me to leave. They gave me a party, they gave me these gifts, and I still have the presents. They begged me to stay, 'Please, no one understands us like you do.' It was profound and very humbling to think, 'You hated my guts the first day, I'm so young and inexperienced in this field and yet in twelve months, I made such an impact that now y'all are like please don't go.' So I was like, I have to do this. This is what I have to do. So of course, I had planned to work another year or so and then take the stupid GRE, and then move on. Then life happened, and I got into a relationship and blah blah blah. So it took a while for me to get back to grad school. But that experience changed my life, changed the direction of my life, and I still feel like I want to recapture that person because I was so creative. And again, not because it was me, but I think my mind was more open on some level or something, that I could hear constant direction from my ancestors. Not that I don't get it now, because they do lead me and take care of me and all of that, but it was different. I still want to recapture that person. Since I've started grad school, I've been retrying to recapture that person and I have not been able to do that. That's very frustrating, because I believe and you might agree since you're living it, I think grad school has brainwashed me in some ways that are not good.

I have never felt that with any of my other educational experiences. That's probably because I didn't come from knowing my heritage my whole time. Not living in a reservation, all of that too. But I never felt brainwashed or controlled by education or anything like that. I felt like it's a tool for me to be better and to understand things and to

use my gifts. I always felt that way. And I think that's why I did so well right out of college with these people. I didn't know what I was doing, but I still had that channeling. I don't feel like I'm that person, and I want to be twenty-four again. I don't want to be forty. I want to go back and be that creative, non-brainwashed person. So I struggle with that. But that was my most creative I've ever felt. The most alive I've ever felt, the most helpful. I mean, not that I don't feel like I'm helpful, because I know that I help people, but it was this, I can't even explain, it was just an amazing experience.

And I KNOW I was inspired from my ancestors and the Creator to do the work because they would tell me things to tell my clients and I would tell stories. That's when another piece of me started really acknowledging my nativeness, 'cause I started telling stories a lot and asking other people to tell their stories. I would use stories, the things I would say that clients would really have a reaction to, I would never tell this to them, but I was like, 'Well how did I come up with that?' I'm not that smart, that didn't come from me. But it would just come it would just flow. It was being my authentic self and it was profound. I will always remember that experience. With those people, it was amazing.

So then in those almost ten years that I took off, this was never the plan, the next academic challenge was, as I've referred to, the stupid GRE. I probably took the thing like five times because I suck at it. I'm bad at those tests. I think they're stupid, I think that they're stupid; I think that they don't measure your skills. They ask you stuff you learned in freaking high school, like geometry and crap. I'm not getting a math PhD, so really does it matter if I understand the angle of the trapezoid? I don't think so. I so sucked at those. I did take the GRE numerous times. And finally, the way that I passed was hiring a math tutor and studying about ten hours a day for about six months, and all these things that I never knew anybody had to do. But that's the only way that I passed that test. And the only other reason I passed it was because the first three or four times or whatever, I took it on the pencil and paper, and finally by the time I took it the last time and passed it, it was the online thing, which had actually adapted the next question based on the answer to the previous question. If you missed the previous question it gives you an easier question. So that's another reason that I passed because it adapted to my level. Because in the handwritten pencil and paper ones, it gets progressively harder as you get through the exam; so if you don't know number five, you're not going to know six or seven or eight. So of course you're going to fail it. I think they call it adaptive testing, and that's another reason I passed, I had an adaptive test. It still wasn't high; I mean it was barely above the minimum of what grad schools would look at. But I finally passed, because I hired a math tutor and studied ALL the time, and did those stupid workbooks; it was horrible, I hated it.

So then, because people in academia think that's an IQ test, they only want people that score like 1600 or 1500 or whatever it is. So I definitely felt discriminated against, not because I was native, but because I wasn't one of those smarty-pants people. When I applied to grad schools, because most doctorates wouldn't look at me, they rejected me. So I decided to go to a master's program first to earn a master's degree. I talked to my faculty back at college and they said, 'Look, it's not right, but you're right, we do think that's an IQ test and we use it to weed out, because if we get four hundred applications for five slots, or ten or whatever, it is, we use GPA and GRE and dah, dah, dah as

eliminators and sometimes people make some formulas of GPA + GRE = whatever the rank is.'

Anika had a 3.93 GPA from college, but does not feel that her GRE score was too high.

Her college faculty recommended she enter a Master's program to prove she can do the work:

The PhD people have to see that you can do the work. I resented that because I'm already good, why do I have to do this? But fine, I wasn't getting into the doctoral programs, so whatever.

Anika had filled out applications to three schools, but felt like she needed one more:

I had this big APA *Graduate School in Psychology* book; I was like I should pick one more, huh? I am flipping through randomly going through the states. I don't know. I am telling you my ancestors did this; somehow I flipped to another area and was like, 'Hmm, who would ever want to live in this area?' My aunt and uncle lived there, and they were my favorite aunt and uncle. So I have this thought, 'Hmm, if I live close to them and something bad happens to me, then Tom and Mary would at least be close, closer than anybody in my hometown would, so that might be a good idea. I flip and look for places that have a master's program. There was a school, in this rinky-dink town, but had someone there doing addiction stuff and I said ok, good. So I apply there, but I don't think I'm gonna go there, but it was my fourth one, so who cares right, because I knew I'm gonna go out West. That was the plan.

Well, I got accepted to a couple of schools, but they didn't do any interviews, just its, accepted let us know if you want to come. I got accepted into this school, they had a visit day where you could go and visit with people or whatever. Well then that Western school, interestingly, which I think is bizarre, but they do it, I don't know if they still do it, they make you take the MMPI. Yes, before they will take you as a student. They make you come for a whole day interview, where you have to do role-plays, therapy and therapy stuff. So I'm okay, whatever, I'll take it I'll go. I just knew I was going to move here so it was irrelevant I'm going home.

So I come and go for my interview, which was interesting because you could tell all these other people were either straight out of college and had never done therapy or were older people who were re-specializing. Like, maybe they got their bachelor's degree in business and they want to be a psychologist. Because we had to do these really simple, like, I thought was simple, interactions in role-plays like, 'Oh Phyllis, it sounds like you're angry. Oh that must really hurt your feelings.' I mean it is simple stuff. I like did better than everybody. Not because I'm so great, but it's like, this is not hard. 'You seem angry, tell me about that.' But other people were like, 'Why are you mad?' and 'What happened?' and 'tell me the story,' and... and not doing the reflection stuff. So I'm going, I can't be this good, this is like easy. Why are these people not getting it?

So anyway, they end up loving me. The chair of the department and all these people come and say, 'Oh, you should come here,' and 'We think you're great' and la la la. I

was like okay. But my experience was like hmm. It's not like I was loving to go there. Like could I have gone there, yes? My best part of the trip out here was I went to the mountains. That was the best. I was like, I got to go there and drive around oh, and it was great. So, I was like, yeah, hmmmm. But I wasn't excited like I thought I'd be.

Anika's visit to a western school was very disappointing and the rest of the trip could not make up the disenchantment. Her next visit was to another school, and she said she was thinking that she would visit but not go there:

I'm telling you, within fifteen minutes it was clear where I need to be. It was so clear. You just know things; well, I just know things and I can't explain how I know it, but it was very clear, I need to be here. This was all very odd to me, too. I met faculty and told them my story about the addiction thing and the pie. And I'm like, I want to create a measure that defines the pie and then I want to do these interventions, and I'm gonna do this community-based research. They were very excited, but also thought I was crazy because what grad student comes in and does these big projects right? We use secondary data analysis, or we use some little bitty project, but don't have these grand ideas. I've been given the message, I need to do this, and this is what's going to happen. So they thought I was a little nutso, but they liked me. I remember going back to the hotel; I think it was like a Super 8. I called my aunt and uncle and said, 'You can open the champagne,' and they asked, 'why is that?' I said, because I am coming to the school close to your home. They were like 'What???' I didn't even know where they lived was when I made the decision to apply. It's an hour north of the small town, super close. Another way I felt I was guided in the right direction, with a department that was excited to have me and valued me. All of the other messages I got with the rejection letters, 'You're not good enough, you didn't make whatever on your GRE so you're not smart enough, you're not good enough, you're not like everybody else.' I knew I wasn't like everybody else. It was great to go to a place that I was excited to be and they were excited to have me. I hadn't really had that, like the western school they were excited to have me, but I wasn't really excited to be there. I was like; well it's in the mountains, I don't know, whatever. I didn't end up going because it didn't feel right.

I went there, and oh my Lord; if you think that this place is a white place, go to the Midwest. There are so many white people and so few ethnic minorities of any kind. I never met a native faculty member; I never met another native student. I was the only Native there, and by now I had learned much more about my heritage and because of that, I had gotten a better understanding of who I was and why I think the way I do, why I believe the way I do, why I behave the way I do. I'm like 'Oh, that's the Native piece of me.' Having not had a way to understand that before, just knowing that I'm different, but knowing why I'm different...but not knowing why I'm different...I had that feeling much more of my Native-self at this point because I was thirty-two when I started there. Again, in a very white, small place, except four years in college, which was this big... I lived in a big city. There's a lot of stuff to do. I go from that, to a small town in the Midwest. That was hard for me too; you go to the mall, REALLY!! It's five stores. The supermarket isn't the same kind of supermarket you go to. If you want to do anything you

have to drive down to the big city, that was an adjustment too. I mean it was fine to be in a smaller town but it was just weird, even in the small town, there was not near the diversity of my hometown, and I loved being in a diverse city. It's like, where are all the people of color? The South was mainly African-American, but we had Hispanics, we get some Natives, it was much more diverse.

Anika was asked if it was anything like now, when she spends time outside her current town and goes to a larger city:

No, because I have no life, but at some point I would like to have a life and go down there more. Even the other bigger cities I have lived close to were not that diverse. It was more diverse, but it's still a very white state, so it was hard for me to make that ethnic connection that I wanted to. I had been out of school for ten years, so it was initially hard for me starting out. It's a long time to not have to sit in class and take notes and stuff ya know? I was older, I had more experience, and I was much more mature. I was still the outlier because I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to do community based research, I wanted to work on this measure, and I wanted to create treatment based on this measure. Everybody thought I was nutso. I mean even faculty who liked me thought I was a little crazy. They're like, 'You're not going to work on this for your thesis? It is not going to work.'

The other students were also curious about Anika and what she was planning:

'How do you know all this they asked?' I've been out of school ten years and I've figured it all out. I'm not living my purpose, you'll figure it out, and I'm just further along the path.

I was still very much an outlier, who was ok; I was used to that by age thirty-two. But it was also hard with all of the technological advances that had happened in the last ten years. When I was at college there was no SPSS, Power Point, Excel or Word. People started saying 'we'll do that in SPSS.' I lean over to my friend, 'what's SPSS?' The faculty are going over something and saying, 'You have to do a power point.' I'm asking what a power point is. I didn't know what any of this stuff was.

I felt like I was trying to play catch up with these younger kids because I didn't know how to do it. When you first start learning something, you have no idea what the hell you're doing. I really was behind the curve and that was a big struggle. I had this one friend, Jenn, who I call smarty-pants. She is a person that you know has a higher IQ than you but is not arrogant about it she helped me. She helped me navigate a lot of things returning back to school. Another struggle I spend a lot of time on my homework, my papers and things like that. I have to exert an extraordinary amount of effort to be successful because my brain doesn't work like other people and it takes me longer to understand things.

The conversation shifted to a discussion of Anika's social life in graduate school:

My entire graduate school I didn't do much. I didn't go out and party like all these people went out and partied. I didn't go hang out, spend a lot of time with friends. Before I was in grad school I was a full-time personal trainer aerobics instructor and martial artist. I was super fit, well that all had to go, not the best choice. I didn't work out for my whole seven years of grad school. Occasionally I'd go to the gym, but it wasn't anything. I lost so much muscle mass, I gained body fat, I was not flexible any more, and you know how it is. It's not that I wanted to give it up, but I had to exert so much effort in my studies, I can't do other things like other people, yaw know. I also knew I had to get a 4.0 in this master's program to get into grad school because my GRE was...I was not going to take it again, so it would not be going up. I had to bust my ass to get a 4.0 to prove to the graduate programs that I can do the work. I had to pull off an amazing thesis too. So I had to give up everything. All I did was go to school and do my TA or GA or school work. School became my life, which was okay, because I made that choice.

I didn't really feel brainwashed until later. I think the schooling was good overall. There were some things I didn't agree with, the training, I think faculty could have been better, but a very good experience at the Midwest school. I still keep in touch with the faulty. Even though they didn't want me to be fully who I was or am, when I pushed back against them they let me do it, like when I told them that I wanted to do this community based sample and I want to do this measurement-development piece. Dr. C who I picked, was an addiction guy, he ended up going to another university the first year and I had already gotten my thesis and I didn't want to change my topic. Before Dr. B became my mentor, we were talking in his office one night and he was trying to find these measures that operationally defined my pie, and there wasn't anything there! Surprise! His response, 'Sounds like you want to create your own measure.' I would go into his office and critique all these other measures and how they sucked and had bad psychometric properties and all that stuff. He's like, 'Well it sounds like you want to create your own measure.' I'm like, 'I'm quite sure I'm not saying that, I'm just saying you need to tell me what other measure to look at because these aren't working.' He's like, 'Anika, you've looked at all the measures, so that's what you will do.' I'm like, 'What? I don't know how to do this.' He's like, 'Then you're going to take a measurement development course, you're gonna take factor analysis, and you're gonna do this and that and you're going to figure out how to do it.' I'm like okay. He wasn't even my mentor at the time, but he was great because he was so excited about what I was doing and he believed in it. He still thinks I was a little crazy outlier, but he was okay with me being an outlier. Even though the other faculty thought I was a little nutso. They said, 'You don't need to do that, you need to take the psych 100 subject pool, do something easier or get some of your faculty's data.' I'm like I'm not doing that. I'm not doing it! I figured out what I was gonna do and I'm finally getting to make it happen, and I'm going to make it happen. When I pushed back they were like 'Ok' and they didn't say no. They still said, 'We think you're crazy.' One faculty member, Dr. W (whom I liked) said, 'When that doesn't work, you can come back and we'll still let you do the subject pool.' I said well okay I'll probably collect subject pool data anyway on my measure, but I'm still gonna do my community -based research. They said okay, gave me that freedom, even though maybe they didn't like it. I think more than them not liking it, they didn't know what to do with me because they had never experienced somebody like me before. So it's like, what do you do with this person that wants to do all this other stuff? I don't think any other

student has pushed back ... I have never seen another student do that, go, 'I'm sorry, I'm doing what I want and you're going to let me and that's the way it's going to be.' Most students aren't like that, but I was way older and I'm living my purpose and you're not about to tell me that I'm not gonna do it. I'm paying you! So I'm doing what I want.

Anika proceeded with her purpose. She began going into the community and building relationships with substance use treatment centers. This led to her current work with Police departments:

I started building relationships with these substance use treatment centers in the area and then I had to have a control sample, right. I had to have people functioning well, not having any major psychological distress. So I contacted people at these non-profits and contacted banks. My uncle was president of all these hospitals, so I had all these participants ya know, but it wasn't enough. It's not going to close to an even sample size. I remember sitting in Dr. B's office one day and talking about who has stress, high stress and they need help? I don't know if it was him or me that said 'The police!' The police have all kinds of stress they need help. Nobody helps them.

Anika immediately made connections with the sheriff's department and contacted the sheriff for a meeting:

The sheriff doesn't know who the hell I am, but I ask for a meeting with the sheriff, and tell him my whole story, and what I want to do, and why it would be helpful. The police need good psychological well being because you all have stress and you see very horrible things and if you're not taking care of yourself, I don't want you to come to something that I need your help with when you have a gun if you're not stable. So anyway, I do this whole spiel. He thinks it's the best thing he's ever heard in his life. And I didn't think it would go that well. So he agrees for his whole department to participate and then says, 'What else can I do for you?' Well, could you call some other sheriffs and get them to talk to me and meet with me? He said yes and calls the chief, who is just across the street, who also said yes. He calls his other sheriff buddies. So now, I have all these sites, and to me that was the easiest. But everybody was like 'you're not going to get...' Dr. W too, he taught the research methods course. He said in the beginning, which I argued with him about, one of the first few days he's like 'Yeah, here's the bad thing, you're all going to graduate, be therapists, and never read another journal article.' I raised my hand and I'm like, 'Yeah that's actually not true because I was a therapist for like years and I would read journal articles. The problem is what you wrote had no real external validity because you're not writing on real people. You're writing on psych 100 subject pool people and writing about them. We kept wanting to learn about new treatments and interventions and things we can use with our clients but you weren't working with people in the community. So what is published in a majority of psych journals has no validity or helpfulness to any of us. That's why most therapists don't read research that isn't relevant to what you're doing.' He didn't really like that, his face got all red and it was not good. But I was like that's wrong. He loves me now. My whole thing is, I'm so critical of

faculty, another thing I think is wrong with academia... faculty are focused on jumping the hoops of tenure and promotion. They are not focused on making a difference in the world, and they are not focused on developing and taking care of their students. Because if they were focused on those things, they would be living a very different life. But, they are interested in turning out a million publications to jump the hoop to get a raise and secure their jobs so then they can be lazy-asses. They don't care about helping real people in the real world and they don't care about developing their students.

The conversation shifted to discussing the care that universities put into international students, the money and resources that come with international students:

Well perhaps, they're paid to care, I guess in some ways with the money. And I am going to be a hypocrite and criticize all of these faculty, and then take the easy way out and get Psych 100 Subject pool for my research? I'm not doing it. That's not who I am. And I said I'm not going to do it. And so, so many faculty kept saying 'Well that's easier,' it depends how you operationally define easy. If you think easy is doing something totally against my purpose in life that has no meaning to the world, perhaps that's easy. I consider 'easy' living my purpose in life and using my energy in ways that impacts the world and makes it a better place. That's easy for me. What is hard for me is going to do meaningless research with a bunch of eighteen-year-olds in Psych 100. That's hard for me, because I don't care and I don't have passion about it, so I can't do it. What do eighteen-year-olds that come to the university have to offer? The majority of eighteen-year-olds that comes live this life up here? Yeah they're privileged kids, most of them don't know what they're doing with their life, and don't know what they want out of life. If you want to study people, study people about to graduate, that'd have a little more external validity than the psych 100 people. It's a biased sample, blah, blah, blah; I could go on and on. So I'm going to do things that make a difference.

Dr. B, of course, was always supportive. He's like, 'Anika, do it how you want, don't listen to them; you're going to do fine. I know you're going to do it.' He was, and still is, an amazing supporter. It was good to be in a place where I was allowed, with some people, to be totally who I was, and that was fun. Even with the people that thought I was a little weird, and didn't know what to do with me still really liked me. I know that the faculty (even though they were like use the subject pool) liked me and I always felt supported on some level. I'm ok with them thinking of me as an outlier, and they don't know what to do with me. They're just struggling. So I was okay with them being in this place, but I never felt mistreated or anything like that.

Anika's revelation of the success of the data collection was a big moment for her. It took place when she was working in the faculty mailroom:

I'll never forget this either, a whole bunch of faculty came, all happened to come in at the same time, to check their mail or whatever. They knew I was in my data-collection mode and my target was 1,200 people total. I remember one of them came in and said, 'So did you get your 1,200?' And I said 'No.' They said, 'Yeah we figured it would be hard.'

They were doing all this empathetic, whatever. ‘Well how many did you get?’ I said ‘1,358’ And they all passed out on the floor, they didn’t say, ‘Did you get 1,200 or more?’ They said, ‘Did you get 1200?’ Well no, I got more than 1,200. They freaked out which was amazing. I loved every minute of that. It was fantastic. They looked at me and they were shocked. ‘How long did it take you?’ Six months, I did it all by myself driving all over the state. And they said, ‘Well how the world did you do this?’ Because they kept saying, ‘It’s too hard, you’ll never find a community sample. Community people don’t care about this. They don’t want to participate in research. They don’t value it. You have to stay in academia cause academia is a safe place.’ They gave me all of these reasons. Whatever, I just went out and developed authentic relationships with these people and I offered something of value in return for participating. I gave them candy and diabetic candy for people that were diabetic, but I had candy. Then I promised my sites that I would come back and do a formal presentation to them about what I learned and provide specific site suggestions. If it was a clinical site how can you improve assessment and treatment of your clients, what they are saying, what they need. If it was an on-clinical site-how can you improve the well being of your employees, what are some organizational things? And, I got about 400 pool people too. I was doing my measurement on adults, but I haven’t even analyzed that data. I figured if I can get the data, why not get it, and then see, is the factor structure the same with adults vs. kids in college? I haven’t even examined that, and who knows if I will but I have the data.

This prompted a conversation about the novel idea of building relationships and a passion to help people in doing research:

That’s how ya do it. It’s not hard at all, you just go develop relationships and you take care of people and they take care of you. To me that’s like duh ya know it’s like it’s simple. At that time, I didn’t even have my master’s yet, I had a bachelors and I was like, ‘You all have no excuse. All of you standing here, you all have a PhD and I did all this with a bachelor’s. When you give reasons why it can’t work you need to own why it doesn’t work for you. But don’t tell other people that it’s not going to work for them because if it was that hard, I couldn’t have done it with only a bachelor’s degree and I did. I was very happy about that when they were like ‘What? 1300?’ I’m like, ‘Yes, I did it myself.’

After successfully finding her sample and successfully completing her study, she was preparing to graduate and go on to a doctoral program. She had made her decision to attend the university in the west:

At that time, I was trying to pack and move here. It was summer, and that’s when I defended. I was going around and doing presentations and stuff. I was also the director of the psychology-advising center. It was a nice office, so I worked there a lot. I remember just hours and hours in the summer trying to get all of my presentations together. All of the charts, the data, cause it was like twenty sites.

Anika recalled that during this time, she also was preparing certificates to thank each group for participating in the project, when she was disturbed by the comments of Dr. W, who was the chair of the department:

"I was working and Dr. W stopped by (he came by to check on me often), he said 'You're working here a lot and you're busy.' I said yeah I got three weeks left and I gotta do all this stuff, pack, and fifteen presentations. He said 'this is such an academic brain. Why are you stressing out, why are you doing all this? Why are you printing these certificates?' I said because I promised them that I'd do this. They already gave themselves, now I have to give of myself and I have to go back and I have to do these presentations and I wanna give them something nice, so I want to give them a framed certificate. He's like, 'You don't have to do that, you already have the data, and it doesn't matter now.' I was like, and that's why you can never do community work, because it's never about you, EVER. It's about what you have to offer them. That's what it's about; it's never about me. Like, even my research is not about me, it's about how I can leave the world better than I found it. If I have to stay up for the next week and not sleep, that's what I will do because these certificates are going to be printed and they're gonna get framed and I'm going to do these presentations because I promised.

I think the general view of academia is to go in and be a helicopter researcher, get the data and then fly away and don't take care of anybody, exploit people for your own benefit of tenure and promotion. Which makes me rage, because the fucking people, excuse my language, these are the people that are in academia teaching us. It's a huge problem, I was like 'Yeah, that's why you, with a PhD who's sixty something could never pull off what I did at thirty-five with a bachelor's degree.' So I went back and I...I remember the first presentation I gave was to a sheriff in this really small department. To be honest with you, even though I was thrilled that they all participated, I was like I don't know how this is going to be helpful. I'm going to try to make it helpful, but I don't know if they're really going to appreciate it. I knew the clinical people would, it's very clear.

Anika gave details about the process and data collection; it was based on the PIE (the PIE she created during her counseling years) where she needed to focus. She worried that she did not have enough data for the non-clinical. She knew she could not just make something up to sound good. Her first presentation was for a sheriff and his Undersheriff in a small department. She was nervous before her first presentation:

The sheriff was the first one I was going to present to; they're such an interesting culture. Him and his undersheriff were sitting there with no expression. You can't tell if they think you're a piece of shit or you're going to give them something of value, right? Because it's just a blank face. I go in with all my energy, I'm giving the presentation, I

lay out the issues I think they have based on my measure, which wasn't even a measure of anything worthy, and here's some suggestions, here's how I would work on these issues blah blah blah. So then I get finished, he looks at me and gives me one of those eye looks, whatever, it's hard for me to explain and he said, 'It's very ironic that you came in today.' And I said, 'Why is that sheriff?' He said, 'Because me and my Undersheriff, before you got here, were talking about issues we have in the department and problems and that kind of thing. And you came in here and said the exact same thing we were just talking about. The difference is, then you told us how to fix it. This has been the best thing that has ever happened in this department.' Inside I'm like, 'Yeah?' I'm like freaking out. And outside I'm like, 'I'm so glad this is helpful to you.'

Thank God I pulled it off. I actually did something good, ya know? He was like, 'Now that you've done all this great stuff, what are we going to do without you because you're leaving us now?' It was very sweet; I said I really appreciate it. He says, 'No I'm serious, you came and told us how to fix it, now you're leaving, what are we going to do?' I tell him, 'Well, I was never going to say this, now that you mention it, I'm actually going to continue my research at a western university. My plan is now to collect data again in the Midwest and also develop new sites in the West, so then I can compare data across states and sites and get a more diverse sample. If you would like to participate you're welcome to.' He says 'Yes.'

I am starting to freak out, because I had this dream maybe of doing it in two states, I never thought it would really happen because I didn't know my impact of this feedback. I went to all of these other sites, did the presentations. Everybody loved it, thought it was super-helpful. EVERY site said yes.

Anika reflected back to her time working in substance abuse, when she was on to something. She supports the connection with her ancestors who have guided her, affirming that she is doing the right thing:

I'm like whoa, if all of these people are going to do it again, I have to be onto something because they all want to participate. I was thrilled, I mean, it about killed me because I worked so hard, and I was so tired.

I remember the day I had to be out of my apartment, I had to like beg these four people to come and help me load the truck because I was running out of time. That's how I finished a presentation I came home and packed. Like, it was crazy, but it was a good experience because I did something meaningful. I was able to make a difference in the world. I developed these relationships and, I think (not that faculty are super different because of me) I was able to do two things: (1) challenge their own values and the way they approach research and challenge the fact that they can never say you can't do community-based research because a grad student did it by herself. And also I've created a space that other students can thrive because they're an outlier on whatever level. I've created a space; it's ok to be an outlier. That was important because a lot, well most of my life I have always felt like I'm alone. I'm the outlier so I'm different; I don't fit into

the world, so I'm different; I'm always doing it alone. I mean not in the spiritual sense because I have my ancestors. But there's not a lot of other physical beings that are like me that are around me. So I feel very much like I'm trying to blaze a trail, like I'm trying to figure this out. But when I figure something out, my immediate thought is what about other people? How can I help other people who might be like me or might be different in their own way? I've always gotten good mentoring, but if I didn't get something because I learned it or figured it out, how can I then give it to somebody else? So giving back, helping other people, guiding, being a mentor to other people, helping other students figure out how to navigate shit in grad school. Whatever it is, I'm always like I will do it. I will help because I know what it's like to be there and not know how to do it and not be able to figure it out.

When I do stuff I'm always thinking about how I can make somebody else not feel alone. How can I help somebody else feel supported and understood or mentored or helped or whatever it is. Because I know what it's like to be put in whatever the situation is and be like, 'Oh, just figure it out' because that's what happened to me a lot. Especially at this [graduate] level. Oh yeah, and its been hard because again I've been trying to figure it out; figuring out who to call, figuring out what reference to get, figuring out how to navigate some system. I've had to do it all by myself because there haven't been people that really helped me. So I always think that way. It's like 'Oh I can figure this out' and it totally sucks for me, but then, because of my own journey, I can help somebody else not suffer as much. So that's how I look at it.

The school in the Midwest was great. Again, if you would have asked me before I went to that interview would I ever live there for any reason...NO! I would never live there for any reason. But again, my ancestors know better than me and led me to a place that was right. It was where I was supposed to be.

So interesting story about my last University... I never thought about coming there when I was looking for doctoral programs. I originally was only looking for clinical programs because most counseling programs don't do anything with addictions. But I also wanted to find programs that worked with native individuals because with the school in the Midwest there was no option. Even with a master's program there wasn't a whole lot of master's programs that had native anything. Since leaning of my heritage in high school and becoming more aware of it, learning more about it and my tribal values and pieces of myself that really are Native and all of that, I was like I need to work with Native communities, get back to our strengths and traditions and all that we forgot. And we have forgotten because of colonization and oppression and all of that.

Another thing I think in academia that is wrong and bad, but they're not going to change because I don't like it. The majority of psych doctoral programs are biased against masters degree people and won't take you and, if they take you, they will make you retake all of your master's work from them. So if you've already taken stats and research methods and diversity and whatever, well that's nice that you have master's degree, but you have to retake it all. Well I'm not about to do that because I'm too freaking old and I had a good education at the school in the Midwest, so I was not willing to do that. So there was not a plethora of options for me because you say I'm not retaking my Master's

credit and the school had to have something native. So there's not a lot of options. So I applied to three Ph.D. programs. Again, just like my master's I had three [applications]. I'm like I gotta find a fourth, I gotta find a fourth. So I kept looking and looking, there wasn't anything. And then I remember one day, I was at Dr. B's office late at night and it's silly, it's not like they're going to have a new APA Credited Psych program in 24 hours, it doesn't happen. Then I remember typing in something about Native, substance abuse, and the University, something like that. And up popped this other University. But it was counseling. I was like no. So I closed it and didn't even look. Then another time I went back and I was like, fine, okay, I'll look. I actually went to the page and started clicking around and then I found this place that had done native substance abuse-use for years and saw about the native student services, or whatever it used to be. I was like wow, there was never... and obviously in all my past educational experiences there were not a lot of native persons, so I guess there wasn't a reason to have that. But I was active at the multicultural center at the school in the Midwest, which was great. I got some of my ethnic interaction there. It was a center for everybody. There wasn't separate centers, and really more than anything, it was a black center, which was fine, but a lot of the other ethnic minorities didn't go. I went because I'm like; I need to be around other people that are similar to me. I went a lot and was real active in the multicultural center there.

I started clicking around and reading and then I realized there were people here that did substance use, even if it was in a counseling program. And they did take master's people. I was like, oh my gosh. Again, it was my ancestors, not me, because I kept trying to click on the clinical programs and they didn't change. Here I was and I remember going back to Dr. B the next day and I said, 'I found my fourth.' And he said, 'Really, what is it?' I said it's a counseling program. Dr. B, like months before, had told me counseling programs might be a better fit for me and I did not want to hear that because I was in the clinical program and clinical program is where it's at and clinical program people do addictions. Dr. B said, 'I think counseling faculty are more open than clinical faculty are. I think they value more diverse experiences and I bet you they would take your master's degree.' And boy was he right.

Anyway, I got rejected from the other schools.

I started talking to the people from a Northern school a lot, and they seemed to like me, they seemed to be connected to me. The only down side was, they don't give (again I think this is bad and wrong in academia) their students a lot of freedom. Let's say you are the faculty member and I come into your lab, I am doing YOUR research, and going to use your data for my dissertation, and I am not going to do anything else. Because they're trying to create these clones of themselves and again, I think it's exploitative of students. I think it uses students as slaves to perpetuate their career and get their promotion and tenure. They are not focused on developing students because if they were, they would let students come in and do what the students wanted to do and help the students find their purpose and their passion and all this, but they don't do that. That was the one down side. But, I'm telling myself, 'Oh you could figure out a way to do your own thing anyway.'

Anyway, they're calling me and e-mailing me. So all the faculty and me think they're going to pick me. I mean it's very clear, you're kind of seducing me. I mean I am going

to the school in the North, who'd ever thought I'd live there, but that's where I'm going to go. Up North close to the great lakes, it's really cold, they have bad winters. So interestingly, one day I was at work for a faculty member from Western University, but I knew I was going North. So I called the University in the West and said, 'Yeah, ya know, I'm probably going to have another offer on the table pretty soon, probably this week, and I just want to know when I'm going to hear from ya'll, if you're going to pick me or not. I'd just like to know about options and whatever.' And she's like 'Oh yeah, they've already made decisions. You should hear this week or next week,' or whatever; it was like Friday. I'm like okay, good.

When I get home, on my answering machine is a woman, from the South of all places, leaving me a message from the university in the West, saying they're offering me a position and I should call her. The first thing she said was, 'I detect you have a southern accent. This is Susan from the university in the West and da da da and we are making you an offer, please call me back.' I was like, a Southern woman calling me from the university in the West making me an offer, after I'd just called and asked when they were going to tell me. So I call her back, and we didn't talk till like the next day or whatever it was. So of course we had to start with our cultural piece. I said, 'Yeah, so you're from the South, where'd you grow up, etc. We start laughing and doing our whole cultural back and forth. Then Susan said 'Well we're actually having a visit weekend, so you should come out and you can meet us and see if you want to be here,' and its March the whatever. I'm like okay I'll come.

I was excited about that, and then the next day, (somebody had broken into my mailbox, I had to get a P.O. box) I had to drive to the P.O. box to check my mail and I had a reject letter from the Northern school. The university in the West was the only place that accepted me. And again, my ancestors had a hand in that, because the way they were talking to me, and no faculty's going to waste your time bullshitting you in all this kind of stuff; I mean, I was going to go to the Northern school and all my faculty was shocked too when I said no, they rejected me. I got offers from the university in the West I'm like, well either I'm going to the university in the West, or I'm going to take time off. 'Cause if I came here and hated it, I would not have come, I would not have come, I would've waited. So I came out for the visit day and it took about twenty minutes for me to be around the faculty and I got that feeling like this is where I'm supposed to be. I remember talking to the training director at the time. I'm like, 'I took all these masters classes and I don't want to retake them, so what do I need to do to get out of these classes?' And she told me it was pretty straightforward. So then again, I was coming here, which was again, totally not my plan because I wanted to go to a clinical program. And again, the last choice was the choice. Like the Midwest school was the last choice, the last place I picked, randomly. Well in my experience, my ancestors are like, 'We told you to flip to that page and the same thing with the university in the West.' Not randomly, but they were like, 'And would you please click on their department website so you can read about their native stuff and see the native office and all these other things.'

So I came to the university in the West and worked on Native research. Took me a couple of years before I could be involved at the Native office, just because I was so busy, but then started getting to know people at the office and that was nice to have that

community. You asked before about opportunities I had or didn't have: I applied for a minority fellowship from the APA , which I got.

I applied for the minority fellowship for the American Psychological Association. Super competitive program, never thought I would get it, but got it. And that was a gift that (a) most students don't get (b) most minority students don't get because it's so competitive, and there are only a few slots for it and I got picked. That was the first time I got that, in 2006. So after my first year at the university in the West, I applied for it and I got it. So that gave me a stipend, I didn't have to be a research assistant anymore and I could focus on my research that was the gift of that. I was still involved with other Native research just because I wanted to be, but I didn't have to work there anymore. I could just focus on my research, which helped because then I was trying to pull off a bigger project in two states. So, I came here, got the minority fellowship, which was great. It really helped me a lot and it actually gave me a better stipend than I was making as a student, so that helped me to live and not be stressed about money. I still had to get federal loans because it didn't pay enough for me to pay rent and all that stuff, so I still got my loans.

Oh I should say too that it was nicer to be around, again this is a very white town, but it was nice to be around native community, even if it was mainly on campus, because I had never had that before in my whole life. So, through those experiences I felt very understood, supported, encouraged, and that entire kind of stuff and had never had that before. So that was a pretty special experience. And that's why still today, now a faculty member, I'm involved with the office and I try to help as much as I can there. I think it's good for students to see other people that have made it through. Especially a grad student that was a grad student here, and then has made it through and is doing well. So that's why I stay involved at the office, it's an important place for me.

So that was really good, working here was good. Learning more about native culture was great. Still though, I don't think this will ever change as long as I'm alive. I felt very much like an outlier when I came, because again, people don't know what to do with me. They hadn't had a master's student in years because mainly they would take a student straight from undergrad. But in addition to that, just like the Midwestern school's faculty, nobody had seen anybody like me ever; who is older, did community based research, developed their own measure. Do you know that faculty don't even develop their own measure because it's such a pain in the ass, it takes so long?

This led to a discussion of her thoughts on the probability of having a grad student come in that has already developed a measure and did a community-based study. She also discussed meeting the department chair during that weekend visit, which she decided to choose as her mentor:

His website talked about substance use, ethnic minority, assessment, and I was like oh, he's perfect. 'Cause I'd already picked him out. So I came on that visit day and asked him if he's taking any students. He said yes. I said okay. 'So tell me what are you

interested in?' he asked. 'Tell me about your thesis.' Of course that's not a five-minute story. So, I go through my whole story and the measurement development and all the stuff I did and I said, 'So now I'm going to continue my measurement development and collect data in the West and the Midwest.' One thing I forgot to tell you before, when I met with these sites for my thesis and gave them feedback, one of the things I asked them was what can I do to make my next project better? Especially if you're all going to participate, how can I make this better? All of the non-clinical sites said we want more job specific items, like job satisfaction or work... stuff. So I knew I wanted to add job satisfaction to my stuff and I knew it was going to get bigger, a bigger project. So I tell [the director] all this and I go through my whole story. He doesn't say anything, but he thinks I'm nuts. Like, he's listening to all this going, 'Who are you? You're never going to pull this off.' Again, not from a bad place, but just because faculty don't see people like me. So of course they go, 'Why don't you just go to the subject pool?' and 'you're a little crazy,' and grandiose is what he thought I was. He doesn't tell me this, and I'm jumping slightly ahead for probably two to three years, he doesn't tell me what he thought about me the first time. But later we talk about how well I've done the program and whatever. I'm going on to internship or whatever it was. He's like, 'you know what, I thought you were nuts when I first met you.' I just laughed and I'm like 'I know everybody does; its fine.'

He said, 'I really thought you were very grandiose and you had all these big ideas. But you know what, I didn't say anything because I wanted to get to know you first and see if that was valid or not. And you know what, after I got to know you I realized that you were actually going to do everything you set your mind to. So it's in my best interest to just support you and help you do it, instead of being in your way.' We had a big laugh about it and he said, 'No, I really thought you were crazy.' I'm like it's okay everybody does. I'm so used to that you have no idea. I realize I'm an outlier. You know how those people are outliers but they have no clue because they think they're like everybody else? I am very aware of my outlierness. It's not a surprise to me when people think I'm crazy. But I appreciated him because even though he thought I was nuts, he gave me the space and the freedom to be who I was, even if initially he didn't know what to do with me. Ya know what I mean? Kind of like Dr. B, 'I think you're crazy but okay here we go.' It was so nice to be able to be like that because, again, I like the faculty here, they all thought I was crazy. 'Well why are you doing that?' And they would even ask him. They would tell him at faculty meetings, 'Why are you letting her do that? She's never going to graduate. She's not going to be successful. You need to make her do the subject pool.' They kept pushing him and he's like, 'No, she's already pulled this shit off before. So what if its two states, it could be three states. I'm just gonna let her do what she wants to do.'

But I'm going to say now, in hindsight, my ideas were a little bigger than I could handle because I wanted to do this two state study, but then one of the reasons I wanted to come to this university in the West is I wanted to do a cross-cultural study of my measure with native people. That was very important to me because I have to find ways to give back to my native community. So I can't wait to do that, I gotta get on, I gotta start. So I had this thought of, do this big sample that I'm going to do, but then do a pilot study with native elders to get the feedback for the measure and stuff, and then once I get their feedback for

the measure, then I'll collect data from 300 other native individuals, half will be in treatment and half will not be in treatment just like my other study. I accomplished everything except the larger native study with 300 people because I had to freakin' graduate. I did my big study in the two states, and then did my pilot study with native elders. We made that kind of pilot, and then I haven't done my other big study, but that's fine. That was a little bigger than I could pull off. But at least I did the native pilot thing because that was really important to me, I wasn't going to do something and not have a native piece to it. That's why I came here and finally had the opportunity to do that. I used eight elders from I think eight different tribes from the U.S. and Canada, which is great. They all gave me great feedback. They said 'Yes, all these subscales and these constructs are culturally appropriate, they do reflect our tribal values; they're focused on strengths. We think this is great.' We need more of a strength focus because, you know, in psychology everything's about what disorder do you have and what's wrong with you and not what's right with you, and my measure gets at the 'what's right with you' piece. Because let's say, even if you're low on relationships, or competence, you could still be high on meaning in life and what you're higher on is strength so you have to use that as a foundation for change.

All the elders loved it, thought it was great, which was really encouraging. So yeah, coming here being the outlier, weirdo kind of person that doesn't fit in, but then still feeling supported in that was really great because [the director] did give that to me and I know I can't really say why it's different. Part of me knows that the relationship I have with him is different than he has with other people because of who I am and what I expect. The other reasons it's different, I can't explain, I don't have an answer for that. He doesn't have a relationship with his other students that he's had with me. Like, not that he's not a bad advisor, but he just doesn't spend tons of time getting to know you personally and building this connection with you and all these things. He's like, 'Okay, here's your thing, and here's feedback, and here's what you should do.' But, it's not this connect thing, part of it is, I have to have it, so I engage people in ways that make it happen or something. Even the other students that have him, they're like, 'I don't have a relationship like you do with him, how do you do that?' I'm like, I don't know I just do, I just go be myself. I can't explain it, but it's good. It's just like Dr. B, there's that connection and a relationship that's beyond, 'Here, check this box and take this class.' But THAT, in my opinion is what mentoring should be. They should be concerned about your personal life and are taking care of yourself. They should be willing to share something about their own life with you and really get to know you instead of 'Oh go do this, oh do this, figure it out.' They should be invested in you. I'm very fortunate that I've had that at the university in the West and the one in the Midwest. Another thing, (jumping ahead) I got because of being Native other than the Minority Fellowship I got as a student, because you can have it and not be a native. I shouldn't say I got it because I was a Native. I got it, in part, because I'm doing Native research, that's why I got it. I'm on the NH loan repayment program, which I cannot express to you what a huge gift that is because when I graduated I owed over \$120,000.

Anika explained that 'NIH' was the National Institutes of Health, one of the largest grant funders in the country. They have a loan repayment program for individuals who do a variety of

research. It is very competitive, with over 500 applicants each year, but only accepting 100. Every quarter, they pay over \$7,000 on Anika's loans; she still has the program until next July. She can then ask for a renewal on her contract. This is all conditional on these individuals working toward independent funding for research, and getting publications out and getting additional training. If she does these things, she is likely to get a renewal on her contract:

Assuming I stay on the program and whatever they calculate your total percentage of what you owe, and then what you have to pay, assuming they pay off everything else, guess how much if I stay on the program, how much I would have to pay out of \$120,000? \$5,700 and something, that is probably one of the biggest gifts I have ever gotten.

This program is just for researchers; I'm on the health disparities track. They have a clinical track, a track for people doing AIDS, three or four tracks for different stuff. But there are other programs that I can tell you about and show you their websites that are for clinicians working in underserved communities. Those are actually; I don't want to say better... it has an additional benefit that my program doesn't have. My program is a gift, but these other clinical programs will pay your taxes on the money they give you to pay your loan because that is income. It is a problem because on my tax return I look really rich, and I am not. It makes me look like I make \$30,000 more than I make because that's income they're paying on my behalf. These other programs pay the money to offset the difference in your income levels. My program does not. It is still a gift, but it does not. So that is totally messed up. I owed so much money last year and I'm like 'I'm poor,' I had to get my accountant to do it and I'm like 'that's not...I don't have that much money.' He was like, 'Yeah I know, but you know the loan repayment?' I'm like 'Oh my God, I don't have any kind of money.' But it makes you look like it and it bumps you up to the next fancy tax bracket that you don't exist in, but you have to pay the money.

There's a way you can ask for reimbursement for them to pay or pay you back, but because of the income I made, my real income, it didn't work. I thought at least, I'll get that \$3,000 or \$4,000 back. And my accountant was like 'Actually this year you made too much.' But it's still a gift. That is the other big gift I've gotten, and I've had opportunities to get because of not only being native, but doing the native research, which I think is important and it's nice to get valued for things like that. Most people don't value community research, most people don't value working in ethnic minority communities and both the Minority Fellowship Program and the NIH value that. It's nice to have that, though it's not valued in academia, which I think is ironic because NIH, who they fund is the academics who don't do a whole lot for the real world in my opinion but...

Anika was then asked to clarify her dissertation. It was a continuation of the measurement and development of her master's thesis. She added a new state in addition to the

one in the Midwest, using substance abuse treatment facilities, adding an eating disorder treatment facility in addition to the non-clinical sites, which were: non-profits, hospitals, banks and police departments. The Tribal elders were included as a focus group:

I had more police departments than any other kind of site. The tribal focus group was to see if the measure was culturally sensitive and appropriate to be used with a larger native sample. Ya know I connected because there were actually ethnic minority students in the program. I made a lot of connections when I was here to those ethnic minority students, which was nice because I hadn't had that in grad school. I hadn't had that really since college, and before that high school. It was nice, I was getting to know them and they were getting to know me. We had some of the similar experiences where faculty didn't understand us or we thought a different way because it was a very white program. We didn't really feel understood or supported necessarily in the way we are in the world.

I got to know other people's experiences and that validated my own, I think too, because a lot of me is native. I didn't grow up in a native community. I didn't grow up on a reservation. I didn't grow up having the opportunity to fully embrace that side of my culture, because of that, I am very acculturated and I fit into this whiteness more than other people who are ethnic minority. I think that's why I had an easier time in higher education than some of my other friends that were ethnic minorities who grew up in ethnic community. They grew understanding their identity; they had all these other cultural pieces that they've had forever that I'm just trying to get. I think in some ways, they are stronger in their identity than I was; they had a harder time in higher education than I did. I still had hard times, but not to the extent that they did because I think I am very acculturated. The only thing I felt really misunderstood about, and kind of teased about, was not my inactiveness, people just didn't talk about that, which I thought was interesting because I thought 'Do you not know how to talk to a native person? We're not so different.' It was more around my Southern culture and that people do not get out here at all. So I felt more oppressed around my Southerness than I did my Nativeness, but some of my other friends felt more oppressed around their identity than I did. And again, because they grew up knowing who they were and all the pieces of who they were, and being immersed in all their cultures, if there were more than one culture, they lived it. So, it's much more prominent than it was for me, at least here. But it was nice to have that connection with the other ethnic minority students and feel understood and validated.

One of the best times I had was working with this woman who was half Hopi. I was her supervisor and we ended up having a great connection. I told her about my upcoming presentation at a Native conference. It is a retreat and then a conference, and she asked if she could go with me. I'm like, 'Sure you can come, I don't care.' We end up going and it was a very good experience for both of us. It was a really bad experience for me in a lot of ways, I will tell you in a minute. When we were driving back from the retreat she said to me, 'I just realized I'm native.' Because she's half Native, her dad is full blood he's very involved with his work stuff in native communities. He did not want them, his children, to grow up Hopi because their mom is white. He wanted them to live in the white world, did not want them to experience all the oppression and negativity on the

reservation, wanted them to pass. So he, who is the holder of all information, never shared it with his kids. He just said, ‘That’s work, family is family, home is home, and this is different.’ So they grew up in Seattle, occasionally would go back to the reservation but weren’t treated that well because they were outsiders, didn’t know about the culture, couldn’t speak the language all these things. But it’s not their fault, their dad wasn’t teaching them, he just didn’t. So she’s like, ‘I just didn’t realize all these things that I do and the way that I think, the way I think, until I’m around these other native people. Now, I am starting to understand that I really am native. We both had that kind of positive experience. I had been working on learning more about my culture more than she has even though, sadly, she had a dad in the home that just didn’t tell her. It was a good experience that she and I connected with this medicine man that was from Canada and our medicine person for the retreat. He was an amazing man. We spent time with him, telling stories it was a powerful experience.

Anika then discussed the disturbing experience at the retreat. She told about presenting one of her colleague’s researches, Jeremiah , which was about drug use at a reservation.

If over half of the population is doing something consistently, like you have over fifty percent of high school students using marijuana on a regular basis, that means it’s normative. We were talking about that and problems, and unfortunately, I don’t think I can explain that adequately in words. I started getting attacked by people asking me questions about Jeremiah, asking me questions about his research practices, asking me questions about why I’m criticizing native people. I’m like, ‘I’m not criticizing native people, and I’m just saying this is a concern.’ Some people tried to normalize drug use. Native people have used psychoactive ingredients as a part of ceremony and vision quest and all that. People using psychoactive natural materials don’t do it 24/7, or on a regular basis. It’s part of something else. So people tried to make the arguments, ‘Well you’re saying that native people can’t use drugs.’ I’m like, ‘No, I’m not saying that at all. I’m just saying I don’t think our kids need to use drugs. Help me understand, that it is a culturally-bound experience, because it’s not.’ I got ripped to shreds by these native people criticizing me that I don’t know what I’m doing, I’m making inaccurate conclusions, measurement isn’t appropriate. It was awful. Most of the things they were asking me about, I didn’t have the answers to because I was his student. This is not my research, it’s not my research design, and I’m just presenting this. So then a couple of people stood up and tried to defend me, and defend Jeremiah, because some people in there knew him, and said he does good research, he’s always done good research, da, da, da. It became this fight who’s trying to protect me and who’s trying to cut me down. And I held it together; I don’t know how I held it together. It was a disaster area it was so inappropriate. Not that any speaker ever deserves it, but particularly, for a grad student, for her first time at this conference and to be treated like this. It was inexcusable; I could not believe what was happening to me. I handled it well and didn’t freak out. I was calm and shocked that this was happening to me. The first time I had ever felt... I mean people had told me ‘You’re not native enough, you’re not really native, you have to be full-blooded, you have to be registered, you have to have grown up on a reservation to be real.’ I mean there’s all these ways we as native people oppress each other, which I don’t

like. I had heard that before, or ‘You don’t look native enough.’ It’s like hell I can’t...first of all, many Native people look white. That’s the way it is with our tribe.

After this happens, I get my stuff and my things to run out, just get out, because I knew I was going to have a breakdown, but I wanted to get out of the room. Well, I try to get out of the room and these men stop me and they hug me and say, ‘We’re so sorry, we’re so embarrassed,’ and I just lose it. I start crying... these were native and white men, they were like, ‘We’re so embarrassed, that should not have happened, we’re so sorry, oh my gosh you did a great job, don’t listen to them.’ I mean, they were trying to help me but I was like I got to get out. So I finally got out, I go to my car, lock the door, and I just cried forever because I can’t believe this. I never thought I would get treated that way, ever. Especially in an environment that is touted to be supportive and encouraging, especially of native grad students and all I got was abused the whole time.

My friend came out, and then the medicine man, they were both pissed and telling me I didn’t do a bad job. I was worried about embarrassing Jeremiah and now I’m not a good student because ...ya know, you go through all that stuff, well I misrepresented him and ... it was a nightmare. I’m upset; they’re upset, they’re like ‘It’s fine.’ I stay outside for a really long time, then go, ‘I can’t believe this.’ Then I know I have to go back in.

I sit in the back and there’s this woman, Carrie that was talking after me. I don’t even know what her presentation was on, but she, in her own way, put everybody in their place. As part of her talk, she brought up stuff about crabs in a bucket and how native people, instead of building each other up, treat each other like crabs in a bucket. Because if you put a bunch of crabs in the bucket, none of them will ever get out because they’re always trying to get on top of somebody and pull them down. If another crab gets up and about to get out, they’ll get on top of them and pull them back down. And she said, ‘that’s what we do to each other, because somebody’s successful, because somebody’s doing something good, because somebody has a different idea. We don’t like it and we have to pull them down and put them in their place. Instead of encouraging young people, as the example was to me, to do good things and be creative, we have to find ways criticize them and pull them back down and put them in their place instead of helping them be more of who they are and be successful.’ And then she said, ‘we do more internalized oppression to each other than white people have ever done to us. Now we learn from the best, we learn from the colonizers, but we perpetuate the oppression on each other. Like saying you’re not native enough, or saying your this, or somebody’s successful and we treat them differently because they’re successful and we’re jealous, or reservation vs. reservation, or when people leave the reservation and they do something successful, everybody at the reservation treats them different when they come back because they’re not like they used to be. We’re so good at that. If we would start directing our energies to building each other up instead of tearing each other down, we would be light years ahead of where we are, but we keep doing that, crabs in a bucket that’s all we do. That’s why we stay stuck. White people don’t have to oppress anymore, we’re perfect at it. We’re so good at it they don’t have to do anything anymore. We still blame them for everything, but we’re the ones perpetuating this oppression.’

Anika recalls her gratitude for Carrie's comments. After her presentation, many who had been engaged in criticizing Anika during her presentation came up to Anika and gave her hugs and asked why she was crying:

'You did fine?' I'm like, 'You're so lying.' So there's like, people I don't trust there at all anymore. That was one of the most horrible things that have ever, to this point, I'm sure there will be other very hurtful things that native people do to me, but that was one of the most hurtful things because that was the first native conference I had been to. There were some white people there too, but mainly native people. I was excited because it was touted as being a real supportive environment for native grad students and you get a lot of support and encouragement and maybe some mentoring. All I got was beat to hell and back, and it was horrible. I'm still not over it, but it took many, many days and months of crying.

Afterwards, some of the participants along with Anika they had a talking circle with Samantha their elder. Samantha and Anika had made a connection earlier and she didn't like what had happened to Anika:

She didn't like at all what they did. But at the same time, Samantha is also not going to save you because she wants you to go through hard things and figure out how to navigate, to develop skills, to stand up for yourself. She wants you to be empowered, not that she wouldn't save you if something really horrible happened. But Samantha is not going to jump in and save you because she wants you to be resilient and strong and be able to handle yourself. That's what she believes. To be honest with you, she was standing to the right of me and I was thinking 'Samantha, can you break in and stop this?' That's what I was thinking, like why doesn't she step in, why doesn't she help me? I could see the look on her face and she was very...one look, I knew she didn't like it. So I'm thinking 'Well you're the elder why don't you...hellooo...it's my first time...' But now that I know her more, she would never save me from that experience, because in Samantha's mind, that is an opportunity. What are you going to do with that? How are you going to manage this? If I fix it, you will miss a lesson. So I'm going to let you have your experience. I will help you afterwards. I'll support you, but I'm not going to steal an opportunity from you. I was like, 'Please steal it, this is awful.' But she's not going to do that.

What she did do was so powerful and I'll never forget it, at the end of the talking circle she said, 'I have one other thing that I want to say.' She looks at me, and you know how everybody looking at her, and then her head turns to me and they all look at me? She says, 'I have one question for you. Are you coming back next year?' So I knew in the moment she was calling everybody on what they did to me, publicly, by saying that. I said, "Oh of course Samantha, I look forward to it." And then everybody clapped. She said, 'That's what I wanted to hear.' She didn't want this experience to get the best of me and I don't ever come back. That meant a lot to me that she basically called everybody out, in her own way, and wanted to publicly acknowledge that she wanted to check in

with me to see if I was going to come back because of the experience. So she didn't have to save me, she's like are you coming back? This wasn't right is basically what she was saying. Then I go around and people are hugging me and I'm crying again and it was interesting because a lot of people told me how strong they thought I was. I didn't really feel that way.

If they felt she was strong, how did the confrontation during her presentation end? Did she decide enough is enough and just get up and walk away?

No, I wrapped up. Ya know, they were kind of attacking me and then other people were trying to stand up for Jeremiah... Yaw know, I don't even remember. Either the questions stopped or I said, 'Ya know, we're almost out of time, so it seems like a lot of you have opinions to my presentation. I will obviously be around the rest of the day, so if you have any other additional thoughts or things you'd like to say, please find me and we can discuss it further.' And then I was done. So I held it together until I had to get off. It was hard it was really hard.

Again, and in hindsight, if Samantha saved me from it, I wouldn't have learned how to deal with that. Because that won't be the only time I'm presenting or talking or teaching this and I get attacked. Because the police has attacked me too, which I think is interesting, but it doesn't bother me. Now it probably would still hurt me if it were native people because that cuts me deeper, but I know that I can deal with that now. Had I gotten saved from it, I wouldn't have learned that. So anyway we're doing the talking circle and we finish and we go hug each other and we're talking and people talked about how I was strong. Then it was interesting, people told me 'what happened to you, is why I'll never present at this conference again. You are not the first person it happened to. It hasn't happened to just graduate students, it's happened to other people. That's why I won't present here ever again.' I was like 'Wow, this happening and it's happened before and nobody has addressed it or fixed it?'

And now, there are native and non-native people that no longer go to this conference because of what happened to me. I could not go back the next few years because I had either publication due, or then I went on an internship, and then I'd just moved back here. I just went back in June, so I missed four years, but I just went back. And Samantha has been on me about that, so I just went back. And at one point, I'll present because of course Samantha, as soon as I was going to come back she asked, 'Are you going to present?' I'm like, 'Samantha I don't have anything.' She goes, 'Well you need to present again.' 'Yes Samantha, I know that you think I need to present again, but I don't have anything.' So at some point I'll present again and I'm not really worried about it because I'll tell you this, you can do me like that one time unexpectedly, but it won't happen again cause if I start getting attacked like that, two things I'm going to do different. One, you can hold all of your questions until the end. People were asking me questions all the way through every slide there was some attacks. So (a) I am holding all questions till the end of the presentation, (b) I will not hesitate to professionally call out people that are trying to rip me to pieces again. And I will bring up what happened in the past. I have no problem doing that.

We're going to talk about this in our talking circle, because this behavior is not acceptable. It was not acceptable before it happened to me, it wasn't acceptable when it happened to me, and it's not acceptable now. We need to fix this problem. I will totally do it, and I won't care what anybody thinks cause I don't care. Cause it has to stop. I don't want any other student to have to go through that again. There's no reason. I mean, how does that help me? All it did was hurt my feelings, that's all that it did, was cut me to the core by one of my own people. That's inappropriate for them...for people to do that to anybody. If you have grievances that strong, then let's have a forum for that, but not during a presentation. It wasn't even my work. 'Well why did Jeremiah do this?' 'I don't know I wasn't here years ago. I don't know why the hell he did it. I was one. I don't know.' I kept saying, 'I don't know, I'll have to ask Jeremiah about that, I don't know I'll have to ask Jeremiah about.' How many times do you want to ask me about methodology? I don't know I didn't do it. Shut up. And it was again, it got to the point where they were obviously trying to put me in my place, and it's like, wow. If you have such a low self-esteem that a grad student threatens you, I am so sorry for you. Why do you have to be threatened by me? I don't care what you're doing. Do what you're doing and be good at it. That's what I hope for everybody.

This brought a discussion about the simplicity of our students entering a classroom and receiving similar encounters. Instead of embracing the differences and waiting to ask questions of clarification and understanding, we are quick to judgment and ridicule:

Yeah, it was awful. It was so bad that somebody called Jeremiah from the conference to tell him what happened to me. So he already knew when I got back, and I sent him an email. I waited like two days because I was too emotionally upset to tell him. I sent him an email and said, 'We're gonna have to talk because there's something that happened to me.'

He said 'Oh I know somebody called me. Yeah, I know they were upset about it, they wanted to call me and tell me so I could be prepared for you being upset.' Oh yeah, word got around about how I was treated. And like I said, some people will not go to that conference because of how I was treated. It's amazing. It was horrible. It was really horrible. That's why I don't think I have adequate words to explain that. I don't think there's anything else I want to say about that.

Anika then shared her thoughts on faculty that did not know what to do with her because she is Native but looks white. She does not feel that they are as multi-culturally competent as they think they are. All native people are not dark:

"I think some faculty didn't know what to do with me because I talk about being Native but I look white, and they are not multi-culturally competent as I think they think they are. So like, yeah, but you look white, and I'm like, and? Do you know what Native look like? They look like this. This is how Native people look. We are not dark people. All

Native people are not dark, dark stereotypically Navajo looking people. You look at people especially on the eastern seaboard, are not stereotype of what Native people look like. If you don't fit the mold...

There are many African-Americans, if you didn't know it, you'd think they were white because they're so light skinned. But yeah, so I think some people didn't know what to do with me. They accepted another student a little bit better as being native because she was half Native and had a card. So then, she's the real Native person, and I'm just like a pretend one or something, I don't know. I think a majority of faculty did not code me as an ethnic minority, I know for a fact they didn't. Because they didn't code me that way, they didn't treat me different, do you know what I'm saying? I think that's a reason I didn't feel differently or oppressed or anything like that, because they didn't code me as that. They did code this other student that way, and she felt treated differently, not discriminated against, because she was special or a minority. I was not, so I got treated more like, you know, you can pass because you're one of us or whatever.

One negative thing I think that I would say about... the university in the West, but the Midwestern one too. Because God knows the Midwest is white. . There's not enough ethnic diversity in the faculty. So it's hard to find people that look like you. So that's why at the Midwest school I spent a lot of time in the Multicultural Center. It wasn't a Native center but a multicultural center. So at least I felt there were people that understood different things than white people do. But here, it was such a gift to have Native students, a center for people like me. It was nice to come and feel accepted, no matter what I looked like, or if I had a tribal card, or what my blood quantum was. So, although I did feel treated different, and not that I wasn't accepted with my ethnic minority status as other students were that looked more minority or had a card or whatever or grew up on the reservation or whatever it was, I did feel accepted at the Native Student Center. Many places do not have a Native center that stands alone. It's hard to find other native students and other native faculty, that was a gift and a place of refuge to some extent for me. Although, being a grad student, I couldn't be as involved as you want to be in the office 'cause you're drowning in work and stuff. Um, but I also didn't like, and this is a general higher Ed comment...I didn't like the lack of diversity training and focus in our program.

And that's particularly frustrating because the accrediting body for graduate programs requires that diversity is infused throughout the entire curriculum. You don't just have your diversity class that you take for three credits and you check the box, right? You're supposed to have it in every class. The faculty member is supposed to be responsible for talking about diversity issues in every single class. That's the way it's supposed to be taught, that's what organization expects. Well the university in the West didn't do that. We had a diversity class that is usually taught by an ethnic minority faculty member, because of course, they're the holders of all information regarding diversity, so they get that responsibility. Check the box; you've now taken the diversity class. So it's really frustrating to not see other faculty be responsible enough to infuse diversity and cultural issues throughout their curriculum like they're supposed to do. And we got, technically, I mean we still got reaccredited, but we got technically in trouble because we weren't doing that. And they had been told last time they needed to do it.

These faculty, I think, are privileged white people who feel like it is not their responsibility, and then they go, well I don't know that much, I'm white. Well, you know you freaking need to learn it! Why don't you teach it? Why can't a white person teach diversity? If somebody without a personality disorder can teach a personality class, why can't a white person learn enough to teach a diversity class? A white person teaching a diversity class has a lot more power teaching diversity to white students versus a minority teaching to white students versus an ethnic minority trying to teach... you don't know, you don't get it da da da, whatever. But a white person going, you know I was stupid too, I didn't get it, I was ignorant. I made these same mistakes... etc... You get more credibility. But I think you know, white people say, 'I don't know how to teach that?' Really? That's a problem, but yet they get away with it. I think it's a huge problem not just in our university, but also in all universities. Faculty isn't required to infuse it in all their courses because if we had it, and it should be, in my opinion from grammar school. If it was infused in higher education courses, you couldn't help but learn something, even if you were actively resisting, you hear it over and over by different people, different ethnicities, something will eventually stick with you.

I didn't like the fact that we only had a couple of minority faculty at a time, and right now we only have one. We did make an offer to a minority candidate who turned us down because we were too white. Who wants to be the only second minority faculty on staff? It is sad, and we have more men than women. We do have more minority students now; there are many other psych programs that are more culturally diverse than we are. So people that are more culturally diverse are going to pick a program that meets their needs, because it's not as white as ours. It's sad to not have other perspectives and experiences from faculty and students.

Another thing I didn't really experience, granted I didn't grow up on a reservation and I wasn't immersed in my culture my whole life, I'm still playing catch up...many people that were immersed in their culture and on some level different than the majority did, all of those students said they felt they were treated differently. They weren't understood as well, they had different ideas, and different ways of thinking that were not accepted. There were different expectations...I'm certainly a big talker, but many of the students were much more quiet and reserved and that's what the culture dictated. They had to change who they were and try to fit into graduate school. They complained about that, said that people didn't understand that was part of their culture. They kept getting told, 'You have to speak up,' they were expected to not be who they were, they were expected to be different than who they were, and they were told on some level that who you are is not okay. You have to be like us to succeed here. That was a constant theme from students saying that in our department. That gets back to a lack of cultural competence on the part of faculty, because they think, I really believe they think they're trying to help students. They don't realize how insulting and hurtful in what they're doing, that's incompetent with the students. Of course they don't spend enough time to learn about other cultures to know that they're doing that."

Anika discussed how some faculty do take the time to understand international students

and customs before they will do the same for those who were born and raised in this country

prior to their own ancestors entry. Anika went on to say that graduate school gives positives, but is also a brainwashing experience:

The Native Center was great. I loved being involved with that and getting to know other people, and I've continued since I've graduated. I appreciate having a doctorate; I know that graduate school in some ways has not changed me for the better. I think a lot of ways it has; I understand science more. I understand research more, I'm a better therapist, I mean there's a lot of competencies I got. If I didn't come to grad school, so all those are very good things. I'm a better writer. But so much of graduate school is trying, in my opinion, is trying to, kind of what I said before about doing what your faculty member tells you. I believe it's trying to say, do it this way. There's a right way and a wrong way and here's the right way. And if anything is not like this, it's wrong. So in my opinion, I think graduate school at some level brainwashes you into doing things a certain way, and thinking in a certain way, where you lose your freedom and creativity anymore, because it's pounded in you over and over, and not that that's all bad...think this way, do it this way, conduct research this way. So for me, much of what we have learned is either so repetitive or it's so structured as far as, here's the step, and here's the next step, and so this is how you do it. Period.

I'm not the same person I was at 24 in my brain, with this freedom to be creative and channel my ancestors' guidance and messages. In that way, higher education has stolen my pureness from me, my pureness of my spirit and my creativity and my ability to immediately channel things from my ancestors. I have to work more at it now, or really work to get a calm, quiet place where I can hear them more. Before it was never an issue, it was just like *do this*, or *say this* and I would just do it or say it. And I would go, 'Where the hell did that come from? That didn't come from me.' Now I feel that this education has put this filter in me, or a block in me, and I'm like so robotic about some things. In order to navigate the system and graduate, I am no longer the pure spirit I was after undergrad. I feel that my undergrad education, for me at least, wasn't a brainwashing experience. It was a growing, developing, learning experience where I could still have this creativity but a foundation of knowledge. And now, I feel like grad school is the other way, where it's pushing, pushing, pushing on you, pushing down, so you lose creativity because it's like, do it this way, do it this way, do it this way, do it this way, I feel like it's not so much freedom in grad school as in undergrad. In graduate school the gates close on you, and you are restricted in the way you think, the way you have to write, how you have to produce things, how you do a test. It took so much of who I am. Of course there's the maturity and all those other factors, but the creative open channel is not there and I am struggling to recapture that and reopen the channel and get back to the free flow of creative inspiration that I want to have, so I can use that in combination with my education.

Interview with Revae

Revae is a northern Native who is working on her doctorate degree in Bioscience at the university. Revae is an active graduate student who contributes her time working with native

women on her campus and in her community. I met during a pow wow. The interview for this study began with a description of her heritage:

My mother is a little under half, actually a combination of Northern and coastal tribes. Her grandparents met in foster care. My grandfather was a Northern west coast native and my grandmother was transported from farther north during World War II. She was taken from her home and brought down to an orphanage...they actually met in an orphanage in a northern coastal state. So that's the native side of my family and my mom. Like I said, my mom is only half Native. And her father's white. My mom ended up marrying a white man as well, so that side of the family is European, actually a combination of two strong European linages.

Well let's see, my mom was actually adopted by her uncle. Her mom, her mom died in childbirth, or it was a year after childbirth, she was really sick, I believe with pneumonia. And her father was an alcoholic, so my grandparents adopted her. Who's actually my grandfather, actually her uncle, and my grandmother is her aunt by marriage. My grandfather, since both my great-grandparents went through the assimilation process in orphanages, my grandfather never embraced his native side. I mean he enjoyed the outdoors, hunting and fishing and that sort of stuff; but you know he was really just a blue-collar worker, trying to fit in and blend in with society. My grandmother is completely Caucasian, so she was always very unsupportive about being a Native American. My mom had me when she got pregnant in high school she was 17. Her and my dad got married; she had me when she was 18. Unfortunately, I don't know maybe not unfortunately, since they were so young though, I didn't really get to spend a lot of time with them. They actually didn't give me up for adoption, but they basically kind of just let my great aunt and uncle take care of me. Kind of the important thing to that is that, even though my mom was never allowed to embrace her native culture, she always tried to pursue her native culture. She was always very connected to it. She still is. So the most exposure I really got to it, as a child was when I would go visit her and she would take us to the pow wows.

My great aunt and uncle that had adopted me were on my dad's side of the family, and they were like, my uncle is 100 percent Polack and my aunt is, you know American, several different European-Caucasian nationalities. So actually, besides just going to a few pow wows that I kind of vaguely remember as a child, I was not raised with any sort of knowledge or upbringing of native culture whatsoever kind of going, starting into my school, I kind of was back and forth with my mom and my aunt and uncle until about the age of 5. I went to school at a public school for kindergarten, and then in first grade, I went to go live with my aunt and uncle for full time. They insisted that I go to a private school, so I was really fortunate. It was really fortunate. It was really small, but it was a very fun school. I got to go to first through eighth grade. So I really got lucky. I feel it really helped me build a lot of my foundations...math, science, English, all of that stuff. I was very fortunate in that I got a really good solid foundation in grade school and a good start to that.

However, by the time I got into high school my aunt had...she had a stroke. She was in her seventies. So, I went to go live with my dad. I just lived with him for a few years. I started public school when I went to high school. Him and I and his wife didn't get along very well. He was, well he was physically and mentally abusive. I ended up getting taken away from him when I was 16. I tried to go live with my aunt and uncle again, but since my aunt was so sick, it was just too hard, too stressful. So I went up to the west coast to live with my mom, where I continued my junior year in high school. And I actually ended up dropping out my junior year of high school because my mom, she didn't get a bigger place for us to live, my sister, my brother, her and me in a one-bedroom apartment. So I uh, well by the time the first summer I went up there I was fifteen and had gotten a job. I really liked working and making my own money that sort of thing. So when I went up to go live with her, when I was seventeen and fulltime, I insisted on getting another job and you know, I thought it was really cool. I was making good money and stuff like that, what I thought was good money at the time. I didn't want to go to school anymore; I wanted to work and ended up dropping out of school the second half of my junior year. At one point, I had three jobs, waitressing, retail; my life was pretty much dedicated to trying to pay the rent. Through this time my aunt had become really sick...sorry...

Revae's voice broke as she tried to tell the story and began to cry. She was handed a

Kleenex and the researcher put her arm around Revae's shoulder. She tried to explain away her emotion, "I don't know why I'm crying; I thought I was past this." She was given a moment and the researcher shared that memories are strong and those that touch our lives will always be with us. At times like this it is okay and safe to share our feelings. She responded,

Yeah, I'm really okay. I was 18 at the time. I don't know why this is so, it happened a really long time ago.

It was clear she was important to Revae.

Revae said while crying:

She was very important to me. She was really a great lady.

She was asked if she was the one that raised her:

Yeah, she totally did, she did. She's such a great lady. She ended up passing away, and I was still in contact with my uncle of course at the time. He was like my daddy.

We were both very, very close. You know he just kept telling me, like at that point when I was 18 and I hadn't even gotten my GED yet. And he just kept encouraging me to go to school, go to school, get your GED; you know you can do much better for yourself. He really gave me some tough love in the sense that he didn't help me out with anything, and

he was like, "If you go to school, I'll pay your car insurance," you know? I'll help you out in whatever way I can, but I'm not going to help you unless you go to school.

All of these events Revae has described took place in Seattle, where she lived from 17 to 23 years old:

That took me a while to get through my head. By the time I was 20, I uh had actually got my GED when I was 19. I started college when I was 20. It was a couple of different factors: my uncle, knowing I had his support of course, was the foundation of me thinking I could go to school. I had been dating a guy; he had been telling me that I should go to school as well. He had come up from a pretty rough background and that sort of stuff too. He was like, you know, 'if I can go to school, you can go to school too.' You go do this you got to do this. He made it seem so natural and easy that I was like, yeah, you know, maybe this is something I should really do for myself. I ended up getting enrolled, starting classes at a community college.

When I was almost 21, I enrolled in the fall semester and started classes. I thought I wanted to enter real estate business, by the end of fall semester I hated it. So I was like, maybe I'll do psychology. So I ended up taking some psychology classes. Just didn't drive me at all, and I ended up taking an environmental science class and that is where I found my passion. I just, you know, it just the way people, the way our society is built around resources, the way we use resources, the way...I don't know, it seems like we try to separate ourselves from them to trick ourselves into thinking we're above the environment, we're above this stuff, it really really intrigued me. It was almost like a social thing, but I really liked the sciences well. So I kind of bounced around between community colleges and finally broke up with my boyfriend and moved in with someone else. Him and I were going to school together. He was trying to go, I ended up going too, transferring to an outside community college with him, it was in Bellevue. I was like; 'This is not the right school for me.' He wanted to go out there because he could get more loans. I was on a really good financial aid plan, so I didn't really need it because I claimed my mom on my FASFA. My mom had at this point (I was 20) I mean, God, I can't even keep up with how many times she's been in & out of rehab. So basically she's broke. That's a bad thing, but a good thing on your FASFA.

So you know, I always told her, like you know, 'Mom, you might not have actually gave me any money to go to school, but since you're so poor you really did help me out.' [laughs] So I was really lucky with that, and getting good financial aid at that point. I didn't even try to get money from the Aleut foundation, which is the tribe my grandfather is an original enrolled member of. So yeah, anyway, I ended up finally telling my boyfriend, 'No, I'm not going to go to this college with you, I'm just going to stay in the city.' I went to Seattle Central Community College, and ended sticking it out there, getting my AA degree. I wanted my AS but had taken so many classes I was at the credit level to get my AA. I was ready to move on to a university.

I was getting ready to graduate and I ended up talking to this lady who was connected to my ex-boyfriend's family. She was a spiritual leader (counselor); she was really, really

great. I ended up talking to her, and she told me that I should come and check out Colorado. She said Colorado was really calling for me, that I should really come out here. I did some research on schools and found the State University. It was actually the only school I applied to because I was definitely on a budget and thought fifty bucks for an application was pretty expensive. [Laughs]

So, um, through the whole time, I was working on weekends as a janitor, cleaning offices and schools on weeknights and the weekends. I was putting in 25 hours of work on the weekends alone. That's how I got myself through school. Even though my uncle said he would help me out, I really tried not to rely on him. If it was something really critical, I would call him and he would say okay. It was usually a huge bill, like not being able to pay my phone bill or something. I would always pay my own rent. I always, always tried to be independent. It always helped that I had good financial aid and that sort of stuff. In 2005, I moved out west and got accepted into the department of Agricultural Sciences. I honestly wasn't prepared for some of the classes some of the huge lecture classes um they were pretty intense. My organic chemistry was definitely a struggle for me. I got a C in that class and a C in Plant Physiology. I had to repeat Elite Physics, but I got an A the second time. [Revae laughs] I got a D the first time, I kind of think it was the teacher. I got a different teacher the second time and really loved it, really loved it.

Going into my second year at a State University I was definitely doing better in my classes. Kind of got better study habits, got buckled down. In community college, I was so reliant on the tutoring there. They had a whole room committed to tutoring; anybody could come in at anytime. Great tutors, you know, fellow peers, a real strong support system. They didn't have that here though; they didn't have that at all. And kind of where I found my network of people ~~was here in~~ at the, Native American resource center at the university. So that's really where I found my network of people to hang out with, and to feel part of the community. That was the first time, also that I had ever met another Native American student. So I was very intrigued to say the least. While I was very close to my aunt and uncle, they would always tell me, don't tell people that I was a Native American. 'You're not Native American, don't tell people that.' I, um even as a little kid, I was like yes I am, you can't tell me what I am, I know what I am. And they were always just like, no, no, no. [laughs] My aunt grew up during the Great Depression, so she was totally from a different generation. She wasn't as bad as my uncle. My aunt would say, 'Oh yeah, we have Cherokee-Native on our side of the family too.' But my uncle would say, 'Don't tell people you're Native American.' My uncle was 100 percent Euro-American.

So, coming to the NACC Native cultural office was intriguing to me. I was really excited to reach out to meet some more community members. That year, 2006, I was really wanting to get something started or have something to do, like a student organization. We had AISES (American Indian, Science, Engineering Society) and NASS (Native American SS), but those are more like school centered programs and more work related. So I ended up talking about the drum, I just thought the drum was amazing and I was always intrigued by it. It had incredible healing powers to it; you can feel your soul move. Women cannot be involved in the drum group at CSU and many drum groups do not allow women.

Revae and the assistant director of the Native resource center decided that the women of the office needed something, thus began a group dedicated to meeting the needs of indigenous women of the Fort Collins Community. The goal was to connect students and community member in a weekly tradition of sharing and learning, which has been a tradition among tribes throughout history... This group would be called the Women's Circle. This is a tradition that is seen on many campuses.

The group opened to Native students, staff, faculty, and community members meeting regularly once a week. The group works on various craft projects such as native shawls, beadwork, attending museums in Denver, Friday night art walks etc. There is a cute little Plaque on the wall with our first project just to kind of show we're officially here. I want to add more people and more years, and dates to the collage. It was kind of an idea to continue the collage every year.

Revae stops and takes a moment to reflect and takes the story back. The conversation shifted to her youth and building her work resume:

"I had a resume when I was 17 and I need to do that again. My mom helped me so I could get a job it was pretty bad. My seminar class was emphasizing the need to get one together. I was involved in 4H and FFA and that kind of stuff and night school. I am so glad I worked at 4H and FFA then; it showed me how to work and dedicate myself to something.

I got to State University and I had no resume, so I started to build my resume. My first career fair I handed my resume to a bio technician at the USDA, she noted I was from out of state and I was in Soil and Crop Sciences, and I had work-study; I was practically hired on the spot. The story almost repeats itself five years later as a PhD. So that was really my first foot in the door in my field. I got really good exposure to lab techniques, lab analysis, that sort of stuff and carbon sequestration at the USDA, just right over here on [a location near campus]. I made some good connections; that was really great I loved it, but picking soils? I knew there was something a little more interesting. I moved on from that job, it gave me a foot in the door for a summer internship, the door in my field. I was gung ho, I listened to people telling me to be bold and get interviews, the more you practice the better you'll get. I would do it even if I didn't want the job, anyone that would interview me.

In the summer of 2006, I went for another interview at the USDA, the sugar beet research lab and was interviewed by a lady named Shanna Lawson there. One of the questions she asked me was what got me the job. The reason I knew the answer is, growing up in Oregon there were sugar beet trucks, and we'd find sugar beets lying all over the roads.

We'd pick them up and throw them around because you couldn't do much with them. She asked me 'What are sugar beets used for?' 'Sugar,' I replied. She said I was the first person to answer the question correctly. You're hired [laughs]. It was a competitive position, out of chemistry majors and others. All of these really smart people that had been in the university since day one and 18 years old, did not know what a sugar beet was used for [Laughs again]. So, really it was absolutely ironic, right? I got an awesome job that summer working on protein mix and absolutely loved that job. I was looking at protein extracts on sugar beets, looking at proteins induced in certain strains of sugar beets that inhibit a virus (necrotic yellow vein virus) that is a cause of failed crops.

Sugar beets are one of the most highly produced in eastern plains. They are also highly subsidized and a major part of U.S. commodity. Shauna was doing research on this project too and she actually told me, 'I think you have some potential.' She was one of the first women I ever worked with, besides Lea; she was kind of like a mom though, 'pick your soils,' making sure everyone was on task. Ros was really a research leader, 28 years old and a post-doc, it was freaking amazing, with a high paying job at the USDA! I was her right hand gal all summer.

During the internship it was amazing; she was such a huge inspiration to me. Reminded me that I was new at this, but saw the potential in me and I should try and get a scholarship. I told her I was Native American and I did identify as that. She told me about a committee she was on, 'the Bridge to Doctorate.' She told me about another lady I needed to meet, Lynda Kaems, who was looking for students getting master's degrees to go into doctorate programs. I met her a few times and got connected, but at that point, I was just trying to focus on getting my bachelor's degree. Getting done with schooling, I needed to get done with school. Everything went really well up until 2007. My uncle got into a car crash and he was in the hospital for about a month, and had a brain aneurism and ended up passing away. I did go see him for about a week, I missed a week of school, but I had a month of school left and two more weeks until finals. It was so hard but he was always so adamant about me going to school. I was told that the only response he had was while I was there, I always felt so bad about that.

The interviewer confirmed what she was saying, which was that she was doing as he wished—attending school. Revae agreed, and then said:

I really felt like I was doing what he wanted me to do. You know I missed it; he passed away while I was gone. He was always like, don't do soil and crop sciences, be a lawyer or doctor. [Revae laughs]

Yeah [he was proud of her], I was supposed to graduate that semester but I had to drop a couple of classes. I had to go down and handle the estate that summer. I came back in the fall 2007, got my stuff together, it took me one more semester after that and I graduated in 2008 with my bachelor's degree. The spring of 2008, I only had a couple of classes, so I really had to focus and start thinking about graduate school. Let's see, spring of 2008, I had some free time and Iron Eagle invited me to visit the home of my grandmother. That was my first time ever up north.

I went for an AISES conference. Anna went with us. Anna Haiem, she was the PI for the ‘Bridge to the Doctorate’ program. She told me, ‘You’re in the sciences and have a diverse background, we could use a person like you to be applying for this.’ Um, so I applied and got accepted into the program. Yes, I’m in my PhD now, so I will get my doctorate.

Revae and the interviewer again shared a moment rejoicing in this accomplishment, as both had the understanding of what it takes to overcome the self-doubt and embrace the inner journey to persevere in this difficult journey. She continued:

I ended up picking my advisor and he had already submitted a grant for using C-3 grasses for biofuels. He started me off immediately on the project that summer. I began familiarizing myself with the literature and that sort of stuff. In the fall of 2008 is when I officially started the ‘Bridge to the Doctorate’ program. What I didn’t like about the program is they expected you to do a master’s degree within two years, that’s really hard. The advisor I picked was one of my favorite teachers, and I really, really liked working with him. I enjoyed all the classes. I was very enthusiastic about the project; I wanted to learn as much as I could. I wanted to meet with him and talk with him about science, about trying to get this off the ground and what I needed to be doing. He was hard to find, nowhere to be found. So I was like you know, I’m just going to do this myself then. I’m going to buckle down, I’m going to do this and get this stuff done. That’s how I got my literature review done in my first year. My second year, the summer of 2009, I got accepted into Duke University in Geneva, their summer program. I was placed in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), it’s next to the UN, and there are all sorts of organizations there. One organization accepted over 100 interns and the WMO accepted 10 interns that year. I got so lucky that I was one of them.

I worked two doors down from the director of the WMO. I got to talk with him several times. The joke in Geneva is that interns run Geneva in the summer because everyone goes on vacation. [laughs] I got to work with some really great people and experience Europe it was really beautiful. My boyfriend is from Europe; his aunt lives two cities outside Geneva and visited there too. While in Geneva I got a great foundation on climate change. Coming back to a more conservative university, as this one, it’s hard to talk about climate change; it’s a hippie greenie thing. It’s not like that at the WMO. When I came back here I was trying to talk about the experiences and things I learned, it was definitely a challenge. The responses I received were, ‘Oh yeah, well those are just some people’s opinions,’ and blah, blah, blah. So I always made that like a strong point to integrate into my thesis. They kept telling me, no, you don’t need to talk about that, and I’m like well, I’m going to. This is important. This is important stuff, you know, this is the bigger aspect of things, you know, this is the broader scope.

I ended up getting my fieldwork done that fall, my plants harvested and going into the lab. Most graduate students have work-studies; they would not provide me with work-study. I did everything by myself and was in the lab literally 12 hours a day all winter long trying to process hundreds and hundreds of samples in triplicates. It was intense. I

got very familiar with the techniques and knew the data backwards and forwards. By spring I started writing my materials, methods and results section.

I ended up coming back, caught the end of field season here, for my actual PhD project.

Part Two: Critical Race Perspective

In order to know where we are going, we need to understand where we have been as a people. Understand the past, embrace it and make a plan to move forward here and now. No longer can blame continue to be placed on who did what and wallow in the damage as in therapy, it is time to work through the here and now. In fact, Joyzelle Gingway Godfrey (2000), who has Teton, Yankton, Dakota, and Ottawa Native blood, and a professor of Lakota Studies, says that it is detrimental to mental health if a person does not have a clue of where they came from.

A clear footprint of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is written across the newest research on indigenous studies. It is an assumption that racism will not change under the traditional systems of anthropological studies. Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008) bring to light the vast studies of Indigenous peoples in their handbook of *Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. The argument is not to replicate the work of other scholars but to break new ground of social activist methodological and moral ground: a need to decolonize and deconstruct the attitudes of the western scholar. Indigenous peoples are not members of a primitive culture that need to be looked at with this western lens. (p.6)

Taking a stance on human liberation by mobilizing scholarship and advocating for ethical and moral responsibilities various epistemologies embody. (Ladson-Billings, 2000). In other words, it is the established scholarship that clashes with challenges made from perspectives of amendment that critical race theory offers. Wynter (1990) said it another way:

For it is the task of established scholarship to rigorously maintain those prescriptions, which are critical to the order's existence. This focus on the ways of the dominant order is important in helping us explore the ways such an order distorts the realities of the

Other in an effort to maintain power relations that continue to disadvantage those who are excluded from that order. (p. 27)

According to Freeman (1995) the left scholars, who are mostly scholars of color, embraced this movement of critical race. It was first seen in the law schools, where racial power and culture are formed by the American legal system. From critical legal studies emerged Critical Race Theory, to examine race and racism and raise its awareness in American consciousness for all African-Americans and all peoples of color (Brown, 1995).

It is important to not ignore racism in a pluralistic society exploring the lived experiences of the other side, those within the racial groups. Some argue that a rejection of the race concept is a solution, while others argue that this concept is impossible to ignore (Shuford, 2001).

Results

The critical race perspective was chosen as the lens to navigate this study. This perspective, focusing on factors of: racial identity, oppression, marginalization, social economic status and discrimination have all been spoken about each participant in their own words.

Today's indigenous women have many stressors, whether they live on the reservation, in the suburbs, or an urban environment. There are also many stressors for indigenous women who may not be full-blood quantum, but have strived to stay connected to their ancestral heritage. Many changes have evolved throughout the years, and some are maintaining cultural knowledge despite not matching their own tribes' personal appearance. Many have been removed from traditional cultural customs because they have grown up removed from the tribe. Many did not find out until later in life that they were part of a native culture.

The common theme among all participants has been the desire and passion of *self-determination*. Each woman has encountered many obstacles from *cultural oppression*. This has only made them stronger and more determined to succeed and go forward with their education.

There is a thread in their stories that shows a web of: *self-determination*, through tears of *cultural oppression*, leading them to search for their true identity; many times encountering a *social environment* where *economics* were a factor in what they could or could not access, leaving them not only with a sense of *marginalization*, but actually encountering the reality of being *marginalized*. With an innate *love of learning* they overcame the *violence* of what life had dealt them and continued to pursue their goals through strength and *self-determination* an intrinsic drive that began at an early age.

One of the main emerging themes from the stories is *racial ethnic identity*. Four of the women in the study knew that they were different from the mainstream population, but it was not clear to them, specifically, what their true identity was. At a young age, they faced encounters that were brought to their attention through no weakness of their own. The other themes that emerged from the study were *marginalization*, finding oneself on the outside looking in; and *cultural oppression*, experienced within and outside families, when the women were kept from acknowledging their true identity, which were the underlying non-verbal expectations of following the dominant group norms.

Some experiences of exclusion occurred as perceptions of not being (adequately) native, and growing up around *violence* were common, both at home and at school. At home it was a socio-cultural experience and a matter of non-parenting skills and lack of resources. At school, it was a matter of differences and being bullied that led to sometimes becoming aggressive to protect one.

Experiences of *social environment* and *economics* varied among participants. The stories revealed how *economics* plays an important factor in what is and is not accessible to these women and the paths that are taken to attain their goals. Finally, what all of these women showed

throughout their stories was a high level of *self-determination*. Regardless of their *socio-economic* status and struggles, they all identified with the themes *of racial and ethnic identity, marginalization, cultural oppression* and *violence*.

Racial and Ethnic Identity

Devon Mihesuah (2003) writes how Native women shared the struggle against colonialism, which included: genocide, loss of lands, encroachments onto their lands by Euro-Americans, intermarriage with outsiders, population loss from disease, warfare and removal. While they shared a common struggle, they reacted in diverse ways. The author writes that:

Some of the greatest stressors that Indigenous women face have to do with their appearances and with not knowing their tribe's history and culture and, therefore, their identities as Natives. Identity conflicts among Native females are critical and ongoing psychological problems especially for multi-heritage women. (p. 81)

Identity confusion was common in the women in this study's stories. Racial identity can be simply defined as the biological race one claims. It is, of course, common for one person to have multiple biological heritages; "a 'multi-heritage' person might claim all of her racial heritage or only one" (Mihesuah, 2003). The individual may have no cultural mores related to the tribe, but still be connected by genetics. The ethnic identity, describing the women's' culture, language and ancestry, belief systems and language, was a factor for the participant being misidentified as belonging to another marginal group. The following quotes are taken from the stories that represent this occurrence:

Emma: I began to realize that I had brown skin and I had brown hair and all that other stuff, so I associated myself closely with that, just even on television seeing Latinos and Hispanics on T.V. and seeing that, 'Oh that's me,' just closely aligning the two together.

Emma believed that she was just like her peers, and had not questioned or known any differences. When drawing a self-portrait, she drew a picture of herself with blond hair and light skin just as she saw her peers. Her self-identity was not immediately evident to her. Her family

had not made her aware of any differences. They had left the reservation and were living acculturated in a world away from others like themselves. Emma said:

I remember asking my mom and dad if we were Mexican. I was defiant in saying we were Mexican, and them trying to teach me that NO, we're Native, we're Native American'. I didn't really have any type of grasp of what that was.

Emma identified with the only group she was cognizant of that actually looked like her, which were Mexican not Native. Emma's realization of her true identify was grappling; she went from seeing herself as a white child like her peers, to then seeing a brown girl who was of Latin descent, and finally being told that she was Native American. She knew other Mexicans, but she did not know any Native Americans.

What was wrong with me? I didn't want to be just Emma the Native; I was still trying to navigate my identity.

During Emma's second year she had a mentor named Two Feathers-who was instrumental in helping her navigate growing in two worlds:

My mentor knew I needed to heal those wounds and the only way to do that was for me to understand who I was.

Julie's first encounter and opportunity to speak openly about racial identity was during the time she worked in Glacier National Park for the youth conservation corps:

[Her friend who had a similar cultural experience] was the first person that was honest enough about how difficult it was to live that life, of being physically Indian and culturally white in that state. There's a lot of pressure on you, you know, to be one or the other. To be able to know things you would have no way of knowing, or to deny things that you can't deny because that's been your life. I mean there's a lot of pressure put on you when you're on that boundary.

Julie had a difficult family upbringing and eventually met other Native people who had similar experiences. It was only then that she was able to relate to her own racial identity.

Anika grew up in a predominantly white community.

I grew up thinking I was white. We didn't really discuss it, so most of my childhood I didn't even know my heritage. I was surprised to know I was Native...[when she

discovered] it was kind of casual, my mom was, ‘Oh, by the way,’ I was like, ‘Whoa, wait I’m Native? Hold on.’ Then she said, ‘Yeah, don’t say anything to pawpaw about it cause he’ll get mad you know.

Anika did not receive this news until she was in high school. While she has important family history, members of her family tried to keep their Nativeness a secret:

It was pawpaw’s great-grandfather who was a leader of a Native tribe. I never asked where’s pawpaw’s family? They just kind of said we’re of mixed European ancestry, and so forth.

Once Anika learned of her Native heritage, she embraced it wholeheartedly, and it became her identity. She even expressed belief that her ancestors were the source of her creativity with clients:

And I KNOW I was inspired from my ancestors and the Creator to do the work, because they would tell me things to tell my clients and I would tell stories. That’s when another piece of me started acknowledging my Nativeness.

Revae knew her family lineage at the time of this interview:

My mother is just a little under half of...actually, it’s a combination of Native tribes. Let’s see, her grandparents met. So that’s the Native side of my family and my mom is only half Native. She ended up marrying a white man as well, so that side of the family is European.

She did not have this knowledge her entire life, however. Revae’s grandmother died in childbirth, and her mother was not allowed to embrace her native side, but her mother stayed connected to it. She had Revae when she was 18 years old. Her white uncle and aunt on her dad’s side raised Ravae; but she does remember going back and forth between and her mom until she was five years old, and vaguely remembers pow wows.

Marginalization

Marginalization has become a term synonymous with individuals of different color, gender and lower economic status than those in power. They often emerge as individuals who experience omission from meaningful participation in society, such as quality education, fair

taxes, lack of health care, adequate housing and other basic needs. This can result in severe material dispossession, and in extreme cases, can eradicate groups. How were the participants marginalized? Each individual will speak on her own behalf.

Emma began having conversations with other minorities to discover her own marginalization:

I had these conversations with a lot of other minorities and I realized I wasn't the only one; that all of us had these stereotypes attached to our skin color and to our race; the reason that people were reacting so negative to me on the reservation was because I had socioeconomic privilege.

Emma learned she was different in both environments: on and off the reservation. It was like a double-edged sword that cut deep:

I was no longer the Native girl who pretended to be white; I was just the Native American girl who nobody knew. No one had ever reacted to me that way. My first year in college, I was just saying, 'No, I'm just Emma.' I was just really frustrated when people would ask silly questions like, 'Are you related to Pocahontas?' And very absurd racist comments, made me so frustrated, I didn't understand. I wasn't accepted by my own people and I'm not accepted by you, so who am I accepted by?

Julie also experienced marginalization and stereotyping of Natives while in school:

This time was like a perfect storm, I just didn't like the teachers; I didn't like how I felt in the classrooms. There was nothing anyone said overt toward me; it was just how they acted toward me, which was dismissive at best. It wasn't until much later that I wondered how much of a role that being native played into it. Indians, in general, were considered dirty, thieving, stupid, alcoholics, immoral and government subsidized.

Julie knew that she was different and that she looked different, and she could not change these facts:

I remember the teacher coming by, there was a square grid and one of the questions was: would it be faster to walk down one side of the square and across the other or would it be faster to go diagonal? He came by and said, 'Wow, that is really good,' at that point, I realized he just thought I was a moron, because I thought, this is easy to see. I couldn't explain it, I couldn't do any of it in a formula, and I couldn't do any of that. I started to realize that I was seen as just some kind of moron in the schools.

The marginalization that Julie had felt through the years left her distrustful of any encouraging praise that was given to her by that time:

It took me a long time to say, ‘You know what, I am really capable, and I have something to add to these conversations and don’t discount me because I don’t fit into your idea of what I should be.’ That took me to my forties, in my forties I got angry. I got angry at being marginalized.

Anika felt marginalized in school, not for being Native, but for not being smart enough, or at least not scoring highly on the GRE:

So then people in academia think that’s an IQ test, they only want people that score like 1600 or 1500 or whatever it is, so I definitely felt discriminated against. Not because I was Native, but because I wasn’t one of those smarty-pants people.

Despite not growing up on a reservation, Anika still had challenges to achieve her goals in academia:

I didn’t grow up in a Native community, I didn’t grow up on a reservation, I didn’t grow up having the opportunity to fully enhance that side of my culture. Because of that, I am very acculturated and I fit into this whiteness more than other people who are ethnic minority. I think that’s why I had an easier time in higher education than some of my other friends that were ethnic minorities who grew up in ethnic community. I think in some ways, they are stronger in their identity than I was; they had a harder time in higher education than I did.

Anika felt that even though she grew up in a white social class, she still had to work harder than most to get accepted. The standards were held high for those who grew up with privilege and who could afford the best in education, making the journey for those who are at the bottom of the social economic scale a momentous challenge.

Even when they were succeeding, the women were frequently underestimated or were flat out refused support by those whose job it was to support them. One of these examples comes from Revae and her school counselor:

I need to start preparing for the next phase of my PhD. He was like, ‘well you know, I really think it’s just too competitive for you. I don’t think you’re going to make it in this, so you might as well just give up.’ He absolutely refused to help me.

Cultural Oppression

Oppression is known as an equal use of individual or group power to target persons or groups politically, psychologically, and socially based on attributes beliefs, behaviors and rituals that do not conform to those of the dominant cultural group. It is also known as white privilege, due to the common association with the dominant culture. The individual that experiences this becomes marginalized, a marginal person—functioning more at the edges of society rather than at the center, more likely to be an observer of, rather than a participant in, the scene around them. It has been noted by historians that the urge to power compromises a person's integrity. Oppression can be defined more specifically as unjust, harsh and cruel exercise of power over another, which leads to psychological distress, emotional pain and suffering. Oppression falls under the context of racism and prejudice felt by individuals or groups that do not conform to the beliefs or expectations that allow inclusion in the dominant group. However, not all minority members are oppressed (Kleg, 1993).

Emma experienced oppression in both directions:

Being in a classroom with all Native students and yet there was that cultural gap because my cultural identity was very much white, because I was around white people all the time, I was very white. And so, the other Native in the classroom ostracized me. They called me 'apple'.

This is an example of reverse cultural oppression; you begin viewing and responding to the world around you from the perspective of two different realities. Emma began partaking of each environment but did not fully belong to either. She was discovering her minority status both on and off the reservation. When Emma was struggling at the reservation and did not want to go to school because of the way the Native kids were treating her, before getting on the bus one day, her grandmother taught her an important lesson:

She was asking me to interpret because she only spoke Native, very little understanding of English. She shared with me that what I was trying to interpret was Looney Tunes to

her and at one point she started crying. When I asked what was wrong, she said, ‘Not understanding, not knowing the world hurts the heart, so I envy you because you can understand this world because I feel lost every day and nobody’s there to interpret to me the world.’ It’s like, ‘There is something special there at that school that I wish I could have.’ My grandmother shared this story with me before I got on the bus. And so at that point I realized that there was something special about getting an education.

Julie had a different experience, but also oppressive:

I’m adopted, I am native but a white family that took me out of the environment adopted me. I lived a very different lifestyle and was told by my white family not to interact with natives.

Julie’s adopted family had actually imposed a practice of cultural suppression on her identity. For a young child being asked not to interact with natives, people that looked like her, it was very confusing. It wasn’t until later in her young adult life that she found someone who had grown up under similar circumstances that she could make a connection with while working in a youth corps program. However, while there she experienced oppression:

I did that for nine months, I hated how I was treated there. I was the only Indian. It was all manual labor... I was raised for academic success. I bucked heads with my bosses...before long I was cleaning toilets.

Revae grew up thinking she was white, and therefore, said she didn’t experience oppression due to being native prior to learning about her heritage. However, after learning of this knowledge, she was asked to suppress it by her own family. She also experienced reverse cultural oppression when she was rejected from a program for natives because she was not from a reservation and did not fit the profile of what a stereotypical ‘native’ looks like:

I got rejected from the university which really hurt because they actually have the ‘Indians Into Psychology’ program there, specifically for native students. They did not pick me; I was like wow that was a native specific program for native people.

Anika continues to struggle with people who do not accept her Nativeness:

I think some faculty didn’t know what to do with me because I talk about being Native, but I look white, and they are not as multi-culturally competent as I think they think they are. So like, ‘Yeah but you look white,’ and I’m like, ‘And? Do you know what Native look like? They look like this. This is how Native people look.’ We are not dark people.

All Native people are not dark, dark stereotypically Navajo looking people. You look at people especially on the eastern seaboard, they are not stereotype of what Native people look like. If you don't fit the mold...

Revae's family was mostly unsupportive of being Native. Her grandmother was completely Euro American and she was always unsupportive about being a Native American. Revae did remember attending pow wows with her mother at a young age, before she was sent to live with her uncle and aunt:

Even though my mom was never allowed to embrace her native culture, she always tried to pursue that native, her native culture. She was always, very, very, connected to it. She still is, so most exposure I really got to it, as a child was when I would go visit her and she would take us to pow wows.

Violence/Physical-Emotional/Survival

Violence appeared in these women's stories in the form of parental abuse, both physical and emotional. Violence is also found in more subtle and passive aggressive behaviors, and does not always bear the typical signs of physical abuse. Definitions of violence have been categorized according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) into four categories: (1) physical, (2) sexual, (3) threats of physical or sexual, and (4) psychological or emotional (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 2002).

The women in this study, whose lives crossed paths with forms of violence, showed the power of perseverance and believing in oneself against the odds. The indigenous women of past ancestry survived and persevered through the many changes and challenges that were filled with violence from outsiders: the violence that crept into their own homes with the arrival of disease and alcohol. This challenge set before them brought with it the loss of home, land, and children taken from their home, some never to return. These events took place during stages of violence.

Indigenous women today cannot give up so easily after the ancestors persisted to keep the stories and cultures alive, in spite of the odds against them. Violence is described similarly by

most authoritative sources as physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging or abusing causing physical or emotional trauma. It is a refusal to listen to, or denying another person's feelings, and ridiculing or shaming them. It happens when one person believes they have a right to control or dominate another person.

Emma spoke of getting bullied by her classmates:

I told her I was tired of getting bullied and all of the other stuff and I didn't think I wanted to go to school again.[...] My parents literally had to drag me onto the bus again; I would cry before the bus came in the morning.

Julie's non-biological parents may have taken her away from the reservation and tried to keep her away from other natives in the hopes of shielding her. However, there is only so much that parents can do to shield their children from violence and ignorance and keeping your children in ignorance of their heritage doesn't seem to be a solution. As a way of coping, she said, "I kind of turned into a tough kid, just because if you were that, people left you alone."

Anika had a challenge of violence during her first counseling job. Her clients started out with mistrust toward her and in the end they overcame many obstacles and embraced her:

This one guy had tried to cross the room and attack me. We went from that to them crying and begging me to stay.

Another example of experiencing violence, this time a form of academic violence, occurred when Anika was presenting a colleague's data at a Native conference. Anika was not prepared for what took place:

I started getting attacked by people asking me questions about Jeremiah, questions about his research practices, and questions about why I'm criticizing native people.

Some people tried to normalize drug use but Native people don't consistently use drugs. This is a new phenomenon. This is not my research, this is not my design, I am just presenting the data. I got ripped to shreds by these native people criticizing me that I don't know what I'm doing, I'm making inaccurate conclusions, measurement isn't appropriate. It was awful. Most of the things they were asking me about I didn't have the answers to because I wasn't his student.

Revae experienced an unstable life with her biological parents. She lived between her mother, and her uncle and aunt before she was five, during her formative years. She then left the only stable environment she knew to live with her father during the onset of her teenage years. It could be presumed that the relationship was strained, since they had not had regular contact and he had another family:

I went to live with my dad. I just lived with him for a few years. Him and I and his wife, we didn't get along very well. He was...I want to say...well he was physically and mentally abusive. I ended up getting taken away from him when I was sixteen.

Self-Determination

In each story, self-determination to persevere is ubiquitous. This was one of the prevailing themes in the research. Deci & Ryan (1985) discussed intrinsic motivation and self-determination: Self-determination theory is a concept for an individual to be “concerned with supporting our natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 68) Ryan & Deci were the first researchers to develop human behavior through their research. Individuals attempt to integrate the social practices and values that surround them. To be self-determined is to endorse one’s reflections at the highest level of reflection (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination is also defined as determination of one's own fate or course of action without compulsion; free will. This was a driving element among all participants, regardless of the external circumstances.

For Emma, her grandmother’s story was her inspiration, but when she arrived at college, a lack of institutional support pushed her self-determination:

Rich environments like college campus, not having somebody who looks like you and understands where you came from, and the whole cultural aspect not willing to lend you a hand of support was beyond my understanding. And so I wanted to be that point person.

I became very frustrated not having the intellectual support to help me do what I wanted to do. With the American Indian Leadership Program I was looking forward to having a professor for when I say, ‘This is the American Indian issue I want to address,’ and not

be given this funny look or told, ‘Ok, you go play with your theory over there and I will stamp an A on it because you thought of something no one else has. But we don’t support you in getting published.’

However, Emma’s experiences made her realize that The American Indian Education Program had been carved out to intentionally keep natives ‘over there.’ It had been around for over forty years and they knew what they were doing:

But I’ve also realized that they kind of carved out that type of area that I was talking about: ‘You go play with your Indian education over there.’ They carved that into the school. That’s frustrating, but at the same time, I’ve been able to create relationships with classmates and everybody else, where it’s like, ‘No, this space isn’t appropriate.’

Emma has worked to change the conversation, so that others will be prepared and not experience what she has had to experience.

Julie also experienced oppression from a school faculty member who was supposedly advising her, but she turned this oppression into motivation:

When I went to school in the state in which I lived, I met with my advisor, some guy in economics. He had my transcript, everything in front of him; he looked at me and said, ‘I don’t think college is the place for you. I think you need to go to Vo-tech.’ I was so angry because in that state the Indian kids went to Vo-tech. When you look at the numbers it was very few Natives that went to college in 1977. So at that point I just thought, son of a bitch, I’m going to get a degree. And really that’s what pushed me.

After years of struggling with math, she was disappointed that her teachers could neither recognize her conflict in math, nor could they acknowledge her successes in writing or help to guide her in that direction.

Anika discussed throughout her story how hard she worked to compete and keep her grades competitive:

There were people a lot smarter than me. I had to work really hard. I’m one of those people that that the grade that I made it’s because I worked for them. I worked very very hard. I had to study, had to push myself, so school wasn’t easy for me.

I knew I had to prove myself and show that I could be good in grad school, because I am also a horrible standardized test taker.

Despite working on a graduate degree, Revae worked weekends as a janitor to put herself through school:

Through the whole time, I was working on weekends; I was working as a janitor...cleaning offices and schools on weeknights and weekends. I was putting in 25 hours of work on the weekends alone. That's how I got myself through school. Even though my uncle said he would help out, I really tried not to rely on him.

Revae was also told by an 'advisor' not to pursue her current path; that she should go into Social Science instead:

And I just stood, I just stood up and looked him straight in the eye, and I was like...you know what? That might be *Your Opinion!* But I know that if I have the right support and the right leadership, I know I will be successful. And that's when I know I can do this. I mean it was, I just said it so coldly, so fast I was like, oh my gosh, I can't believe I even just said that.

Like Julie, and Revae also took this as a challenge to work harder to accomplish her goals:

It has a lot to do with perseverance and just opening your ears and trying, trying to learn, having the desire to learn it, the desire to be there and crank out those hours and having the dedication. But yeah, that was a huge challenge with me, the challenge of someone not believing that you had what it took, what it takes. And you know, showing that you do...

It made me...it really showed...I proved to myself, you know, I, if I really want something I can do it.

Anika, Revae, Emma and Julie, shows that through self-determination, persistence, and a lot of hard work: we can do it. *Mujeres Valientes –Strong Women*

Social Environment vs. Economics

The social environment is rooted in the natural environment, with the grouping of humans as they formed families and clans to survive nature, work with nature and other rival human groups. As these groupings evolved into larger social units, and societies increasingly left the natural world, this turned the socioeconomic society into becoming dependent on each other; thus civilizations were created. Prior to this creation in the Americas, explorers and settlers

arrival increased the complexities of the current indigenous societies. These changes became increasingly complex and led to a significant change in the natural environment.

As history played out the social environment for the oppressor was successful in acquisition of the land increasing their gluttony and power. Approximately six million Jewish people were murdered and given a country to right this. Over twenty million indigenous people were slaughtered in their own country and they were given baseball caps with Indians and a big nose. They were also shuffled on lands that were desolate.

Their memory is stuffed into a museum, refereeing to the Indigenous as if they were already extinct. This museum is for the dominant culture, but it leaves out many gaps in the true history. An example is the Glass cases showing corn, berries, and buffalo meat with a card reading “the Plains Indians’ lived on a diet of corn and berries and buffalo meat that was high in protein” (Nerburn, 2009, p. 121).

Ironically, Emma remarked how the fact that she was the only minority may have actually helped her to not receive ostracism from her classmates:

I was the only minority in the classroom there was no other interaction with anybody else, so they just thought I was normal. They accepted me and my parents had the social capitol to make sure that I was included in things like, I took ballet lessons, I took piano lessons, and many white social events and stuff like that I participated in. I participated in all aspects of the lifestyle that everybody was living in.

However, this led Emma to have considerable confusion about who she was. When asked to draw a self-portrait, she drew a picture of a little white girl with blond curls that looked just like her friends.

Julie grew up isolated from her real identity and told not to talk to natives. She felt she was always looking in, but not fully belonging to, the world that took her in:

So in tenth grade, I went to a bigger high school. But with school consolidation, there were fewer and fewer native kids. There weren’t many to start with, and even though the reservation was relatively nearby, they had their own high school. So if we got kids, it

would be the urban Indian kids and a lot of the time the urban Indian kids would go to the other high school.

As noted by author Kent Nerburn (2009) who spent much time on the rez; he wrote of the sub constructed houses junk cars, drunks and casinos. A fix for the atrocities, which are still less than other oppressed groups. Quoted by a Lakota elder “Six million Jews got killed, and you give them a country. Twenty million ‘Skins get slaughtered and you put big-nosed Indians on baseball caps. You think that’s fair?” (p. 119) The realization of what happened has not left the hearts and memories of many indigenous peoples. There has not been a reconciliation of equity for many and they see no escape from the borders of the reservation. Those that do leave find many challenges and struggles with identity and support. Julie grew up isolated from her real identity always looking in and not fully belonging in the world that took her in.

I did that for nine months, I hated how I was treated there. I was the only Indian. It was all manual labor... I was raised for academic success. I bucked heads with my bosses...before long I was cleaning toilets. My mom found out...my dad was at a federal agency, sitting on a Commission. She said ‘you call them and ask them why their daughter, who has a year of college under her belt, is cleaning toilets and happens to be the only Indian on that campus?’ I got moved immediately.

Anika was raised as a white girl and went to a private school:

There weren’t any native kids in the private school. From time to time, there would be an African American child, but it was mainly a white private school.

After Anika found out about her native decent, and while she was in college, she received the highly competitive minority fellowship for the American Psychological Association. She wondered why she received the fellowship and if it was because she was Native American. She also discussed how the social environment dictates to the dominant culture, but across the country the discussion continues to regurgitate (resonate) diversity:

“I didn’t grow up on a reservation, I wasn’t immersed in my culture; I’m still playing catch up. Many students were immersed in their culture and on some level different than the majority, did all of those students say they were treated differently. They weren’t understood as well, they had different ideas, different ways of thinking that were not

accepted. There were different expectations. I'm a big talker, but many of the students were quiet and reserved and that's what culture dictated. They had to change who they were and fit into graduate school."

This is another common trap for children of poverty who do not have strong family structure Revae demonstrated economic income as:

"I ended up dropping out my junior year of high school because my mom... didn't get a bigger place for us to live, as me, my sister, my brother and her had a one bedroom apartment. The first summer I went up there I had gotten a job and I really liked working and making my own money, that sort of thing. When I went to go live with her full time I was seventeen. I insisted on getting another job, you know, I thought it was really cool, I was making good money, at one point I had three jobs."

Revae's uncle tried to offset this by offering her help, conditional on her going back to school:

"You know he kept telling me; at that point, I was 18 and hadn't gotten my GED yet. He kept encouraging me to go to school, get your GED. 'You know you can do much better for yourself.' He really gave me some tough love, he didn't help me out with anything, he said, 'If you go to school, I'll pay your car insurance, I'll help you out anyway I can. But I'm not going to help you unless you go to school.'"

Revae made the right choices with the support and encouragement of her uncle to do better for herself. Another ironic benefit for Revae in navigating the acquisition of resources needed to obtain a graduate degree, was the poverty level of her mother:

"I always told her, like you know, 'Mom, you might not have actually gave me any money to go to school, but since you were so poor you really did help me out.' So I was really lucky with that, and getting good financial aid at that point."

Love of Learning

The Indigenous women in this study shared a drive to succeed, but they also shared a drive and a love of learning. These women loved to learn in spite of any oppression by classmates or faculty. In fact, it was often their love of learning that they relied on when everything else in their world was uncertain. This seems to be the underlying truth to the survival of these women in this study. A quick review of their words will bare this out. An

innate drives to learn, as defined according to Webster it is belonging to the essential nature or structure of an entity. This I believe has been the underlying truth to the survival of the indigenous women in this study.

Emma's struggles in her early years did not extinguish her innate love and passion for learning. She is now well on her way to her PhD. She credits this passion for her success:

"I fell back in love with school. I fell back in love with knowledge and everything else along with it."

Julie is a successful anthropological researcher, with a master's degree; she has written books and continues to do research. She always challenged herself in school because her dad instilled it in her:

"I went to see an advisor to plan out my semester classes; she said 'Julie why are you here?' I said 'I love anthropology', she said 'well you do pretty well in anthropology and excel in your writing classes...why are you doing these things that seem to be a lot more difficult?' I shrugged, my dad hammered in my head; if you get A's that's a waste of time you're not learning anything. If you're getting C's that's where you need to be, you're getting challenged."

Anika graduated and is now a successful researcher and clinician, whose research takes her across the country. The challenges of graduate school could not deter the passion Anika currently has for knowledge and learning:

"Since I've started grad school I've been trying to recapture that person and I have not been able to do that. That's very frustrating because I believe, and you might agree since you're living it, I think grad school has brainwashed me in some ways that are not good. It's trying to say do it this way, there's a right way and a wrong way, here's the right way. And if anything, if not like this, it's wrong. Much of what we've learned is so repetitive or so structured, as far as here's the step and the next step, this is how you do it. PERIOD. In graduate school, the gates close on you, and you are restricted in the way you think, the way you have to write, how you have to produce things, how you do a test. It took so much of who I am. I am struggling to recapture that and reopen the channel and get back to the free flow of creative inspiration that I want to have so I can use that in combination with my education."

Revae has accomplished all of her goals in the doctoral program, and will graduate before the end of the year:

“In the fall of 2008 is when I officially started the ‘Bridge to Doctorate’ program. I was very enthusiastic about the project. I wanted to learn as much as I could. I’m just going to do this myself, I’m going to buckle down; I’m going to do this and get this stuff done.”

Summary

In this study each participant discussed intrinsic factors. The common thread was their racial/ethnic identity and the confusion that surrounded each one. This added questions of uncertainty while making a connection to their true identity. In critical narrative Emerson and Frosh (2009) note the critical narrative methodology allows the scrutiny of individual accounts “worthy of attention” (p. 17).

The variation and degree to which differences occur among sovereign tribes can be more than doubled for many who have grown up several times removed from one’s indigenous roots. Individuals that remain on the reservation struggle with identity; their memories are fresh, kept alive by stories of the elders. The young inherit the oppression of their past and the wounds remain as they see their parents, older siblings and others living under the dreads of alcohol, unemployment, rundown houses, and broken cars scattered across barren prairie. Native women of the study acknowledge self with ancestral roots; they have been scattered peoples through out the decades of the trails and tears of colonization. The spirit of a people remains whether tied to the reservation growing up closer to the traditional family; or in suburban or urban environments not all cultural traditions were lost.

The many growing up in an urban environment hearing the stories, intuitively knew that they were connected. For some the realization came sooner than later. Whether they knew this from an early age or found out later in life, many have connected with this reality and embraced their ancestry to carry on the wisdom of the ancestors. Each participant has expressed a passion to work toward the education and betterment of our Native communities. The women in the study know who they are: Strong, Resilient, and Wise Native American Women. They are living

in the here and now and know it is important for their future to learn the truth and move forward. All women are seeking to find the truth about who they are and where their histories lie. Many stories were lost when the Euro Americans arrived and colonization began. Many indigenous peoples were put on reservations, while the stories were simultaneously being replaced by the Euro American's version of the new world. What happened to indigenous people were not done single handedly without the help of other indigenous people.

Indigenous education before the white man was holistic. Children learned about the natural world and how all is connected. They were allowed to excel at their special gifts and talents they were blessed with. Then ripped from a family unit and tortured to conform; many families never saw their children again. Teaching the true history of America with all of the atrocities is a start. Second putting schools in native communities teaching using their process will build the native community giving back the rightful place in American Society.

To continue the blame of who did what will not change who we were then and who we have become now. We are a diverse people, we are a strong people, and we have many elders who have kept the stories and the true way of mother earth. They are the true keepers of the stories; they will not be dressed in the guise of seeking glory or monetary gains. The true keepers of the stories, they are the quiet ones, the keepers of truth speaking to the people, ignoring the academy.

As our Native sisters before us, they listened to Mother Earth and the timing of the winds, so must we to find our true path. Today's indigenous women call upon the depths of intuition to keep in step with the call of their Native ancestral knowledge to push forward and keep the song alive for the children.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“I am the one who fought for you. And I know I’d do it all again. I would never blame any one of you if there were nothing you could do. But remember what went into my name when I died for you. And I’d do it again in a heartbeat. I’m Ana Mae Pictou.”

“I’d Do It Again in a Heartbeat,” music and lyrics by Shannon M. Collins

This chapter contains a reflection on the journey of indigenous women who choose to persevere against the odds. The chapter is organized in the following manner: first is a summary presentation of chapters one, two and three, then an overview of the major themes, then discussions of the findings, implications, recommendations for further research, a review of critical theory perspective and a summary is given to conclude.

This qualitative study was designed to discover and recognize personal and environmental characteristics contributing to the completion of a higher education degree by five indigenous women. The major themes will be described in a later section as a synthesis of what each participant distinguished as extrinsic and intrinsic factors that shaped their character, and pushed them to the completion of a graduate degree.

Chapter 1 introduced the study and illuminates why it is an important contribution to the academe. A brief description of the plight of the researcher’s indigenous heritage, the challenge of schooling that her parents encountered living off of the reservation, and an epiphany she had as a young child were all part of her continued quest for understanding. Through these insights, she began her quest to explore the nature of the human spirit through decades of atrocities.

Chapter 2 covered the history and plight of indigenous peoples in the U.S. and particularly looked at their schooling. The literature included life before the newcomers arrived, life during colonization and the plight of indigenous women over the past 400 years; when they

faced the loss of land, home and culture, when their children were taken away and moved to boarding schools, stripped of their beliefs and identity. The literature spoke of the government's role in broken treaties and massacres that led to the loss of the wars fought by the indigenous to keep their identity. These actions of injustice leave a scar on any sense of justice.

In Chapter 3, the research design was presented with the purpose for this study and the process for data collection. Further specifics detailing the analysis and methodological framework were provided. Chapter 4 described the findings of this study using critical narrative. The participants' stories were told in their voices with minimal interpretation. The data were analyzed and quotes and statements from the participants' stories supported emerging themes. The summary points to the degree to which indigenous women have evolved regardless of their tribe, whether they live on or off the reservation.

Four indigenous women have communicated their life histories, telling their stories of navigating through the schooling system. They shared their success, challenges and how they persevered to personal achievement. Despite the successes, they collectively have experienced racial and ethnic identity, which was unclear in their early years, marginalization, cultural oppression, violence, and social economic, self-determination and a continued love of learning. I have heard their stories, written them down, and listened to the "data", analyzed and organized what they have said, and now, I reflect further based on their and my own experiences.

Through the interviews and discoveries, I believed the women arrived at a place of substantial integrity. It was through these examples of the self-discovery and emergent themes that understanding the achievement of these indigenous women all had self-determination, their talents and success were reflecting factors. The women of this study pursued disciplines that serve the betterment of indigenous peoples as well as all people.

Extrinsic factors also played a key role. I observed the interrelated and intersecting systems of family and economics that related to the educational and sociocultural circumstances of these indigenous women. These factors intersect with various intrinsic factors, e.g., personal characteristics such as self-determination, ethnic identity, and marginalization. Figure 1 aided in the course of reflections and should help the reader follow the analysis.



Figure 1. Extrinsic and intrinsic factors of successful Indigenous women.

Leading Themes

Each indigenous woman in the study had these interrelated extrinsic factors: family systems, social economics systems, and educational systems. The intrinsic factors that intersect with the extrinsic factors are racial/ethnic identity, cultural oppression, marginalization, violence, love of learning, and self-determination.

Family Systems

The family is an intricate part of indigenous women. Cultural barriers to educational goals exist in many indigenous families. Two of the women in the study had lives focused on survival, not education. Family systems can be a positive and negative influence on the success of indigenous women. The women in this study had one or more family members that provided the support they needed. Emma's grandmother made an impact on her young life on the importance of having the opportunity to attend school and learn. The following is part of that conversation from Emma:

I asked her what was wrong and she said in-her Native language something along the lines of 'not understanding and not knowing, the world hurts the heart, so I envy you because you can understand this world because I feel lost every day and nobody's there to interpret to me the world. It's like there is something special there at that school that I wish I could have'. My grandmother shared this story with me before I got on the bus. And so at that point I realized that there was something special about getting an education. There was something important this idea of schooling and knowledge and that I needed to figure out how to grasp it.

Socio Economic Systems

When basic survival is at the forefront of daily life, it leaves little room to focus on higher order needs. Three participants came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and working class families. One participant was born on the reservation but was adopted when she was eighteen months old by a white family. Another participant's family was from a reservation, but her parents were both educated and they lived off of the reservation. Two participants had not

completed the doctoral journey at the conclusion of this study. One student has the financial means to attain her educational goal. The second doctoral student is dependent on government subsidies, which leaves the question: will this individual remain in poverty at the end of her educational journey?

Educational Systems

All of the women in this study were high achievers and determined within the sphere of education. Each believed a family member supported their interest, but their drive to succeed was sparked by something within each of them. It was an intrinsic drive that began at an early age. In the participants' story, the success or challenge at a young age kept their interest. Julies' experience early in school is a good example. It would not be the last, but yet she persevered.

She said:

This time was like a perfect storm I just didn't like the teachers; I didn't like how I felt in the classrooms. There was nothing anyone said overt toward me; it was just how they acted toward me, which was dismissive at best. It wasn't until much later I wondered how much of a role that being native played into it. Indians in Montana, in general were considered dirty, thieving, stupid, alcoholics, immoral and government subsidized. In general, we were a thorn in the side of the law-abiding white folks that lived around there.

Racial/Ethnic Identity

Identifying as a race is complex when living in a multicultural society there remains a stigma (Loury, 2005). This remains particularly true for identifying as Native American. Even when one's heritage was clear, as in the case of Emma, who was born on the reservation with both of her parents being Native, there was confusion. She grew up away from the reservation living in an environment that was opposite from her racial identity. In her first year of class she didn't notice any differences. She said:

At that point I didn't notice any cultural differences; in fact we had to do a self-portrait and I drew a blond-haired, blue-eyed girl and didn't have any real understanding of

Native American or any other identity. I just found myself in my peers. I think is how I would describe it.

When I really started to realize I was different from everybody was when we moved to Tucson. Again I was the only minority in the classroom. I began to realize there were racial differences between people. I remember asking my mom and dad if we were Mexican. I was defiant in saying we were Mexican, and them trying to teach me that NO, we're Native, we're Native American'. I didn't really have any type of grasp of what that was.

Marginalization

Through each woman's story the common thread that kept the web together was the sense of being marginalized. Marginalization was such a "passive aggressive" act in these cases that it became an intrinsic factor. The actions and behaviors of those in positions of power over these women was not obvious so egregious as to warrant charges or claims of discrimination. They were there, however, and if one complained too much, there may be consequences. These consequences could mean a lower grade, not being heard in class, or ignored as an assistant. In a job, it could mean a lack of promotion or even a demotion. These women often sensed that they were being tolerated and their input was devalued. The actions were at times subtle, and other times life seemed intolerable. They often felt powerless; yet knew they had to confront the problem. These women did not allow naysayers to interfere with their personal drive and self-determination to persevere and attain their educational goals. For example, Anika said:

My whole thing is, I'm so critical of faculty, another thing I think is wrong with academia...faculty are focused on jumping the hoops of tenure and promotion. They are not focused on making a difference in the world and they are not focused on developing and taking care of their students. I think the general view of academia is to go in and be a helicopter researcher, get the data and then fly away and don't take care of anybody, exploit people for your own benefit of tenure and promotion. Which makes me rage because the fucking people, excuse my language, these are the people that are in academia teaching us.

Julie said:

I remember the teacher coming by, there was a square grid and one of the questions was; would it be faster to walk down one side of the square and across the other or would it be

faster to go diagonal? He came by and said ‘wow that is really good’ at that point I realized he just thought I was a moron, because I thought, this is easy to see. I couldn’t explain it, I couldn’t do any of it in a formula, and I couldn’t do any of that. I started to realize that I was seen as just some kind of moron in the schools.

Emma’s realization of her place in the schooling system:

With the American Indian Leadership Program I was looking forward to having a professor for when I say ‘this is the American Indian education issue that I want to address’ and not be given this funny look or told ‘ok, you go play with that, but I can’t really help you’; which was often what I got from my professors at my last school. ‘Ok you go play with your theory over there and then, when you’re done with it, we’ll stamp an A on it because you thought of something that nobody else has. But we won’t support you in getting published.

Cultural Oppression

Oppression that an individual feels is when there is a sense of loss of integrity. This is when another’s sense of power becomes the dominant force in their interactions with other individuals. It is not limited to politics or only in larger systems, but can be found within the individual players of the dominant culture. For Anika, history of oppression is very close, as in the following story she shared.

So it was the intermarriage of one Native tribe and the slaves from the Underground Railroad which just recently, just a few years ago, got federally recognized. There was so much oppression within both groups about who’s really Native and who deserves this and ‘oh you’re black blood is in your Native blood and you’re not really a Native anymore’ and there was all this internal oppression about it. But they’re finally recognized now. But I don’t know that I can be, and I haven’t looked into it because I haven’t had time since I’ve been in grad school, other than trying to find the relatives I know on the Dawes Roll are the ones that I know I can’t find.

Anika’s experience in academia validated this experience among her native counterparts:

I didn’t grow up on a reservation and I wasn’t immersed in my culture my whole life, I’m still playing catch up... students are more quiet and reserved and that’s what the culture dictated. They had to change who they were and try to fit into graduate school. They complained about that, said that people didn’t understand that was part of their culture. They kept getting told, ‘you have to speak up’ they were expected to not be who they were, they were expected to be different than who they were, and they were told on some level that who you are is not okay. You have to be like us to succeed here.

A few years ago, Anika attended a Native conference. She delivered another colleague's research, which discussed the high use of drugs on the reservations. This research was not well received by some of the attendees. They began asking questions that Anika was unable to answer; she felt their wrath on a personal level. As part of the conversation:

And then she said 'we do more internalized oppression to each other than white people have ever done to us. Now we learn from the best, we learn from the colonizers, but we perpetuate the oppression on each other. Like saying you're not Native enough or saying you're this or somebody's successful and we treat them differently because they're successful and we're jealous or reservation versus non-reservation.

Julie experienced cultural oppression from the family that adopted her. The likely did not realize that their innocent intent of protection was causing emotional harm. Julie said:

There's another thing I should mention 'I'm from a difficult family. I am a Native, but a white family that took me out of the environment. I lived a very different lifestyle and was told by my white family not to interact with Natives. They had taken me out of the environment and they didn't want me to find my way back in. That was a really strong semi spoken statement (laughs). I didn't interact with a lot of Natives or the few that went to my classes.

Violence

Violence has existed since the beginning of the Universe and has been studied by anthropologists, psychologists and various other scientists since the birth of man. We know that conflict has existed among all species, as (Burrow, 1985) Darwin has explained to in the *Origin of Species*. The women in this study have endured the threats of violence, both physical and emotional, confirming that they are children of their ancestors. They have been able to adapt to the cruel attacks on their personal self. For example, Julie said:

In seventh grade I think is when the negative stuff started. You don't know if it's associated with race or if it's just associated with you. I broke up with this one kid and he told his friend, he said you tell her not to walk anywhere near the buses by herself because I'll rape her. I don't know if that was said to any of my white friends. I don't know if that would have been said at all and we certainly didn't talk about it.

Love of Learning

The driving force for all of these women was their thirst for knowledge. Most of them expressed that it was in their early years of schooling that they loved some aspect about learning in school. Regardless of the challenge each faced, there was an aspect that kept the drive alive. For Revae, after she was officially accepted into the Bridge to Doctorate program, she said she has been unstoppable:

I enjoyed all the classes. I was very enthusiastic about the project; I wanted to learn as much as I could. I wanted to meet with him and talk with him about science about trying to get this off the ground and what I needed to be doing. He was (pause) was hard to find, nowhere to be found. So I was like you know, I'm just going to do this myself then. I'm going to buckle down, I'm going to do this and get this stuff done. That's how I got my literature review done in my first year. My second year, the summer of 2009, I got accepted into Duke University in Geneva, their summer program. I was placed in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), next to the U.N.

Self-Determination

This is an intrinsic factor that cannot be learned or taught. It is not contingent on extrinsic motivational factors. Deci (1971) It is argued that some activities provide their own inherent reward, so motivation for these activities is not dependent on external rewards. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan, (1985) is a theory of motivation. It is concerned with strengthening our natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways. Early testing of Skinners operant conditioning on behaviors was not inclusive of intrinsic motivation. Behaviors are motivated by more than extrinsic rewards. The women in this study found self-motivation that comes from within to succeed. For example, Revae said:

Through the whole time, though while I was working on weekends, I was working as a janitor...cleaning offices and schools on weeknights and the weekends. I was putting in 25 hours of work on the weekends alone. That's how I got myself through school. Even though my uncle said he would help me out, I really tried not to rely on him.

Emma also said:

Once understanding privilege and oppression, I also wanted to help students navigate the higher education system and just realizing that there's other things external to academics and intellectual conversations that students need help with, and it's being ignored.

Julie was motivated; she discussed an experience that gave her additional inspiration to pursue her educational goals:

The first semester I was on the Dean's list. It felt pretty awesome. However, what I didn't tell you is when I went to school in a smaller city (the first college) and I met with my advisor, he was some guy in economics—like how ironic right? He had my transcript, he had everything sitting right in front of him, and he asked, so, what are you interested in? I said, well I've got a lot of interests, I like science, I like writing, I like music, and he said so what are you thinking about doing? I'm not sure, I said the only thing I know is whatever it is, it cannot be heavily math based, 'why not' he asked? I'm not good at math. At that point he did not mention why don't you think about creative writing, or dance or a degree in music. Instead he looked at me and said, I don't think college is the place for you. I think you need to go to VoTech, I think that would be a far better fit than anything we can provide you. I was so angry because in Montana the Indian kids went to VoTech. That was the end of the conversation. Not long ago I was talking with one of the tribal members who are also a lawyer, I told her what he said. She said of course that's where they sent all Indian kids. Indians didn't go to college then. When you look at the numbers it was very few Natives that went to college in 1977. So at that point I just thought, son of a bitch, I'm getting a degree. And really that's what pushed me. It just took me a little longer than normal.

Anika said:

I was never the brightest, most brilliant student that was VERY clear. Yaw knows I'm not the smarty-pants kind of person that gets everything the first time. There were people a lot smarter than me. I had to work really hard. I'm one of those people that, that the grade that I made it's because I worked for them. I worked very very hard. Had to study, had to push myself. So school wasn't easy for me.

Their stories illustrate how they overcame barriers and social injustices, and arrived at a place of self-actualization in the dominant culture. They were ascribing to the real world while reaching educational attainment. These personal narratives revealed memories and reflections that surfaced, which provide the context for understanding resistance and resiliency as a function of a cultural condition (Creswell, 2007).

The participants are accomplished scholars and researchers at various universities. Fields of study include climate change; Department of Soil and Crop Sciences; Cultural Anthropology; Private Practice Organizational Counseling; Research, Publication and Lecturer.

Implications

I began the reflective process with a reference to critical narrative analysis by going back to looking at individuals and their development in society (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). The reflections of indigenous women as part of a human system are unique, complex and captivating. When they are nurtured, as with nature, they can surprise us at the most unexpected times. In this, our human system may have the abilities to open doors to greatness. Indigenous researchers need to go beyond the Western researchers' knowledge of the indigenous people. According to Smith (2008), many Western researchers have taken indigenous knowledge for their own advantage.

The indigenous researcher, with a connection to an understanding of self-determination, and an awareness of the complex evolving ways of oppression, could bring silent voices from the past to assist and unravel lost truths.

To make more sense of the critical narratives that are represented by these stories, further studies of indigenous women whose lives have been compromised from their culture and ancestry are needed. These are women who want to stay connected to their indigenous roots, whose families have lived on or off the reservation, and were pulled away from ancestral roots and culture. There are women who grew up living in a concrete world trying to reclaim their indigenous origins. These women have not let go of their culture and traditions. One question to look at is: how have they kept the balance of living in two worlds?

There are additional implications and questions to be considered: Why did Julie feel oppression at school? Where did she hear that Indians were “morons and alcoholics”? What is the process for adopting Native children to non-Native families and when does it fail? What is the screening process for adoptive parents and when does that fail? Why would children be kept from their culture or put into an environment that suppressed their natural identity? Did these factors play a role in the difficulty she had learning the skills required in math?

Anika’s influence of cultural disconnect was seeing and discussing the challenges her native peers experienced. The personal effect for Anika was the rhetoric of the learning process that took away the creative element in graduate school. Anika felt bound by the limited sense of freedom to learn. From this experience, she began engaging to find the creative side of her life force, and she feels the academy has compressed her spirit.

Revae is optimistic and has found confirmation in another advisor who believes in her work. She has fought the challenges needed to succeed in the Bridge to Doctorate program. The work at the government institute gave her experience and financial support. She was a graduate assistant at a cultural program on her campus, which was also a wealth of support to her. The camaraderie of individuals found in the cultural office is unique. Each person meets other students with similar experiences and/or other challenges. This connects some of the students to a shared kinship. Only a small percentage of indigenous students are on a predominantly white campus. Many of these students have found a way through the despair with drugs and alcohol. With a shared understanding of the past this inspires their spirit to succeed, and members are finding a circle of family through the cultural office.

Many Indigenous people have always looked after the people before the self, knowing that each individual had their own gift to be nurtured. Within the tribe, each was encouraged and

cared for. Native Cultural centers are similar to a tribe in this way; collectively, the tribe wants each to succeed.

It was the U.S. government that has forgotten about the quality of life and education for Indigenous people. The socioeconomic gap and educational gap have put the Indigenous populations at the quality of a third world country.

According to the 2009 Census Bureau, less than one percent of Native Americans are graduating from high schools and entering higher education. There are many who remain on the reservation, where poverty, drugs and alcohol are rampant, find it difficult to break the cycle. The first people of the United States were Native Americans. They were born on this land; with the influx of settlers they were driven from their homes, herded like cattle and given desolate lands to live on. The U.S. government broke treaties and did not want to share and learn from the indigenous people. They did everything to move toward extinction. There were many inconsistencies in government between various tribes; the agreements were not always followed from one governmental assembly to another. The outcome for the Native American resulted in the loss of land, war crimes, breaking of treaties, taking children from homes, which, destroyed families. In the boarding schools children were forced through punishment the banning of culture and traditional beliefs. Many Native Americans have been broken, living on and off the reservations, drinking and living in poverty, however there are Native Americans that have persevered through the assimilation practices of the past, living on the reservation, participating and/or witnessing the struggles of the survivors. Some have lived in two worlds, within the Eurocentric and political system processes. Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, however (2008) states how these systems have eroded and damaged Indigenous knowledge.

“Unraveling the effects of generations of exploitation, violence, marginalization, powerlessness, and enforced cultural imperialism on Aboriginal knowledge and peoples has been a significant and often painful undertaking in the past century.” (Denzin et al, 2008 pp. 497-498)

These queries were not part of the study design. It would take further interviews to get more in depth information.

Recommendations and Further Questions for the Educational System & Research

Future research should be focused on looking at the educational system in the following ways: comparing outcomes of early childhood education of indigenous children on and off the reservation; comparing factors between the two environments, where a study would compare results of white urban schools and native schools on the reservation. The research could expand to an in-depth study of women growing up on the reservation and native women growing up in an urban environment. A study could be conducted that is inclusive across all tribal cultures to see how each tribe survived cultural traditions and beliefs. Research should look at the educators working on and off the reservations: Who is teaching native students? Is the native curriculum inclusive of Native culture and the real history of the United States? Are the teachers on the reservation indigenous? Do the schools receive adequate resources in funding to stay current with public schools off the reservation? What services do these indigenous females receive on the reservation; for example do they receive mentoring, tutoring, advanced placement, or career counseling services? A comparative study of the K-12 system on and off the reservation and support systems received upon entering higher education could be conducted. Further investigation of students who grow up in two worlds such as Emma would also be interesting. Why was there such a gap in her education when compared to what her classmates experienced on the reservation? What were the factors? The socioeconomic system is the culprit of the achievement gap equalizing education needs funding to start with prenatal care to early childhood education.

The number one issue is being inclusive of all facts/information of our American history in the classrooms.

Critical Theory Perspective

Over the past decade as Critical Theory has emerged, it has been a process of deconstructing dismantling and decolonizing Western epistemologies (Henderson, 2000, p. 168). It is past time for Critical Indigenous inquiry. Critical theory's intention is for explicit social justice purposes. Critical Indigenous Pedagogy understands political and moral inquiry for the transformative power of indigenous people's subjugated knowledge (Semali & Kinchel, 1999, p. 15) (and I found it important in helping to provide a relevant theoretical framework for this study.)

Battiste (2006), Grande (2004), and L.T. Smith (2006) agree that indigenous scholars are leading the way on this front, and disrupting traditional Western ways of knowing. Critical race theory is an effort to include the voices of people of color; people who have traditionally been excluded from conventionally appropriate legal scholarship. According to Brown (1995), critical narrative challenges the traditional meritocratic paradigm of the academy, "Attempting to subvert what are viewed as pretenses of objectivity, neutrality, meritocracy and colorblindness" (Brown cited in Smith et al., 1995, p. 87).

Researches of indigenous peoples have been represented in traditional Western historiography (Smith, 2008). Indigenous historiography informs a critical multilogical view of the past because all indigenous history is, as Smith (2008) argues, a re-writing and re-righting of position in history (p. 28).

Using the lens of critical theory, Western researchers can be considered as agents of colonial power. Kinchloe (2005) and Steinberg (2007) discuss the value of indigenous

knowledge, their research leads to epistemological and educational value of Indigenous knowledge. This knowledge has transformative power to foster empowerment and social justice. This counters the effects of western scholarship and science. Noted is this research lacks performances of critical collaborative, dialogical work. Critical theory can represent a series of performances, case studies, representations, critical personal narratives, life stories, field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self (Denzin, 2005).

Memories are not always accurate and can be implanted, and subject to illusory states. Narratives are like story mapping, organizing the characters, setting, events, conflicts, incidents, themes and resolutions without interrupting the narrators (story tellers) while they are telling the story. It is disruptive to the contextualization of the presentation.

As I attempted to avoid in this study I looked at the challenges before me. Interjecting can lead to false memory and become distracting to the storyteller. I also have to admit that once I began many questions have been left unanswered. It will take a second round of narrative analysis to unlock the answers, which lie deeper in a three-dimensional realm of temporal (past, present, future), personal (disorder, confusion, to organize), and experiential (self, family, community, school and work) aspects. The creation of story maps with characters, settings, events, conflicts, incidents, themes, and outcomes (resolutions) are needed. This can be a hindrance to the process and the researcher must be aware of his or her reasoned and objective intention about the data collection.

As I attempted to do in this study, the voice of the participant needs to be heard in a particular place or setting with a descriptive knowledge, retelling the story. For example: the researcher can assist the participant to reconstruct the events that led to the feeling of being seen as some kind of moron in school, such as the case of Julie. The researchers cannot lead the

participant into finding words or add their own perceptions; the story must clearly come from the participant.

Critical theory is a call for change in the academic study of indigenous people. Freeman (1995) stated that it is a movement of scholars of color, embracing the left movement found “in law schools whose work challenged the ways by which race and racial power are constructed and represented in America legal culture and more generally American Society as a whole.” (p. Xiii)

Summary

Each participant in this study discussed the importance of completing her education. They shared similar challenges of cultural oppression, self-identity and their love of learning. Each participant managed this experience while reconciling her native culture with her multiethnicity.

Each of these women has reached a place of self –determination. This determination was an intrinsic factor; not all women had the support from their families to pursue their education, but it did not deter them. The cultural oppression did not only come from outside the native culture; it came from within the culture as well. They were marginalized to the extent that it became an internalized factor of who they were. They faced violence, a threat to their self-confidence, yet they persevered and maintained their love of learning to move forward on their personal quests.

This research indicates clearly that Indigenous women must continue to reclaim their past, learn from their ancestors and never forget the atrocities of the oppressors. They must believe in their self-determination and inspire other indigenous girls and women to find their truth. It is important for all indigenous women to first understand the true history and the sacrifices their ancestors made and how they persevered. Second, it is essential to educate the

dominant culture about the true history of the First People. Indigenous women have the chance today and the responsibility to rise above the repression and bring equality back to Native women.

As I reflect back on the research of this study, I see that there have been changes for Indigenous women. Today young native girls are not dragged from their families and sent off to boarding schools or sent to families to become servants. Native children stay with their families and go to school. As young adults they have options to choose their vocation as many citizens of the United States have. The woman's voice has become stronger at home and in academia. What remains and continues to haunt and what keeps the memories alive are the inequities and social injustices that persist from the past.

The number of Native women who are able to accomplish their goals of higher education remains a fraction compared to their white counter parts. Many Native women continue to live in poverty on and off reservations, but it is on the reservation where there is a larger incidence of alcohol, drug abuse and rape. Native women are two and a half times more likely to experience sexual assault crimes than any other group, as reported by the United States Department of Justice on Tribal Communities (2008). This is the state of affairs that exists among Indigenous people as a result of policies and practices of the United States Government. The women who overcome the stigmata of their history and the challenges in their homes and the outside environment persevere, as is the Native way.

According to the Institute of Education Sciences (2006) the total of Native Americans, which includes females and males completing a graduate program is 9.7. The dominant culture is graduating at a rate of 27.3%; this excludes Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and other cultures. The stories from the participants and the documented

research collaborate the ongoing struggle for women of color, which includes Native American women. Ellis, 2001; Solorzano, & Yosso, 2001; and Turner, 2002, conclude that women of color do not receive the support as their white counter parts receive, They feel invalidated and left behind due to a lack of mentorship, advising and guidance.

The participants in this qualitative inquiry into the completion of a Masters and or Doctorate degree have revealed a sense of pride in their ancestry. Each native woman acknowledged the plight of their own struggles, and each individual accepted who they are and proud of their ancestry. It is because of the struggles that they have endured and pushed forward to persevere as our ancestors before us. Each woman knows that she is the change for our future. She is the role model for our youth, and her work has just begun.

It is my humble opinion in today's society, many cultural differences and multicultural issues need immediate and sensitive changes in order to empower individuals and meet their developmental needs. If an all-encompassing society that values diversity is to be built, development of intentional initiatives, partnerships, and programs that promote a comprehensive and just society are needed. Teachers must be at the front of global efforts to address critical and emerging issues with respect to diversity as affirmed by the National Multicultural Institute (2007). It is essential to build skills to effectively incorporate diversity and inclusion practices into society's systems and culture.

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