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Indigenizing Education: Universal Design for Learning and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks

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Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

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Abstract

This study seeks to determine if Universal Design for Learning could serve as a culturally sustaining classroom framework for supporting Indigenous students in classroom settings. It also shares the perceived proficiency of Indigenous parents by those serving in a caregiver role for Indigenous youth, as well as the perceived potential of specific elements of Universal Design for Learning in supporting their students. As an Indigenous woman, I recognize the importance of asking Indigenous families if this strategy is worthy of further research, before conducting research into the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning in this way. This research project also explores the k-12th grade educational experience of Indigenous caregivers and provides potential models for where Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Universal Design for Learning align and where they are misaligned. My research found significant alignment between Universal Design for Learning practices and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. The survey data from caregivers of Indigenous children also confirms this alignment, though more research may be necessary that would broaden the demographics represented in the data from this survey.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the work of many. I stand on the shoulders of all of my ancestors, resilient survivors of genocide. I want to thank my grandmother, MaryAnne Tougaw-Hohn, who's strength, kindness, and gentle leadership taught me much about Indigenous identity. I also want to thank my paternal grandmother, Margaret Alviso-Veliz, a strong woman who taught me about hard work, service to others, and the importance of family. I also want to acknowledge the sacrifices of my parents, who worked hard so that I could have many opportunities that led me to today. I also need to thank my partner, my daughter, and my son for inspiring me to take on this work and who have sacrificed much to

provide me with the time necessary to reach this milestone. Without them, I would not stand here today.

I also want to recognize each womxn who has participated in my cohort - students, professors, lecturers, and directors. Your leadership, wisdom, support, kindness, and generosity have helped me grow as an Indigenous womxn, a leader, and as a person. The lessons you have taught me will help me be a better mother, daughter, and support for all that come after me. Through this process I have learned more about myself than I ever expected. My time with all of you has also sparked a vision in me, a dream for our Indigenous people, that I would have never found without your inspiration. I am immensely grateful for my time with each of you and I will miss you dearly.

Dr. Robin Minthorn, your work as a director, the vision you bring to your work is transforming my community and the broader community around us. Thank you for your work in developing this program so that this opportunity existed for me. Dr. Denise Bill, I also want to thank you for your vision in developing this collaboration and the importance of developing the Masters in Education program as well. Through this process you will grow your own educators, inspiring a generation of Muckleshoot and Indigenous scholars. Thank you.

My work was also made lighter through the work of the Puyallup women who have inspired me through their own doctoral journeys. I want to thank Dr. Amy McFarland and Dr. Hannah Kivalahula-Uddin for their trailblazing. Your work created a path for me, and for all that come after me. I look forward to watching my own tribal community and those around us fill with doctors through the Muckleshoot partnership with the University of Washington. May we all unite to build what our children deserve.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my children. May you know a world where you are always able to be your whole selves. May you seek and find ways to serve your community and build something for those that will come after you. I hope this work will help show you that you are able to achieve whatever you dream, and reminds you of where you come from and who you are. I love you both. Thank you for the time you have given up with me so that I may explore this part of myself. I hope that what I have gained: personal growth, self-knowledge, and dreams for the future, may serve you well in our path towards healing.

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I want to leave you with the following words of Indigenous wisdom:

"When all is going crazy…our people can come back to the center to find the calming effect; to reconnect with their spiritual self." -Janet McCloud, Yet-Si-Blu, Tulalip

"All I know is that Academic Aunties are magical and fierce and kind and patient and creative and demanding - all in a good way. I dream of an academy filled with Auntie magic."

-Michelle Jacobs, Yakama

"Part of healing is remembering who you are. And you are strong, powerful Native women who can do anything." -Billie Barnes, Puyallup

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Chapter 1: The Purpose of the Study

I have served in educational settings in some capacity since I was a high school student myself. I have been a volunteer teacher, a dean, and an administrator. I have spent most of my time working in Tribal school settings. Throughout my career, I have witnessed many instructional lessons, community, engagement, events, and school activities more generally. In my journey, through my doctoral degree, I began to explore Indigenous leadership and Indigenous pedagogies. I began to wonder, what a school might look like that allowed our children to be their whole selves while also serving students from diverse backgrounds and identities. In my work at Chief Leschi Schools, we were at that time, implementing Universal Design for Learning. Chief Leschi Schools had recently also moved to a full inclusion model for special education. Additionally, the school wanted to support all students at all skill levels and our classrooms. As I learned more about universal design for learning, I began to notice some central ideas, embedded in universal design for learning practices and tenets that aligned with Indigenous leadership, frameworks and pedagogies. I want to be clear, ensuring that Universal Design for Learning utilizes standards in lesson design. These standards are usually based on norming data from the dominant culture, which often does not consider their Indigenous experience. For this reason, alone, I am not suggesting that there is full alignment between universal design for learning and Indigenous leadership, frameworks and pedagogies. I am suggesting that there are important crossover's, however, that better support our Indigenous students in public classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to first ensure that before further research is done, that we hear from Indigenous parents that the practices and Universal Design for Learning might be beneficial to their children and supportive of their cultural identities. The first step, then, was to

determine how parents may respond to components of Universal Design for Learning, and to get a picture of how Indigenous students are doing in their current school settings. The project delves deeper into the learning experiences of parents who are willing to participate in a brief interview process. The interview process asks parents to explore their own K-12, learning environments and experiences and compare that to those of their children. Some respondents also shared about the journey of their parents and education. This is important because of the intergenerational trauma that underlies the experience of our Indigenous youth today. This research project attempts to create a model of alignment between Universal Design for Learning and leadership frameworks while also exploring the value of further research into the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning and supporting Indigenous students in diverse classroom environments.

Researcher Statement

A long term goal of this project is to conduct a qualitative study that follows the implementation of Universal Design for Learning and determine its efficacy in supporting Indigenous students in the classroom. This future study would seek to also identify ways in which the Universal Design for Learning framework allows Indigenous students to see more of themselves in their classroom environment, by creating spaces that are safe and welcoming to their whole selves.

Prior to conducting this study, it was important to determine if Indigenous caregivers found the structures of Universal Design for Learning to be culturally sustaining, appropriate for Indigenous youth, and if there was perceived value to support their children in learning. So far, there have not been any studies on Universal Design for Learning and its impact on supporting the learning of Indigenous youth. This research project provides an important avenue for the opportunity to improve equity in classrooms. In the 2017-2018 school year, 79% of all school

teachers were of white, non-hispanic ancestry (2017, NCES). This means that there is a single cultural lens leading classroom settings, and making instructional and curricular decisions that develop the classroom experience for Indigenous youth. By utilizing Universal Design for Learning techniques, the power of classroom decisions is decentralized from the teacher to the students who are making communal and individual decisions. This study explores this potential impact of Universal Design for Learning.

Methodology

This is a mixed methods research project. There are three parts of this study. First, research has been done to demonstrate where there may be alignment between Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Universal Design for Learning. A model was developed following learnings from this research. These elements were then included in a survey. This part of the study collected quantitative data from a survey on the alignment between Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Universal Design for Learning and its potential efficacy for Indigenous students. The data collected was then analyzed using a cross-tabular protocol to identify trends.

Those who completed the survey were then invited to complete interviews with the researcher using a semi-structured model. Interviews were completed using a talk to text feature. These were edited for errors in the transcription, and then sent to respondents to review. Interviews were then compared to survey data and to each other. A semi-structured interview methodology was selected to honor the relationships and whole personhood of interview participants. Kovach (2009, p. 123) wrote, “Highly structured interviews are not congruent with accessing knowledges that imbue both the fluidity and regulation of the storyteller’s role within oral tradition, or that respond to the relational nature of Indigenous research.” For this reason, semi-structured interviews are not only most appropriate to the purpose of this project, because

they provide a deeper contextual understanding of the complexities of the respondent's K-12th grade educational experience, but this format is also most appropriate and respectful of Indigenous cultures and identities.

Positionality Statement

I am a 37-year-old Coast Salish, Native American female. I am a member of the Puyallup tribe and was raised by my mother and father, who both have Indigenous ancestry. My Puyallup ancestors resided in Wollochet Bay. They were active members of their community and there are many references in the historical record of both my maternal great grandparents, David and Annie Squally. While both of my parents were Indigenous, I was raised in a predominately assimilated home. I attended occasional powwows or community events, and ate cultural foods, but I did not have more consistent upbringing in the community. I did not attend ceremony. I did not grow up with drums. I did not grow up hearing my language. After college, I returned to my community and taught at Chief Leschi, the school serving the Puyallup Tribe. Upon deciding to become a mother, I began an intentional path toward decolonizing myself and my family. I am not, nor do I believe I ever will be, done with this work, but I seek to continue growing and learning so that my children will have these teachings.

In my work within tribal school settings, I have worked to serve Indigenous children. These settings have been modeled after the traditional public school system. I seek opportunities to further embed Indigenous values into leadership practices and my work. Upon returning to Chief Leschi, I encountered Universal Design for Learning and found many important components of Indigenous leadership frameworks that could benefit the students at Chief Leschi, as well as Indigenous youth in heterogeneous classrooms in the Public School System, and which also align with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks.

Introduction/Context

This project looks at the alignment and misalignment between Universal Design for Learning and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and pedagogies. It will analyze the potential impact of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an approach to support Indigenous students in the K-12 classroom environment. Recent works have also identified Universal Design for Learning as supportive of equity in a broader sense, including identifying it as supportive of culturally sustaining classrooms and ensuring access to students from diverse backgrounds and experiences (Chardin, 2021). While Universal Design for Learning was initially designed to support students with diverse learning needs in inclusion models at the classroom level, implementing this across all classrooms requires specific leadership practices. This study seeks to determine if Universal Design for Learning aligns and/or misaligns with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Pedagogies. This research project focuses on families in the Lower Puget Sound Region, though not exclusively. The survey was open to all parents of Indigenous children, but was intentionally shared with the Native Education Coordinators and local Indigenous organizations for dissemination in the communities they serve. For this reason, the historic and current contexts of schools in this area are relevant to the purposes of this project.

Based on this alignment and misalignment, a survey was shared on social media and through email groups. This survey sought feedback from parents of Indigenous children in three categories. The first category gathered information on what parents of Indigenous children are seeking from schools and barriers to their child's education. The second section explored the current K-12 setting that is currently serving their child. The third section explored if these parents felt that their child would be best served in schools implementing the elements of Universal Design for Learning aligned to Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and pedagogies.

Universal Design for Learning is a framework for classroom-level leadership that was originally designed to support students with diverse educational needs in the classroom setting.

As a component of the survey, participants were polled for their interest in participating in further research through an interview and storytelling process. Each participant was interviewed regarding their own k-12 experience and that of their child. Participants shared narratives about specific experiences and reflected on how Universal Design for Learning may have impacted their own experiences and those of their children currently enrolled in schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review provides background in current research related to Universal Design for Learning and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. Universal Design for Learning studies provide a diverse look at the different demographics and settings that have implemented Universal Design for Learning and its impact on student learning. There are also several studies that explored Universal Design for Learning as a tool for supporting equity in the classroom environment. The literature for Indigenous Leadership Frameworks explored both models of Indigenous leadership as well as successful work implemented in Indigenous communities using a culturally sustaining model aligned with Indigenous Leadership values.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning has shown success in communities of color. For example, one study analyzed the content of 12 papers that detailed Universal Design for Learning adoptions (Al-Azawei, 2016). Each article was peer-reviewed, cited empirical data, used Universal Design for Learning as a framework, and was published between 2012 and 2015. These articles were analyzed based on seven different themes including the type of results, study beneficiary, sample features, geographical region, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and learning modes. This paper outlines the principles of Universal Design for Learning. It cites the evidence-based principles of Universal Design for Learning, which are grounded in neuroscience. The study found that Universal Design for Learning Is an effective solution to the current one size fits all approach to education. 11 of the 12 studies showed positive results following the implementation of Universal Design for Learning.

Another study showed Universal Design for Learning as an effective engagement and student learning strategy in Kuwaiti classrooms (Almumen, 2020). This study included data from five classrooms, led by teachers from Kuwait. There were twenty-five observations done (Almumen, 2020). These observations demonstrated that Universal Design for Learning was effective for students with and without learning disabilities. The study also showed that in order to fully benefit from Universal Design for Learning, teachers needed additional training and support (Almumen, 2020). This study demonstrates the importance of continued embedded training to support teachers in fully implementing Universal Design for Learning. It also demonstrates the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning in non-Euro-centric cultures.

Another study explored Universal Design for Learning as a framework to support college-level students in ecology and evolution courses. The framework looked at how teachers can support students through reflective questioning (Super, 2020). This study also discussed the usefulness of Universal Design for Learning in engaging students from all marginalized background, including those with diverse ethnic backgrounds, because of the focus on teachers learning their curriculum deeply, their responsibility to identify the most essential elements for instruction, and because students given multiple pathways to demonstrate proficiency, including modalities that are culturally sustaining (Super, 2020). This study demonstrates the value of Universal for Learning in developing culturally sustaining spaces, through the concept of students as experts. Classrooms that have fully implemented Universal Design for Learning will ensure that students are able to be present as their whole-self within a classroom space.

Another important study of note occurred in 2008 and explored the impact of Universal Design for Learning in the classrooms of four teachers. These classrooms were part of a large urban school and utilized Universal Design for Learning to support the teaching of content

through the rollout of Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) (Morrissey, 2008). This study also provides a series of lessons that have been adapted to support Universal Design for Learning concepts, as well as a walk-through form to provide teacher feedback in regards to the effective use of Universal Design for Learning in lesson design (Morrissey, 2008). This study found a positive correlation of increased engagement for students who were present. There was a struggle in the study with continued truancy and absenteeism that may have impacted results. This study also found that with increased engagement, there were fewer behavioral issues in the classroom (Morrissey, 2008). This study shows that Universal Design for Learning may improve student engagement and behaviors for Native students. The study also, however, was limited in size and had a few other limitations that may have affected its accuracy, as discussed above.

Another interesting article explored the impact of Universal Design for Learning in culturally responsive teaching practices. This study notes that Universal Design for Learning requires teachers to not only know their content and be master teachers, but also to know their students. To be successful, teachers must know student interests, backgrounds, and skills (Kieran, 2019). Additionally, teachers must be deeply aware of personal biases in order to be an effective teacher (Kieran, 2019). This article noted the importance of culturally responsive teaching in our current climate, where eighty-two percent of teachers are white, a number that does not align with the population of the country today (Kieran, 2019). This article provides a crosswalk between the principles of Universal Design for Learning and Culturally Responsive Teaching.

State of Native Education Today

In the context of this history, it is not surprising that Native youth have faced constant barriers to the same quality of education as their white peers. In fact, Native youth have the lowest high school graduation rate, which fluctuates at around fifty percent (Center for Native American Youth, n.d.). Access to quality education is a civil rights issue, and the endemic nature of this crisis in Indian Country represents the results of an educational system designed to "Kill the Indian and Save the Man." Native American youth are arrested at three times the national average, and seventy-nine percent of the youth in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons are of American Indian or Alaskan Native descent (Center for Native American Youth, n.d.). Boarding schools were never meant to provide Indigenous peoples access to middle or upper-class American society. Students were trained in physically laborious professions, such as sewing, housework, and farming. Further, the education system was designed as an act of cultural genocide, and the ramifications of this have resulted in more than a flawed system, but one that has perpetuated colonialism on its students for generations, as it was always intended (Brayboy, 2006). The education system in the United States has left Native communities disproportionately living in poverty, and these failings are not new. When compared to their white peers, Native youth experience a higher rate of adverse childhood experiences (Kenney, 2011). The toxic stress from these experiences puts our children at greater risk for life-long adverse effects. (Frankie, 2004). For our youth, this stress translates to higher rates of disease, developmental and behavioral problems (Kenney, 2011) as well as higher rates of substance abuse, academic failure rates, issues with the law, and higher rates of suicide than other youth their age (Stanley, Harness, Swaim, Buivais, 2009).

The graduation rate for Native students in Washington state is somewhat higher than that national average. Despite this, there are still significant disparities between Native graduation rates and those of all students. The OSPI report card data for the 2020-2021 school year highlights this (OSPI, n.d). In Washington State, the graduation rate for Native American Students in the 2020-2021 school year was 67.1%, with 83% of all students in Washington graduating on time in the same school year (OSPI, n.d). To drill down farther, into the Puget Sound region, Bethel School District's graduation rate for all students was 80%, and 70.6% of Indigenous students graduated on-time in the same year (OSPI, n.d). In Puyallup School District, 89% of seniors graduated on time, with 63.2% of Indigenous students graduating on time in the same period (OSPI, n.d). In the Tacoma School District, 88% of all students graduated on time (OSPI, n.d). 75% of Indigenous students graduated on-time in the same period (OSPI, n.d.). These rates show the urgency around making improvements to the state of Native education today, and show the continued failures of the public school system to support all Native children. It is imperative that Native youth have access to quality education. But what does this look like? Current research on this topic has provided examples of various Indigenous leadership models that have supported Indigenous communities, and specifically students. These examples spread across the Americas. The *Remote and Unresearched: Educational Leadership in Canada's Yukon Territory, 2018* examines Indigenous leadership approaches and conflicts with western frameworks. This article shared evidence from first-hand accounts of life in the Yukon Territory and educational systems within it and compared these experiences with data and systems from British Columbia. This piece of evidence supports accounts found repeatedly in other sources encountered so far (Blakesley, 2018). In particular, collaborative leadership models are found across Indigenous leadership models in various resources. For example, collaborative leadership

models are discussed in both *Leadership and Accountability in American Education,* and *Voices of Resistance and Renewal: Indigenous Leadership in Education.* These collaborative leadership models have been found to be particularly effective in Indigenous communities, and community-rooted leadership can improve student academic success. One such example is found in *Grandmothers' Pedagogy: Lessons for Supporting Students' Attendance at Universities. Indigenous Pathways, Transitions, and Participation in Higher Education* (Tachine, 2018). This text goes further to explore how the role of grandmothers as tribal leaders can help support the academic success of college students by promoting improved attendance (Tachine, 2018). In another such example, in the Swinomish community, research was conducted to identify needs and resources within Indigenous communities and to use community-based participatory research as an ethical tool for research done in collaboration with a local university. This research was then blended with the examination of a needs assessment to identify key targets for the success of programs within Indigenous communities. For example, the methods used in this study were based on Indigenous scientific methods, and findings were used to develop strategies to prevent negative health outcomes and promote positive health outcomes based in part on work done by the Swinomish Tribal Mental Health Project, as well as the work done around the Healing of the Canoe project. Key issues were identified in partnership with the Swinomish Tribe in the community as well as the strengths and resources to deal with them. The findings from this assessment were then used to create a culturally responsive intervention. The work resulted in a plan that identified the prevention of youth substance abuse and the need for youth to have a tribal identity and a sense of belonging as a central issue to resolve and tribal elders, tribal youth, and culture and tradition as strengths. Therefore, the project focused on a re-traditionalization by incorporating the use of extended family and tribal elders, cultural

teachings, access to mentorship, native arts, and more. The project was a successful collaboration between academics and the tribal community. It also outlines key lessons that made this partnership successful. This research, as well as other research discussed above, indicates the possible healing available from collaborative models of leadership and research in Indigenous communities. This body of work demonstrates how essential community-based and collaborative leadership approaches in supporting Indigenous students.

This idea of collaboration is relevant not only between the community and the school but also between students and teachers. Several papers discuss the importance of representation of students within the curriculum and learning that occurs in classrooms to promote student success and a sense of belonging (William & Tanaka, 2007). William and Tanaka (2007) state, “In every step of planning and implementing the course, the two distinct worlds of the academy and the Indigenous people needed to be negotiated, and compromises found. " To successfully navigate this within the context of the Puyallup Tribal Community, and other Native communities, student and community leaders must both be involved in developing a culturally relevant and rich program. This will also allow for the creation of a place-based approach to learning, which will be most relevant to students and the community and serve as a vehicle for community healing. (McAlpin, 2008).

Precontact structures supported resilience and sustainability, as is seen in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land. For example, the archeological record indicates that fishing technology was available precontact in this area, and population size demonstrates that abuse of resources was possible for Indigenous peoples (Trosper, 2002). By analyzing the archaeological record and comparing data for population size, it is possible to identify a successful leadership structure that promotes resilience of natural resources and sustainability.

This research highlights the need for the development of a leadership structure that is both collaborative in nature, but also centralized - a balanced approach to leadership, and found this structure in Indigenous society. One structure of note that supported the collaborative leadership structure was the Potlatch. “During a feast, guests are invited to speak and any public business that needs attention can be placed before the assembly. Sides take turns speaking, there is no limit placed on the time for any speaker, and any decision is reached by consensus of the chiefs present. If no consensus is reached, the matter will be postponed to another feast. If other villages need to be involved, a feast will be scheduled to invite them to discuss the matter (Trosper, 2002).” The quote identifies in the potlatch an opportunity for community resolution of grievances, and an opportunity for leadership to equitable resolve conflicts and issues. This shows the significance of being accessible and intentionally gathering community feedback as part of a successful leadership model in tribal communities.

Current State of Chief Leschi Schools

Chief Leschi has represented the hopes and dreams of the Puyallup Tribe, and an important path to healing since its founding. It is a Bureau of Indian Education School that serves Puyallup Tribal youth, as well as other Indigenous youth living in the area. The study will include people from other school districts in the area. Understanding the state of the tribal school and Native students attending local public schools is relevant to the context of this study.

Over the years, Chief Leschi has been run by many leaders - both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. There have been almost yearly changes in initiatives, administration, teaching staff, and visions for the school. Throughout all of this constant change, the school has struggled to close achievement gaps and successfully prepare students for post-secondary studies, but it has always retained its core mission: to save lives. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians founded Chief

Leschi Schools in 1976 to address the high dropout rate of tribal youth in the traditional school system, and an increase in gang participation among Native youth. This was the result of the intergenerational trauma that the Puyallup community was still healing from, as well as systemic racism, and inequality.

According to the most recent school report card available for Chief Leschi Schools, 12.2 percent of students are on grade level for ELA, 5.3 percent for math, and 4.7 percent for science, with only 40.5 percent of students attending regularly (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020). This data can be interpreted in multiple ways. When new administrations arrive, it is easy to look at the high amount of dollars spent per pupil and seek to reduce expenditures, cutting paraeducator support and what is seen as “extra” counseling and social work positions. It is easy to focus on tiered instruction models and systems leadership, and direct instruction models. Common answers to this data are to seek control, reduce field trips, reduce and cut important supports, and leverage those dollars for a new curriculum or a new training in yet another model. From 2015-2019 this is exactly what happened at the school. Direct to student resources were cut, experiences limited, and a focus was put on the new curriculum. Staff who had built relationships in the community were let go - in fact, approximately 40% of the staff were not renewed in the first year of that administration. In this time, Chief Leschi underwent this process with multiple administrations, leading to constant change, reduced academic achievement, and contributing to a crisis for our youth. Student climate data provides another important lens for addressing the issues facing Chief Leschi Schools. In 2014, 41% of Chief Leschi seniors had considered attempting suicide in the last six months, 53% made a plan, and 40% had attempted suicide. These numbers are more than double the state average for the same time period (Healthy Youth Survey, 2014). Further, 62% of 12th grade Chief Leschi students

indicated that their peers used drugs at an early age, and 54% of 12th-grade students reported that peers had a favorable attitude towards drugs (Healthy Youth Survey, 2014). This data demonstrates that systems, rigor, institutionalization, and other western approaches are not the answer, or at least not the full answer, for school improvement.

Indigenous Leadership Frameworks

While there have not been any large-scale studies in Native American communities, key features of Universal Design for Learning align with Indigenous leadership practices, such as collaborative leadership models, that have proven effective within Indigenous communities. For example, the Swinomish tribe had significant success implementing a community-driven mental health intervention, creating its own Social and Emotional Learning curriculum, The Healing of the Canoe (Thomas, 2010). The project examined strategies for identifying needs and resources within Indigenous communities, using a community-based participatory research approach, and blending that with an examination of needs assessments. The methods used were based on Indigenous scientific methods and findings were used to develop strategies to prevent negative health outcomes and promote positive health outcomes based in part on work done by the Swinomish Tribal Mental Health Project, as well as the work done around the Healing of the Canoe project. Key issues were identified in partnership with the Suquamish Tribe in the community as well as the strengths and resources to deal with them. The findings from this assessment were then used to create a culturally responsive intervention. The work resulted in a plan that identified the prevention of youth substance abuse and the need for youth to have a tribal identity and a sense of belonging as a central issue to resolve and tribal elders, tribal youth, and culture and tradition as strengths. Therefore, the project focused on a re-tradionalization by incorporating the use of extended family and tribal elders, cultural teachings, access to

mentorship, native arts, and more. The project was a successful collaboration between academics and the tribal community. It also outlines key lessons that made this partnership successful.

Hawaiian leadership frameworks provide valuable correlations to Coast Salish Leadership. In Aguilera-Blackbear's (2015) *Voices of Resistance and Renewal*, Aloholani Housman identifies Guiding Principles of Hawaiian Leadership that closely align with Coast Salish cultural values. These Guiding Principles include Clear Vision, Strong Cultural Identity, Ability to Unite Others, Ability to Overcome Hardship, Commitment to the Whole Journey, Sensitivity to Spirituality, Respect for Mentors, and Legacy to Pass On (Aguilera-Blackbear, 2015). These principles highlight important Indigenous values like connection to our ancestors, connections to future generations, and connections to the land and community. To be successful, leaders must have a clear understanding of expectations of who they are culturally, the obligations and resources they have to work with within this identity, and that they have a clear and strong vision rooted in this identity. The requisites for strong leadership also includes the ability to inspire others to take a common cause. Without this skill, leaders must use accountability to bring others onboard - a strategy rooted in hierarchical power instead of in relationality. Therefore, a leader must have developed successful relationships with each individual they are serving, know them deeply, and use this knowledge to build buy-in and capacity for their journey (Aguilera-Blackbird, 2015). These positions are relevant to Coast Salish leadership as well, and align with values embedded within Universal Design for Learning.

More valuable insights into Indigenous leadership in schools is available in the text *Principals as Protagonists* by Davies, 2022. In this text, the role of school leaders is compared between a western analysis of school leadership and an Indigenous approach. Davies (2022) emphasizes the importance of knowing your staff, building collaboration for the implementation

of new initiatives, and building connections with the community. These are relevant approaches in both Indigenous and western leadership paradigms. This text shows that these practices serve not only Indigenous students well, but all students. It also speaks to the interdependencies that exist within the schools and which are essential to successful building development. This text emphasizes the stronger impact of collaborative and community driven work, much as the Housman does in *Voices of Resistance and Renewal*.

Indigenous Leadership Frameworks are also explored in Cross 2019. The authors of this text argue that in order for leadership to be relevant to Indigenous communities it must be rooted in Identity Support and Engagement, Community Engagement, and Racial Healing (Cross, 2019). They argue the value of having Indigenous leadership and liaisons on campuses in order to embed support and practices at all levels of an organization. The same article also argues that collaborative techniques for instruction will best serve Indigenous students (Cross, 2019). These strategies align with Universal Design for Learning approaches. Specific supports referenced include affirming Indigenous knowledges, small group learning, and using narratives as instructional tools. This, along with building a dialog between communities, families, and staff help to support the institution in building culturally informed practices (Cross, 2019).

Chapter 3: Context of Place and Identity

This study takes place on the land of the Puyallup people and its broader surrounding Indigenous communities of what is today the Lower Puget Sound region. Smith and Tuck share, "...we find our existence in the intimate and embodied expressions of place. Such knowledges are highly contextualized, soulful, (re)membered, and experienced…in this way we are in place as much as it is in us…every experience and expression of place is replete with multiple layers of memories, each informing the other in diverse and entangled ways (Smith, 2018, p. 27)." It is not possible to understand Native educational experience without a discussion of education as it has existed on this land since time immemorial. As such, it is important to understand the educational context of Indigenous peoples in the Lower Puget Sound region to understand a fuller context of the experience of Native students today.

To develop this rich context, it is necessary to share the educational story of this land from pre-contact through the present day. To provide this full picture, elders and culture bearers of the Puyallup tribe have been interviewed to share about the precontact Puyallup educational systems. Hannah Kavalahula-Uddin, a Puyallup Tribal Member, researcher, and professor, conducted research to share the educational experiences of elders and their parents who attended local boarding schools in the region. Her work was heavily used to share this history. Elders and community members who were active in the leadership of the tribe during various eras were also interviewed, as well as resources available from the Puyallup Tribal Language Program to provide a deeper look at subsequent eras through to today. The state of Native education today was also explored through educational data available from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction as well as national data.

Puyallup Tribal Historical Context, Pre-Contact

This project will use Indigenous leadership frameworks already existing within scholarship and will not seek to define a Puyallup Tribal Leadership Framework. This would be important work for a future researcher, but is outside of the scope of this project. Despite this, an understanding of pre-contact leadership practices is useful for understanding the community in which this work is taking place. Traditional leadership in the Puyallup tribe aligns with components of collaborative leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership models. These models are identified from historical knowledge of the Puyallup people, including village and longhouse structures. The Puyallup tribe's village sites were located throughout the Puget Sound Regions including salt water, river, and inland communities. The name 'Puyallup' originally referred to those inhabiting village sites at the mouth of the Puyallup River on what is today marked by 15th street and Pacific Avenue in Tacoma, WA (Smith, 1940), but community village sites covered a vast area including village sites in modern-day Gig Harbor, Vashon Island, and east towards what is now the lands of the Nisqually Tribe. Post-contact, village sites were eventually moved onto what became two separate reservations, the Puyallup Indian Reservation, and the Nisqually Indian Reservation. These villages consisted of several longhouses, which were led by an individual who could provide for all of the families living within the longhouse (McCloud, 2020). As such, the leader had to have demonstrated the strength and skill necessary to provide for those in their care, aligning with a servant-based leadership approach. Social standing, wealth, and leadership, then, were not inherited rights but were rather earned over time. Positional authority was not recognized, but prestige for skill and knowledge was prized and carried influence (McCloud, 2020). Multiple leaders then collaborated, each expert in their field, to lead the Puyallup people to success. Specific skills and

knowledge prized varied by village site based on the needs and structure of the village. Each village was its own political entity, which was collected together through the reservation process post-contact (McCloud, 2020). Each village site had its own specialized skill sets, work groups, and governing bodies.

As leadership was not something passed down as inheritance, community members, especially elders, constantly assessed children and adolescents for unique skills in specific areas. Their skills and abilities were used to make important decisions about the child's role in the community and marriage relationships as the child transitioned into adulthood and specific skill sets began to be practiced (Smith, 1940). There were also spiritual elements to leadership and skill development. In adolescence, children would go on spirit quests into the wilderness to connect with their spirit powers. These powers were not generally inherited, and adolescents had an opportunity to connect with various spirits that would look out for them and help them further develop and hone skills (McCloud, 2020). Spiritual fortitude was revered and was regarded as an indication of physical strength, strength of character, and cleanliness (Smith, 1940). As social hierarchy was dependent upon an individual's prowess and strength of spirituality, leadership structure was not inherited but earned. It was also not generalized or positional authority, but rather a responsibility was given in a specified area of skill. In this way, there were many leaders, rather than a centralized body wielding positional power and authority. The evaluation of an individual's ability to lead was never 'finished' and was constantly assessed (Smith, 1940). This lack of recognition for positional authority contrasts with western values and social and institutional hierarchies.

Context of Native Education History

To understand the broader context and implications of this study, it is first necessary to understand the history of Native Education in this country and locally in the lands of the Puyallup people. Beginning in the 15th and 16th centuries, the colonization of what would become the United States began. This began the settler-colonial state, in which the external, dominating force, the European settlers, began imposing their own laws, customs, language, religion, and values on the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. This was different from previous cycles of empire building that occurred within the European continent prior to this period, and was more similar to that of what occurred in the occupation and colonization of Algeria (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). In this period, European religion and values placed Indigenous peoples as inferior and savage (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). This concept was often justified under the Hierarchy of Being, a belief supported by the Catholic Church, that all living things existed within a hierarchy, that included God at the top, and in descending order included spirits and angels, human beings, animals, plants, and inanimate matter (Hardon, 2022). The Great Chain of Being was used as a concept to create these hierarchies and to justify the genocides of Black Indigenous People of Color well into the end of the 19th century (Stepan, 1982). As Indigenous peoples were seen as lower forms of being, colonizers often used their power in an unjust and negative manner, resulting in suffering, which in some instances has left unresolved psychological harm through to today. This is due to the impact of intergenerational trauma, with education serving as a weapon of mass destruction (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). By the time European colonizers began westward expansion, the settler-colonial state was able to use lessons learned in the conquest of other civilizations globally. The implementation of Indian Boarding Schools was modeled first in other countries, and this allowed the process to be perfected in its

cruelty and effectiveness when implemented in the United States. Boarding schools decimated the well-being of Indigenous peoples (Sterud-Hayward, 2021). Through boarding schools, the hegemonic class attempted to remove Indigenous languages, religion, and way of life with what was seen as a more civilized culture (Sterud-Hayward, 2021). Schools then, have served as agents of assimilation for Indigenous peoples since their education was first a consideration of the United States Government. Specifically, boarding schools sought to pull children out of their families and communities, forcibly teach English, and forbid the use of their traditional language and culture, and many of these settler-colonial practices were codified in law (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018).

Boarding Schools were designed with the idea that separating Indian children from Indian adults would separate them from their tribal identities and smooth the process of assimilation (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). In this process, children were abducted from their parents and moved to boarding schools out of reservation boundaries. If families refused, they would lose access to food and would be incarcerated. Communication was difficult and censored, and all ties to culture and heritage were forcibly removed. This was in direct contrast to how Indigenous people had lived before. Prior to boarding schools, every community member had a role and a purpose. By pulling children away from families, holding Indigenous peoples onto reservations, and banning religious practices, the way of life of Indigenous people was torn away from them, creating significant soul wounds (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). These wounds connect to our experience today, in our current reality as Indigenous peoples. The reverberating impact of the "subpar parenting, lack of affection, loneliness, and boarding school abuse, was a major factor in the ills that trouble tribes today (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018)."

Context of Native Education on Puyallup Tribal Lands

The primary regions in which this research is taking place are traditional and accustomed territories of the Puyallup people. In the Puyallup Tribal Community, there were two Indian Boarding Schools: The Cushman School and St. George's Indian School (Sterud-Hayward, 2021). These schools housed Native children from tribes around the country, many who lived a long way from home, and many who survived the schools stayed in the area. To this day, the Puyallup Reservation and surrounding areas are home to a diverse group of Indigenous peoples from various tribal communities. Puyallup Tribal Members at the time also commonly attended these two schools or Chemawa Indian Boarding School in Oregon (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). The Cushman School was located on what is today East 29th and Portland Avenue in Tacoma, Washington (Sterud-Hayward, 2021). This would become a temporary site of Chief Leschi Schools in the future. Hannah Kivalahula-Uddin, a Puyallup Tribal Member, interviewed Puyallup elders in her dissertation, Decolonization of the Mind: A Strategy to Improve Native American Student Achievement. This work describes the lived experiences of our ancestors.

In her dissertation, Dr. Kivalahula-Uddin describes the disturbing nature of boarding school policies for Puyallup children, for example, cutting hair is done in mourning for those who have lost close family members in death. To have your hair suddenly cut short would be confusing for young children (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). Her stories also share the separation and isolation felt by children in boarding schools. Hannah shares the memories of elder, Shirley Satiacum, who recalled her mother's experience "She didn't like it at the boarding school. They were mean to her and mean to all the kids. They were very strict and spanked their hands with rulers. They cut their hair. I don't know why they cut such beautiful hair off. They had to wear uniforms (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018, p. 82)." In her study, Hannah shares that several elders report

that their parents did not express love to them, and could not express the words. They reported being taught to be ashamed of being Native. Elders reported that ancestors had been nearly starved in boarding schools. The accommodations were bare and cold, with poor insulation (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). These experiences are also evident in the work of the Puyallup Language Program, which reported that the meals and health of the children in these schools was poor (Sterud-Hayward, 2021). The schools were places of loss for our ancestors. And places where they never felt love, acceptance, or community (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). This has had a lasting impact on the Puyallup Tribal Community.

Following the boarding school era, the tribe continually sought to rebuild, protect its people, and heal from the forced assimilation and cultural genocides of the recent past. Following the pre-contact and allotment eras, the tribe struggled to access and control resources promised to the tribe in the Medicine Creek Treaty. This included education, health care, and fishing, among others. In fact, over time, most Puyallup land fell into the hands of white settlers or the railroad companies. Our elder Ramona Bennett reports that many of our Puyallup Tribal members were murdered, and their bodies were thrown on the railroad tracks, their deaths ruled an accident. Victims included her own aunt, who her mother mourned throughout her life. She also reports that when the Puyallup Tribe eventually organized and took control over their own enrollment records, they found a pile of death certificates that listed the cause of death as railroad accident (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). This coincided with the boarding school era. Puyallup children were taken from their homes and forced to attend boarding schools. Their culture was forbidden, as was their language. The Puyallup Tribal community has many stories of abuse from this era including sexual abuse, starvation, and physical abuse. In the local Puyallup community, memories of boarding school are still fresh wounds needing to heal. Throughout this

era in Puyallup history, tribal members continued to fight for access to treaty rights, control of our resources, and resisted boarding schools. Tribal members fought to keep their lands and stay connected.

By the 1970s, most Puyallup land had been lost. Many tribal members were experiencing homelessness, and struggling to provide for their families (McCloud, 2020). Our leadership and community met in the homes of members, keeping the community together (McCloud, 2020). This was a time of strong, passionate, unyielding leadership. This is the leadership the times called for, to finally place tribal resources and decision-making into the hands of the tribe. Throughout this era, a series of demonstrations and strategic actions by the membership and tribal leadership led to the tribe's control of its own resources. This was largely done with leaders like Ramona Bennet, Janet McCloud, and Bob Satiacum. These demonstrations included fish-ins during the Fishing Wars, the Long Walk to Washington D.C., the take-over of Cushman Hospital, and the take-over of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office in Washington D.C (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). These movements were forceful. At one point, Ramona was quoted as saying, "We are armed and prepared to defend our rights with our lives. If anyone lays a hand on that net, they are going to get shot, we're serious. There are no blanks in our guns (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018, p. 93)." The brave actions and sacrifices of those who participated in these movements led to a new era in Tribal history in which the Tribe controlled their own resources and development.

In this new era, leadership advocated in Washington D.C for a tribally controlled health care system, educational system, and more. These systems had failed the Puyallup community, and leadership spent many years traveling to Washington D.C and building relationships with congressional leaders to advance the cause of the Puyallup Nation. Rolene Hargrove, today a

Puyallup elder, led the political campaigns in Washington D.C. during this era. She traveled to D.C on red-eye flights and stayed in whatever place she could afford, as the tribe was not wealthy in this period (Hargrove, 2020). Political allies during this era included Senator Daniel Inouye, Norm Dicks, and Bobby Kennedy. Without her constant advocacy, Chief Leschi and the Puyallup Tribal Health Authority would not exist today. The tribe had applied for funding to build Chief Leschi, but was constantly moved down and up the list of priorities. She brought the Bureau of Indian Affairs and dignitaries from Washington D.C. to tour the old Cushman building in which the school was meeting at that time. She was sure to showcase the stairs the Bureau required to be built to meet egress, that led straight into the women's restroom, and to show them all of the features of the building that led it to be condemned a short time later. As a result of meetings like this and her advocacy in Congress with her political allies, she secured a change in policy that required the priority list of the Bureau to be frozen in place and for Chief Leschi to move to the top (Hargrove, 2020).

Rolene, Jay Simchen, and Binah McCloud were instrumental in building the school, which required immense advocacy and creative problem-solving. For example, farmland was purchased for the school, but it was on a flood plain, and the Bureau would not allow the building to be built on an unsustainable site. Consequently, Simchen coordinated with partners in the City of Puyallup to buy dirt cheaply that was being removed from the South hill area as part of construction projects, which was later laid on the grounds of the school (Simchen, 2020). This soil had to sit for several years prior to being approved for building (Simchen, 2020). Throughout this process, McCloud, Simchen, and Hargrove involved the community at all levels of planning for the school. Following the purchase of the land, for example, a bus full of children was taken to the site, so that the feet of the children could bless the land (McCloud, 2020).

Similar advocacy and planning occurred in conjunction with the building and implementation of PTHA (Hargrove, 2020). Ramona Bennett, a Puyallup elder today, was instrumental in securing the National Indian Child Welfare Act, and protecting Indian families (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018). It was in this era that most tribal programs were developed. During this time, the Puyallup Tribal Council was composed mostly of women, and even today, the tribe speaks of the legendary change possible when Puyallup women lead the table. The focus on the school as part of this movement shows that education has always been an important priority of the tribal government and its members. This hard work has laid a foundation for youth and families to receive education, healthcare, and mental health care from tribal entities, taking the tools of the oppressor and making them our own. The work in ensuring access to culturally responsive care and education continues through today.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks I will work with include Tribal Critical Race Theory (2005), Universal Design for Learning, and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. Education as it currently exists in the k-12 public education system was never designed to support the growth of Indigenous peoples. Our current education model is about 200 years old. Around this time, industrialization birthed a need for a moderately educated workforce. Before this, education was reserved for the wealthy – and predominately white male – members of the world. The purpose of what was created was not to support the worker or to foster critical thinking, but to develop a mass population ready to work in factories. The goal of this style of education is, "to 'fill' the students with the contents of their predetermined "education." "Education becomes an act of depositing in which the students are the depositories, and the teacher is the depositor…the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat (Friere, 1970, p. 72)." This system was not

designed to promote critical thinking or celebrate, acknowledge, or provide space for different world views, because the system is designed to produce assimilation and homogenesis results.

While it is currently fashionable to point out the damage of this factory model in education for different groups of people, even Richard Dufour and Solution Tree – one of the most heralded of educational gurus – get the solution wrong:

"In the factory model of schooling, quality was the variable; time was the constant. Students were given a set amount of work to do in a set period of time, then graded on the quality of what was accomplished. We held time constant and allowed quality to vary. We must turn that on its head; Hold the quality of the work constant, and allow time to vary. We must realize we have the power to achieve a common curriculum by uncommon means (Cole, 1993, p 10)."

Here, they identify the problem as a failure of schools to provide quality tier 1 instruction, and a lack of data-driven instructional responsiveness to student needs. While it is true that schools that serve people of color tend to employ more first-year teachers, have fewer resources, and have less experience – this is not the problem, or rather not the only problem. The last significant shift in education centered around common core school standards – a national set of standards that would be used to drive curriculum across the nation. We would raise standards nationally and watch children rise to that standard. Schools focused on the Professional Learning Communities model, drilled down into formative assessment data, and everyone quoted John Hattie's findings around collective teacher efficacy. While his metadata-analysis shows a strong correlation between Collective Teacher Efficacy and student achievement, heralding this as great salvation of Indigenous children in schools is a false narrative. Collective Teacher Efficacy is the shared belief that through their collective action, educators can influence student outcomes and increase achievement for all students (Hattie, 2018). While Collective Teacher Efficacy holds significant

value for all students, it alone is not the answer to supporting our Indigenous students. It cannot erase 400 years of colonization, and it does nothing to support Indigenous identity within schools and end forced assimilation. With education's current focus on Career and Technical Education, Social and Emotional Learning, Trauma-Informed Practices, and Data-Driven Decision Making, I am reminded of recommendations for Native Education in the 1928 Merriam Report, "It [the Native school system] must emphasize training in health, in family, community life, in productive efficiency, and in the management and use of property and income to a degree probably unnecessary in general public schools...The fact must be recognized, however, that often Indian children and Indian families need more service than is ordinarily rendered in public schools...special attention [should be paid] to health, industrial, and social training, and the relationship between home and school (Meriam, 1928, p. 35)." Not much, it seems, has changed, in the national discourse around educating people of color in the last 100 years.

The most basic tenet of Tribal Critical Race Theory is, "the basic tenet of TribalCrit emphasizes that colonization is endemic to society (Brayboy, 2001)." Brayboy (2001) asserts that "the goal, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, of interactions between the dominant U.S. society and American Indians, has been to change (''colonize'' or ''civilize'') us to be more like those who hold power in the dominant society." With modern initiatives of Social Emotional Learning and the focus of Common Core School Standards, schools continue this assimilation process. Through this lens, it is possible to view the American school system, rooted in the history of boarding schools, as a tool of imperialism. When we look at common classrooms and building leadership structures, we see that the cultural norms of the hegemonic group are embedded throughout the systems that serve our children. In our current school systems and structures, colonization is not a historical event, but a modern reality. This is another tenet of

tribal critical race theory, that the U.S. policy, in this case the U.S. k-12 public education system, is rooted in imperialism for materialistic gain (Brayboy, 2006). By creating systems in which Indigenous children are subjegated, assimilated, and institutionalized, the U.S. cultivates a compliant work force and maintains white hegemony in terms of economic and social class norms (Friere, 1970). Moreover, schools are led and informed by Western knowledge constructs and systems. This is problematic for Indigenous children who see their cultural knowledge systems and leadership frameworks dismissed or excluded from public school systems. Brayboy (2006) recognizes that Indigenous peoples seek to obtain and further their self-determination and sovereignty. Traditional public school systems and Universities deny the validity of various Knowledge frameworks for Indigenous people, such as storytelling (Brayboy, 2006). In this context then, schools are assimilation engines. And public schools, by act of public policy, reinforce this. This can be seen in current battles over curriculum at school board meetings across the country, as many seek to erase accurate histories from schools (Waxman, 2021).

There is a lack of representation in public education and in Universities of Indigenous world views, beliefs, knowledges, and values (Brayboy, 2006). Indigenous children are also not graduating at the same rate as their non-Native peers. In Washington State, 13% of the overall teaching population were people of color. Meaning that about 86% of the teaching force is white (The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2022). This means that our children are not being served in schools that mirror the diversity around them. It also means that there is little cultural diversity in classroom level leadership. This can become important in considerations of classroom management. Whose culture defines what respect looks like in the classroom? That of the students? Or that of the teacher? When there is disagreement between the two cultures, what happens next? Further, whose cultural lens determines what content is prioritized, taught, and

represented? While school districts work to diversify staff representation to mirror that of their student population, schools need strategies right now, urgently, to ensure that all students have equal access to education, and some are not disproportionately excluded from the classroom due to cultural differences.

Universal Design For Learning is a framework that was originally designed to support classroom inclusion models (Novak, 2018). It is primarily, then, a classroom level leadership framework designed to support the needs of all students with diverse needs, including the needs of students with Individual Education Plans, in the general education classroom. These techniques represent advanced teaching. The goal of Universal Design for Learning is to provide flexibility for students in the presentation of instruction, how skills are assessed, and the work that students complete through which to learn (Novak, 2016). It also focuses on reducing barriers to instruction while maintaining higher expectations. The three guiding principles of Universal Design for Learning are to provide multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of action and expression (Novak, 2018). In order to develop these classroom models, however, Universal Design for Learning requires building and district level leadership structures that support this framework at the classroom level. To meet the needs of students, staff, and the community, Universal Design for Learning focuses on collaborative leadership models. Universal Design for Learning has been successful for learners with severe support needs, more generally, as well. It is essential that all learners have equitable access to the curriculum. The framework is also able to be utilized to support school reform. The heart of Universal Design for Learning emphasizes the variability of the learners and the importance of choice, and the difficulty surrounding current curricula that focuses on the "average" learner. Universal Design for Learning also focuses on fostering the skills of learning rather than

exclusively on content. It holds as a central tenant that all students can learn (Hartman, 2015). Universal Design for Learning can be used to support racial equity as well, because it requires teachers to identify what is truly important in the curriculum and other, alternative ways for students to demonstrate mastery, including considerations for culturally sustaining practices. (Super, 2020). In this way, Universal Design for Learning is also a framework that can support non-native teachers in connecting and engaging their Native students.

To facilitate this, leaders need to collect survey data from staff, students, and parents to help drive initiatives and meet needs in the building. This can also be done through meetings, data gathering, and informal check-ins. Decisions are then made based on analysis of all evidence. Schools in this model do not blindly make decisions based on data but are asked to drill down into the data and identify attitudinal, qualitative, and quantitative data together to create a context for the data (Novak, 2016). Further, the practices of Universal Design for Learning better support culturally responsive teaching, for example, allowing students to co-design lessons, activities, and grading rubrics, allowing storytelling in the classroom, and allowing all students within the classroom to provide cultural resources within the classroom space. These practices help prevent the teacher's voice, a predominately white voice, from dominating the space. In an exploration of western models of leadership and pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning stood out as most directly aligned to key Indigenous leadership qualities for these reasons. Universal Design for learning requires a collaborative approach to leadership, an evidence-based over a data-driven approach to decision making, and provides multiple opportunities in various modalities for students to demonstrate their learning (Novak, 2016). In fact, equity and inclusion are a central focus of Universal Design for Learning, and

studies have shown that Universal Design for Learning has had positive outcomes for students of color in various school systems.

There are many Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. The framework for this paper combines the leadership development guide laid out by Cajete (2015), and the Principals of Indigenous Leadership Framework (Aguilera-Black Bear, 2015). Cajete identifies a series of nested components. The foundation of a successful Indigenous leadership framework must begin with a focus on Native epistemology and values. This foundation should drive a clear vision that will lead the tribe's focus, expenditures, and actions. Therefore, for a school to be aligned to an Indigenous leadership framework, the very foundation of the school must be centered around Indigenous identity. This would have implications then for school discipline, school leadership structures, curriculum, instructional design, and the schools related to the land on which it resides. This framework would be incorporated into every facet of the school. The outermost ring of Cajete's framework is the community. The meaning and knowledge come from the community members and the ancestors of those the school serves. This work would be done by creating a high level of community involvement and creating a secure environment where individuals feel safe and are able to collaborate effectively. This framework would be considered, not as a tiered or ordered system, but rather as a series of contexts to consider mutually important. Leaders in this model would use a values-based approach, listen to the needs of the people, build up the community, and would consider the feelings and needs of the membership in a meaningful way (Cajete, 2015). Similar values are seen in the Principles of Indigenous Leadership framework. This model of Indigenous leadership focuses, as the name suggests, on eight principles: clear vision, strong cultural identity, the ability to unite others in a common purpose, ability to overcome hardships and challenges, commitment to the whole

journey, sensitivity to spirituality, respect for mentors, and a legacy to pass on (Aguilera-Black Bear, 2015). These principles align with Cajete's framework, as both Cajete and Blackbear center work around a multipronged value system that does not weigh one component more than another. Further, both include an important focus on Indigenous culture and ways of knowing as well as a community-based approach that incorporates many voices in decision-making for the tribe.

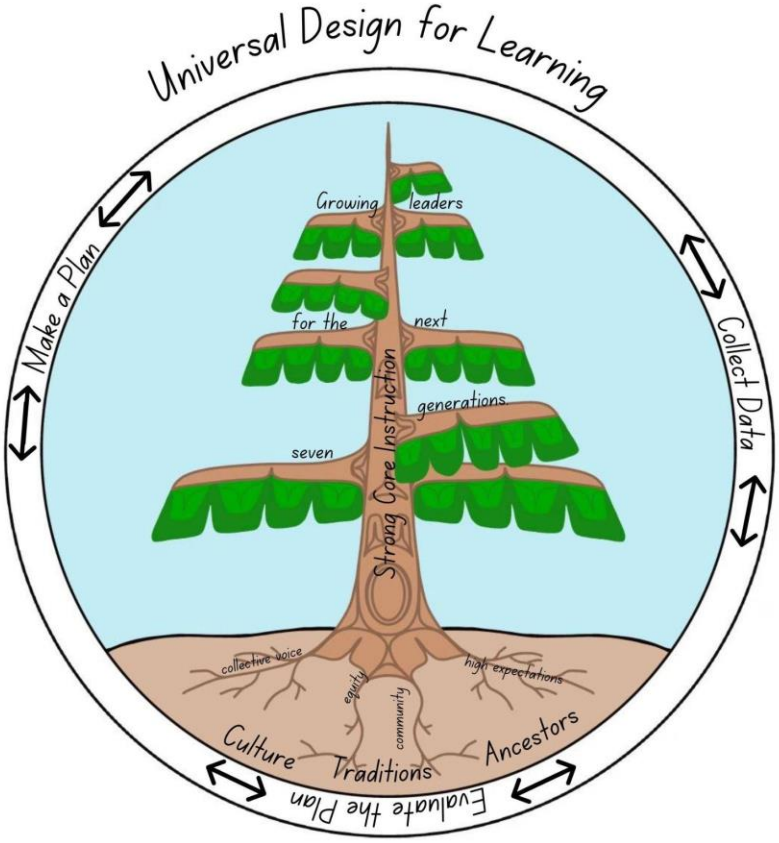
To summarize, my theoretical framework posits that our students have been the subject of systemic racism that has resulted in a lower overall experience of education. Universal Design for Learning has some components that align with research based practices for improving student achievement. It also has some exciting elements that align with traditional leadership frameworks in Indigenous communities. My theory is that these elements, along with some additional Indigenizing of the framework, will allow for the larger widespread success of all students. This project will determine if families and caregivers of Indigenous youth also see the principles of Universal Design for Learning as supportive of their child's learning and appropriate to their culture.

Universal Design for Learning and Leadership Framework Models

The models below show possible models for how Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Universal Design for Learning can produce high levels of learning for all students. Model one focuses on leadership practices that are driven by culture. The second model compares elements of Universal Design for Learning with Indigenous pedagogical approaches. Both models show the potential power of Universal Design for Learning in supporting Indigenous students in achieving positive learning outcomes.

Figure 1

Universal Design for Learning Embedded in an Indigenous Leadership Framework for Building Level Leaders



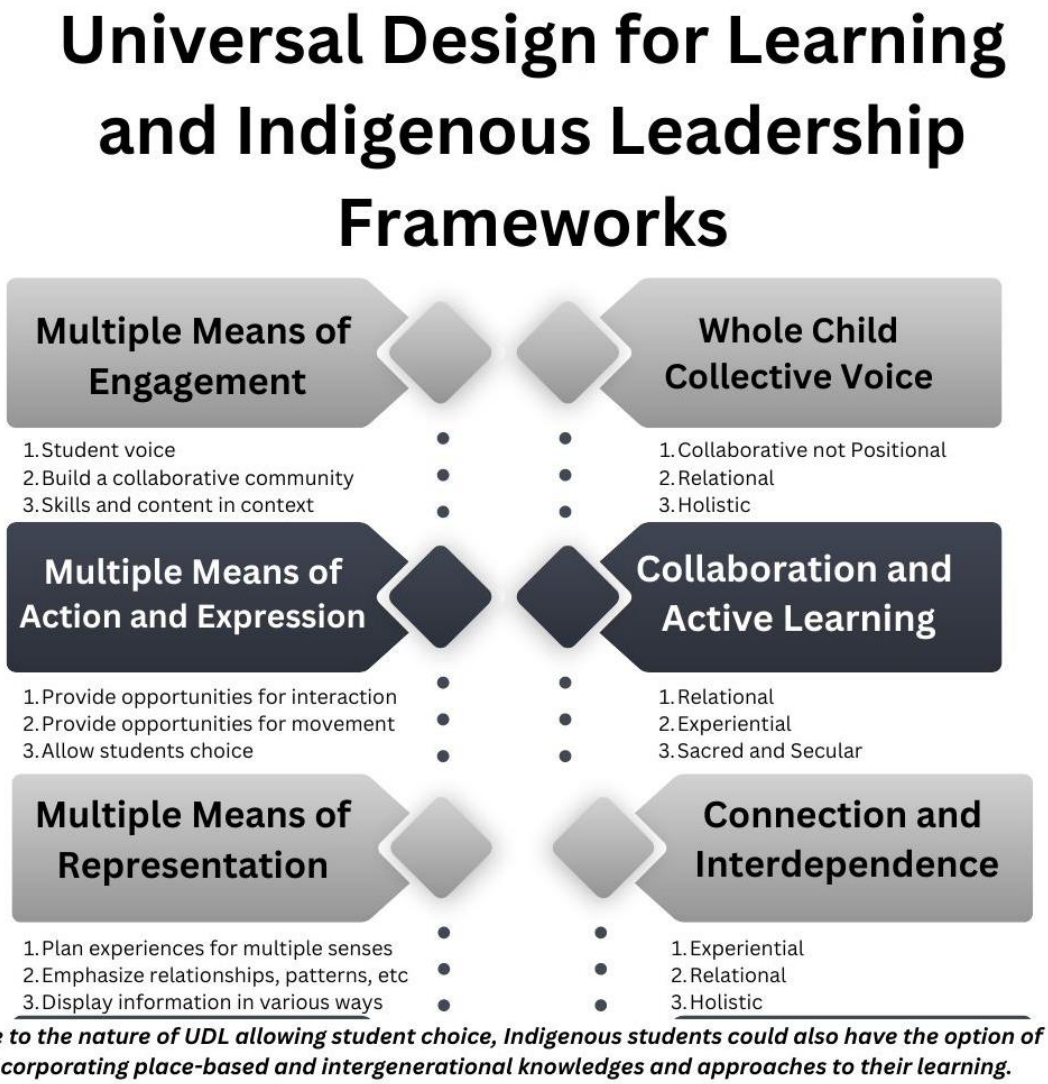
This image shows how an Indigenous leader may implement the Universal Design model in alignment with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. This model has Culture, Traditions, and Ancestors in the soil that feeds the roots of the trees. The roots of high expectations, community, equity, and collective voice will be executed in a manner that aligns to Indigenous identity and values. The roots feed the tree trunk, which is strong core instruction. This means that the leadership approach from the roots will lead teachers to make changes in their instruction to

improve instructional outcomes. The branches represent the output of that instruction, the support and development of our youth and future generations. This model demonstrates how the adaptability of the Universal Design framework allows for the leader or implementer of the framework to infuse their praxis with elements of their own cultural identity, the soil, and bring their whole selves and identity into the work to support their teachers and students. This model also shows how important a collaborative leadership approach is to the Universal Design for Learning framework. To be successful in implementation, teachers need to apply collaborative leadership techniques to their classroom practice to come alongside their students and lead. They will be most successful in a school whose leaders also implement similar practices to model this work. Collaborative leadership is an essential component of Indigenous Leadership Frameworks.

This model can also be used to help support Indigenous educators in the workplace, to show supervisors and peers that they can lead from their own cultural context and still serve as an effective instructional leader, serving students well and ensuring equity. The dominant culture of the United States is embedded and inherent in the structures of k-12 school leadership. This is deeply rooted in their histories. Since the first experiences of Indigenous youth in k-12 structures, schools have been built as engines of assimilations. This is still an effect of schools today. Working in schools where the vast majority of educators are of european ancestry, Indigenous educational leaders may face barriers in implementing a leadership praxis that aligns with Indigenous leadership frameworks if it is different from the dominant praxis of their building or district culture. This model demonstrates how an individual's identity and culture can lead to the same positive outcomes for students as traditional western models and frameworks.

Figure 2

Universal Design for Learning and Indigenous Leadership Values and Pedagogical Approaches for the Classroom



I created this model using primarily the CAST (2011) and Antoine (2018) texts as

reference material. This model cross walks Indigenous Pedagogies and Leadership Frameworks with Universal Design for Learning practices. There are three Universal Design for Learning guidelines: multiple means of engagement, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of representation (CAST, 2011). Multiple means of engagement means that students should have different options for recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence, and self-regulation (CAST, 2011). This looks like students have the ability to choose how they will engage with content, by choosing tasks that are relevant and of value to them as individuals. It also means having students identify their own goals and allowing students to have voice in the classroom expectations, demands of the task, and to ensure community and collaboration opportunities. (CAST, 2011). This aligns to Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies, which are rooted in relationality and connection (Antoine, 2018). These engagement structures would ensure that students could make learning choices that align with their cultural identities, unique to them. It also means that classroom structures would decentralize the teacher, rely more on collaborative classroom leadership structures that honor the individual needs and cultures represented in the space (Antoine, 2018). Further, Universal Design for Learning encourages the teaching of content in a full context (CAST, 2011). This aligns to the emphasis on holistic learning in Indigenous pedagogies (CAST, 2011). The strong alignment here indicates that this model for building engagement may support Indigenous students better in the classroom environment.

Multiple means of action and expression describes the ability of students to access their learning through different learning modalities that account for different sensory strengths of students and their learning preferences. It also includes opportunities to interact with peers and to share patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships of concepts, providing learning in a

fuller context (CAST, 2011). This aligns with Indigenous epistemologies, pedagogies and leadership frameworks, which emphasize learning through collaboration with peers and learning by doing (Antoine, 2018). Indigenous frameworks all emphasize the relationality and connectivity between all things including place, people, and ancestors (Antoine, 2018). Indigenous pedagogies also emphasize the importance of learning in full context, in a holistic manner (Antoine, 2018). Based on these strategies, there is significant alignment between Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Universal Design for Learning.

Finally, Multiple means of action and expression refers to the ability of the student to make determinations about how to best learn content for themselves (CAST, 2011). It also emphasizes the importance of learning with peers through collaboration and discussion (CAST, 2011), and setting goals for oneself for growth (CAST, 2011). These elements align with Indigenous leadership frameworks which emphasize the importance of knowledge about oneself, holistic learning, and learning through community (Antoine, 2018). Based on this, there are also strong correlations between this Universal Design for Learning guideline and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks.

There are some elements of Universal Design for Learning which may not align with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks. One potential misalignment is that Universal Design for Learning is built around data driven practices, to measure targeted instruction (CAST, 2011). Work would need to be done to identify indigenous data collection methods.

Chapter 4: Research Design

The research design for this study was intentionally developed to respect the indigeneity of all participants with the goal of identifying practices that may best support Indigenous students in K-12th grade classroom settings. Research in Indigenous communities is sometimes conducted without the content or interest of the Indigenous subjects. To honor my community, before engaging in any implementation or larger study, it was first necessary for me to determine if caregivers for Indigenous youth identified practices of Universal Design for Learning as supportive of their child's learning and cultural identity. To accomplish this, a survey was developed. In order to understand the role of education in their households, and to share a portrait of our Indigenous families, interviews were also conducted. This approach provides meaningful context to the quantitative data provided from the surveys. Indigenous approaches to science and pedagogies focus on the whole, rather than breaking phenomena into smaller components for study (Antoine, 2018). For this reason, I wanted to honor the whole identity of our Indigenous families by providing a deeper and more meaningful picture that showed us the whole person whose families our schools are serving. These portraits also provide a snapshot of the healing our communities have experienced since the cultural genocide of boarding schools.

Research Questions

The following are research questions that guide the work of this study: How can the Universal Design for Learning leadership framework align to Indigenous Leadership Frameworks? Can Universal Design for Learning support Native students in public school and

tribal school settings? Would parents of Indigenous students feel their students would be best supported in a school that aligned to Universal Design for Learning? In what ways does Universal Design for Learning not fully align with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks? Are schools currently implementing any components of Universal Design for Learning?

Thesis

Aligning to a Universal Design for Learning approach to leadership at the classroom and building level will improve student outcomes for Indigenous students. Parents of Indigenous students in k-12 schools will identify Universal Design for Learning tenets as more supportive of their student in school when compared to models not aligned to Universal Design for Learning.

Study Design

This study explores the alignment and misalignment between Universal Design for Learning and Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and Pedagogies. Following this analysis, a survey was developed. The survey included three sections. The first section focuses on what parents of Indigenous children see as important for their students to succeed. It also looks at what they identify as barriers to their child's education. The second section explores the current k-12 setting that is currently serving their child. Questions also explore the experiences provided for students and questions are designed to determine if the school aligns to elements of Universal Design for Learning. The third section explores if these parents feel that their child would be best served in schools implementing the elements of Universal Design for Learning aligned to Indigenous Leadership Frameworks and pedagogies.

The survey will be shared via social media and will also be shared to local Native American Coordinators in school districts within the Puget Sound region. The data was gathered

over a period of three months. Following this period, parents who indicated a willingness to participate further, were invited to share their personal narratives of their own school experiences. After several emails, three individuals agreed to participate. They shared more deeply about their observations, concerns, and expectations for the experiences of their children.

Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be defined as such:

Parent: The legal guardian or primary caregiver of a child. This could include relative care, biological parents, or those serving in a close familial role to an Indigenous child enrolled in a k-12 school.

Indigenous Child: Indigenous child is defined as a child who is a descendant of a member of a Native American tribe or other Indigenous group including Pacific Islanders, the United States, Canada, or Central America. This includes enrolled members of federally recognized tribes, legal descendants of a member of federally recognized tribes, and individuals and descendants of tribal and Indigenous groups that are not federally recognized.

K-12 Schools: Schools that serve students in any grades from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Puget Sound Region: This area is defined as schools in Western Washington along the coast of the Puget Sound. The primary focus will be on schools in Pierce, King, Thurston, and Snohomish Counties.

Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed methods approach. It combines data from a structured survey with data obtained from three interviews with caregivers of Indigenous youth. This study aims to determine if Indigenous caregivers find Universal Design for Learning elements supportive of

their students and if the k-12th grade educational settings are effectively supporting Indigenous youth. A secondary question of this project is how the educational experiences of Indigenous caregivers influences their perceptions of k-12th grade institutions today and if they believe that they would have been better supported by a Universal Design for Learning framework (CAST, 2011). In order to fully understand the educational experiences of Indigenous caregivers and the influence of this experience, a more open interpretivist approach is required using a qualitative method. The goal is not to draw formal conclusions that will be applied to diverse Indigenous groups across the country with certainty, but rather to determine if further study is warranted based on the interest and values of Indigenous caregivers. This survey uses quantitative data from a survey to identify data trends in regards to experience and attitude of Indigenous students and caregivers, but also seeks to see parents and youth as whole identities, to represent Indigenous cultures in the full context of their identity and experiences. For these reasons, interviews which uncover the story of our families were used to compare their lived experiences with the quantitative data, a phenomenological approach. Interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous youth and their caregivers. The time and limited quantity of interviews, however, would limit the ability of the study to determine if further research was warranted. For this reason, this is being combined with a quantitative approach via a survey.

The survey collects quantitative data from a survey that will collect demographic data on Indigenous caregivers and their children as well as their k-12th grade educational experiences. It also seeks to understand if Indigenous caregivers identify Universal Design for Learning approaches as culturally sustaining practices. Their responses will then be analyzed statistically to determine if further research is warranted. The purpose of mixing survey data with interviews

is to provide greater clarity on the lived experiences of participants and to expand on the limited scope provided by quantitative approaches alone.

Justification of Methods

Before research is undertaken to study the impact of Universal Design for Learning on Indigenous students, it is ethical to first examine if parents of Indigenous children want this design for their students. As schools look to explore anti-racism, decolonization, and other equity initiatives, it is essential that they listen to the voices of those they are seeking to serve. This study seeks to identify if this approach is what parents of Indigenous students find appropriate and supportive in meeting the needs of their children. A survey was implemented to determine if further research would be warranted on the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning in supporting learning outcomes for Indigenous students in heterogeneous settings. The Interviews provide a richer and deeper context for the data in the survey, and also support research more aligned to Indigenous values, inclusive of the whole person, and not just extracting data for the purpose of the researcher.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

This project collects data from parents of Indigenous students. The survey was distributed in spring of 2023. All participants in the survey were over 18 years old. Parents may be Indigenous themselves, or they may be foster parents, legal guardians, adoptive parents, or serve in a parental role to an Indigenous student in any other capacity. The survey was available nationally. Additional efforts were undertaken locally, in the lower Puget Sound region, to collect as many responses as possible. The survey was posted in Indigenous social media groups relevant to the local tribal communities of the Puget Sound. The researcher also collaborated

with other local Native Education Coordinators to share with local parents of Indigenous children. The link was also shared with local non-profits serving Indigenous families.

The goal of the survey was to collect data on the experiences of Indigenous youth in k-12th grade educational settings today and to determine if their caregivers identified Universal Design for Learning as a framework that would support the learning outcomes for their children and support the cultures of their families. From February 6th to March 13th, 2023 there were two hundred and fifty-eight responses to the survey. These responses came from Indigenous caregivers representing tribes from across the country.

Parents who agree to participate in further interviews were contacted to schedule follow up personal narrative interviews. The plan was that if fewer than 10 parents agree to be interviewed, all will be contacted and scheduled. If more than 10 parents express interest, priority will be given to parents who have children residing in the Puget Sound area. Interviews would be scheduled in order of survey completion up to a total of 10 participants. In practice, only three individuals were able to complete interviews. Those who interviewed had an educational background that included some college experience. This mirrored the data of the survey, with 70.6 percent of survey respondents having at least some college experience. All three interview participants were of Indigenous ancestry. The interviews were semi-structured. The interview questions focused on the educational experiences of the respondent, as well as that of their children:

1. Please describe your k-12 educational experiences.
2. Did you enjoy school? Why or why not?
3. Did any of your teachers ever discuss Native identity in any way? Can you elaborate?
4. How did your peers feel about Native people?

5. Did you ever have a Native teacher?
6. How many of your peers were Native?
7. How did your parents feel at school?
8. How did you feel at school?
9. How could staff have better supported you?
10. Did you have choices at school?
11. Tell me about your student's experience in school?
12. How has it been positive? Negative?
13. Do you feel welcome in the school? Please elaborate.

The interviews provided context to interpret the current state of Indigenous education and to understand the lived experiences of survey participants. My own identity as an Indigenous, Coast Salish woman led to an easy rapport with respondents. We often laughed at shared experiences as the interviews transpired. Participating in this portion of the research project was healing for me, as I sat with other Indigenous people and enjoyed sharing our stories. Kovach (2009, p.98) shares that, "Story and Indigenous inquiry are grounded within a relationship based approach to research…such relationships hold a history of shared story with one another..In asking others to share stories, it is necessary to share our own, starting with self-location." Earning trust is critical to research in Indigenous communities where research has often extracted and harmed Indigenous communities.

Justification or Rationale

The continued struggles of Indigenous education demonstrate a continued need for this project, and, specifically, the continued struggles faced by students at Chief Leschi Schools confirm this. Additionally, there has not yet been scholarship aligning Universal Design for

Learning with Indigenous Leadership Frameworks, or studies of Universal Design for Learning in Coast Salish schools, or Native schools more broadly.

Reciprocity Statement

This study provides an opportunity to explore the parent response to Universal Design for Learning as a framework for Indigenizing k-12 classroom and building level leadership. This will provide important background information for determining if Universal Design for Learning could provide a more supportive educational setting for Indigenous students. It will also provide information for us on the current state of Native education in the Puget Sound region, barriers to accessing an inclusive educational environment, and areas for schools to focus on to improve the experience of Native students. Results of the survey will be shared with local school districts and there will be a presentation of the data to parents of Indigenous students following the completion of the project.

Further, this work will assist with the development of a school leadership framework aligned to Indigenous values that can be implemented in schools serving indigenous youth, which can help schools meet the requirements for accreditation and state funding while supporting indigenous cultural values and norms.

Chapter 5: Portraitures of Indigenous Parents' Views on Educational Experiences

The interviews conducted in this study were condensed into portraitures that share the most central themes of their stories. Each person interviewed is shown under a pseudonym to protect their identity. These stories show the K-12 experiences of caregivers of Indigenous youth, often compared to the experiences of their children. The stories below provide a more holistic image of the survey respondents and as such a deeper context. While the experiences of families and caregivers were diverse, each story contains essential truths of the Indigenous experience of education today. The common themes from these portraitures highlight the resilience and capability of our Indigenous youth.

Colleen

Colleen is an Indigenous woman who is the parent of several boys who attended public and tribal schools. She has a deep level of experience in public schools as both a parent and student herself. Several of her children also attended Chief Leschi Schools, a tribal school on the Puyallup Indian reservation. Colleen's mother was a nurse. She was busy and focused on her own career and was not able to attend conferences or school functions for her daughter. She was involved, but wasn't able to be fully present. Her mother was able to attend school to become a nurse. Colleen is able to share insights into the perception of Indigenous students in these settings and also in the continued barriers to accessing education and support that many parents and students face.

Public School Settings

Each of Collen's children attended school in the Tacoma Public School system at some point. Two of her children are still students currently. Colleen shared much about the experiences

of her sons in public school settings, as well as her own experiences. Several of her children were given Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to support their education in the area of Emotional/Behavioral Disability (EBD). Colleen shared, "My other son, they went, um, they went on to Tacoma schools, but they were pushed into the self-contained classroom. They had an emotional-behavioral disorder, whatever they call that, I think that's what it is, EBD. They were in self-contained classrooms and they were considered the most extreme and so they were put into a couple different schools but it was like the ReLife and in Northwest Soil. I feel like that experience for them really played heavily into the school to prison pipeline and I think you know third son, he was initially arrested when he was 17 and went to Remann Hall and to Pierce County jail, and then he went to the Washington state prisons, but he was in for 18 months, out for 18 months." Colleen later also shared about her other children, "Which then he switched over to Stewart Middle School in Tacoma Public Schools and I think it was, I can't quite remember, but I think he was starting to get in trouble so then the same thing. They put him in a TLC classroom and ultimately he went to Lincoln after that and then he dropped out as well. He actually did switch over to BATES for a while; he is still registered there but not really attending. He just turned 18 yesterday he did have a court experience as well, where it was more like, what do you call it, more like a probation thing and I think it was like a deferred sentence. Yeah that's what I think so she can, you know, what I think a lot of those were learned behaviors from his older siblings. He went to Leschi from age 3 to 4th grade, and then he went to a Tacoma school from fifth grade to I think about 10th grade and then Lincoln pretty much pushed him out. I got an email one day from an administrator at Lincoln saying you know he's so credit deficient he really would be a better fit for BATES, so we did try BATES for him but I don't feel like it had enough structure in place. And they really frown upon parents involvement that they are

absolutely like, " nope they're a college student" they really won't even communicate with me about his progress or anything about either of them so they're both technically still on the books at BATES, but not really doing well on and I feel like what that took away from that son was the ability to do sports in school and he was always really super athletic and so that was frustrating and I feel like they did that because I thought schools do that in general because they want to raise their graduation rates so another like looking at this kid the kid's not gonna make it so let's let's get rid of them." In these stories, Colleen shares the stories of her struggle to access quality and responsive education for her children.

In her narrative, she shares about her observations that three of her children were pushed out of the public school system. They received services from Special Education for disabilities that affected their ability to access education, specifically behavior disorders. Her children struggled in school and even in self-contained classrooms, and two of her children were eventually transferred to BATES technical college. This transfer would have removed the students from the school's graduation data. Once at BATES, however, her children were unable to access athletic programs and she was unable to provide direct support by communicating with the college. Her children, who struggle with behavior, were given less supervision and support than their general education peers once they transferred to the technical college. Colleen shared her belief that her son may have been more connected to the school if he had access to an athletic program, which could have built a community for him.

By contrast, Colleen identifies her own experiences in schools as largely supportive. Colleen attended Tacoma Public Schools herself, from kindergarten until middle school. While in attendance at these public schools, she recognizes that she was one of only a few students of color in attendance. During the interview, Colleen shared that she was a survivor of childhood

sexual abuse. She shared in her interview that these experiences made it difficult for her to set her own boundaries, including with peers who were being physically inappropriate with her. These experiences with this peer made her feel uncomfortable and resulted in her not attending school for some time before enrolling in another school. After these experiences, Colleen transferred to homeschool run by her aunt. Benjamin Franklin Academy was a religious school, serving the Morman community. Colleen disclosed that she survived sexual trauma while attending this school. Despite this, Colleen largely reported positive experiences. Following this experience, Colleen transferred schools again, attending Narrows View in University Place, Washington. While attending 6th grade, Colleen's father passed away. For this reason, she only attended Narrows View for one year, but reported that it was very memorable due to the support and access to strong academics that she received. She reported that adults at Narrows View were very supportive of her when her father passed away, saying, "... I remember like going in and I just felt really, really supported by the people that cared about me during this time of grief and loss, and like I really don't know how to even explain it. I felt like there was just a lot of loving adults around at times." This value connects to the positive experience she later described for one of her sons who attended tribal school.

Colleen later moved to Utah and attended Farrer Middle School, and later the high school in Provo, Utah. At 14, Colleen was pregnant over the summer of 8th grade, shortly after her mother passed away. During this time, Colleen also reported positive feelings about school. Colleen reported a lot of support and kindness while she attended school in Utah. She specifically recalled the connection she had with one of her bus drivers who would always check in on her to see that she had what she needed. Despite this positive experience, Colleen also shared, "I stuck it out at Hillside high school because they had a daycare which is great because

it allowed me to bring my baby to school but they were white people and they called CPS on me multiple times because my son had Mongolian spots, and because he had eczema and they thought it was like a rope burn, so I was constantly having to defend myself, and that's kind of how I think I became such a fierce advocate for you know how people are my kids are all these things I like had to really start at a young age." In this part of her narrative, Colleen shares discrimination that she experienced as a teen mother of a child of color. Her white teachers were unaware of Mongolian spots, which affect only 9.6% of caucasian infants, but 90% of Native Americans (Paller, 2011). Their ignorance led Colleen to needing to develop, as only a young teen, strong self-advocacy skills to support her children and keep their family together. The narrative from the white teachers - that her infant had rope burns and bruises - was not only false, but also shows the negative stereotypes that fed their internal dialogue.

Later, Colleen returned to Washington. She attended an alternative school. This school was not as supportive. She graduated in 2002, extending her school a year to help ensure she was able to access Social Security Death Benefits for her family, during which time she attended Running Start. That year, she gave birth to her third son. She reported another important adult, Phyllis, and another adult, Jane, who really cared about her kids and made a lasting impact on her life. Overall, Colleen shared that school was a positive experience that helped her during traumatic life events. "I personally did enjoy school. I felt like I feel like school has been like what's helped me through traumatic times in my life and like, I always I feel like, yeah, people complain about school lunches and all these things, but school lunches were always better than what we had at home and like being able to go and have some consistent adults that were always available to you." This ties together repeated themes in Colleen's interview. School was a place of predictability, access to resources, and a place with caring adults. Access to school helped

Colleen navigate her life while she was a teen parent and a young person who lost both of her parents. She also reported that school, academically, was always easy for her. She shared memories of winning essay contests and candy selling contests. She enjoyed the challenge of academic work and found easy success in school, which also drove her positive feelings about school.

Colleen also felt that having higher expectations for our Native youth could better support them in public schools. “Well, when I look back, I think that having a kid and losing my parents so young, so looking at it from the perspective of working with grieving children I think that holding kids to at a higher standard, but like still having some accountability I think would go a long ways because I think I did get away with a lot of stuff myself, and there wasn’t as much structure so I think having other outlets like school, counselors, and things like that could go along ways, but I don’t know that that’s true across the board, you know, that’s the hard part.” This idea was also echoed in the interview of another respondent in this study. Colleen didn’t have an adult at home to help support her or hold her accountable for her decisions and academics. With more supervision, guidance, and support, she may have made different decisions or had different opportunities. Further research would be needed to determine if non-Native students who were emancipated or unaccompanied minors had similarly low expectations. Intergenerational trauma has led to a higher number of Indigenous students who are raising themselves. This lack of expectation therefore has a disparate impact on Indigenous students.

Colleen also shared about the impact of ability on the public school experience. Both of her sons in public schools received a diagnosis for disabilities for academics or social-emotional needs. She also wondered about how race may have affected interpretations of behavior and then

led to the incarceration of her sons, “So I’m thinking of like for me I’m white passing like, somebody could think I’m white. I think my experience compared to my children was very different. You know, one of my sons is really super dark and he, you know, I always had a different experience and I wasn’t sure if it’s because he’s a boy or if it's because he has such high energy. Like what was so different and challenging for this kid?” Here, Colleen made connections, wondering if one of her child’s behaviors were interpreted as social-emotional disorders based on bias of skin color. This then would have led to his diagnosis, self-contained classroom and exclusion from general education settings, and later pushing him out and driving his opportunities and decisions that led to his later incarceration. This experience has led her to be a fierce and dedicated advocate for her grandchild, “but you know it’s kind of made me a little bit more dedicated to my grandchild who looks like his twin.

Tribal School Settings

Several of Colleen’s sons attended tribal schools. One of her sons attended from 6th-12th grade. Two of her sons attended from preschool through middle school. Her son who attended 6th-12th grade at tribal school had a markedly different experience than those who attended 6th-12th grade in the Tacoma Public School System. In Colleen’s words, “I was most grateful, personally, on the parental side, I was most grateful for the Chief Leschi experience for him because he was provided for on a different level. Like he had smaller classroom size and the school was able to help him to work and focus on his growth as a person, versus, just, you know, test scores or handle a school’s agenda.” Colleen repeatedly shared that at Tribal School, her son was able to access more resources and connections. There were more teachers who made direct connections with her child. It was a smaller community that enabled him to build a peer group.

Many of his peers shared experiences similar to his outside of school. He also had access to sports, which were an important motivator for her son.

In comparing the K-12th grade educational experiences of her sons, Colleen notes, " I just really think that when I look at like, how did this happen? [referring to her sons who did not complete school or who experienced incarceration] Of course, it's their own behaviors, and it's part of like the trauma that they may have experienced, including you know, intergenerational trauma all these things, and my role would be that maybe I didn't provide enough structure or just a plan or all these things you know that can happen. Um, they both had that experience neither one of them graduated and then my one son and youngest son started at Leschi and had a different experience because they were younger. I started them off at Leschi where my youngest two went to preschool. They both started at three years old until they were, I think he went all the way until seventh grade. My son who went from middle school to graduation, he had some of the same struggles as his brothers, but he was way more into sports and stuff and I heard about him and the people in the school really carried him to graduation." In general, Colleen reported that her child who was at Tribal School during middle school and high school had more support than his siblings who attended public schools.

Native Identity in K-12 Schools

Colleen shared that she did not have a lot of access to her culture in her education. She shared that her tribe is from Canada, and she did not have regular access to her tribal community. She did share that, "My mom and my grandma went to parties cause there was just a huge cultural disconnect. I always knew it was negative, but really didn't know anything more about it early on. My culture wasn't a big part of my upbringing at home or at school." Here, she shares that her knowledge of her tribal community had more to do with the 'party' scene and less to do

with ceremony or culture. For this reason, she perceived her identity in more of a negative light. Colleen speaks in another part of her interview about how the experiences of her sons are linked to intergenerational trauma, which also affected her own journey and identity.

In regards to school, Colleen reported that few of her peers in public school were Indigenous. She shared that her peer's perceptions of Indigenous peoples were mixed, "I think that sometimes it was a negative impression, and like the stereotypes really highly influenced and you know those opinions like what people saw on TV of it being like. Like, Indians being in the past and then sometimes it was kind of glamorizing like, "Oh that's really cool" you know. So I think it was always kind of a mixture." Here Colleen shares that her classmates had very few real-life experiences with Indigenous peoples, or at least, that they were not aware of having real-life experiences with Indigenous peoples. This led to stereotyping that Colleen would have to confront or experience. She also reported that she had zero Native teachers herself, and only recalled one teacher that her sons in public school had. This contrasts to teachers that her children had at tribal school, where she could name many.

Chad

Chad had difficult school experiences from K-12th grade. He reported that he attended 25 different schools throughout this time. This was largely due to living in poverty. He shared, "We were poor, so we had to move around a lot. By the time we got settled in, it was time to move again. I went to Chemawa and Chief Leschi too." Chad also shared experiences of his children and his mother, making his interview multi-generational. Chad shares important insights into the impact of Tribal school settings today and how they have grown from his experiences attending them as a young teenager.

General Educational Experiences

Chad's educational settings changed often, culminating in a total of 25 schools attended from kindergarten through twelfth grade. He often just got settled in before moving again. He struggled to find community in schools and often got into conflicts. "So what I remember every time I change schools, I was welcomed. For two weeks. I've always expressed who I am, and that would get me in fights a lot, honestly. In public school, my peers believed a lot of stereotypes, that we live on welfare, we get free government serial type, that kind of thing. In tribal school, because I was lighter skinned, I'd get in a lot of fights for looking too white. That's what I remember mostly, fighting a lot." Here Chad shares about the complexities of living as a person of color. He struggled to find acceptance in either public or tribal school settings. This resulted in conflict that ultimately resulted in fights, causing his removal from school, and disrupting his education.

Chad shared that he was a student enrolled in Special Education, with an Individual Education Plan. He was also an unaccompanied minor, meaning that he was able to make educational decisions for himself. This did provide some voice for him in his education, " I had an IEP, so whatever I asked for, I got. If it worked, I kept it, if not, then not. That's the structure I learned really, because when I did well things went well, and on my bad days, because I screwed up, things wouldn't be good. I'm very open about those times with them [his kids]." In this response, Chada shows that his homelife lacked a lot of structure. He didn't have an environment at home with set consequences and consistency. This was an important theme from this interview. When asked about supports and structure in his school experience, Chad shared, "You know, I think they tried. It was so screwed up at home and everywhere else that it didn't really work for me at school, but I think they tried. I don't think there was much they could have done. They just let me be if I wan't causing any major problems." This mirrors some of Colleen's

interview, where they shared about the low expectations schools held for her. Chad struggled in school and did not have any external supports. The school responded by allowing him to do what he would like, as long as it it didn't disrupt the school environment. He later shared, "I truly believe kids want structure they need structure they don't realize it, but I think the earlier you can start it the better it is. I didn't have structure at home home in a good way. I don't know if there was any structure that I could have had that would have gotten to me. It was too late at that point." Here, Chad shares that he does know that all kids benefit from structure, but by middle school and high school he felt it was too late for him to suddenly have structures introduced. He rebelled against structure and had little accountability outside of school. He advocates for the importance of structure beginning with infancy. He shares, " Like for example, my granddaughter just turned one. We were on vacation and she hit her auntie and she hit her dad. She went to hit me, but I said, "No. You don't hit me." She stopped. I said, " You don't hit me." She knew by the way I looked at her that I'm serious when I speak it, but I can also be very loving. I am not their friend. I'm grandpa, I'm your teacher. I don't care about this one moment right here. I care about this moment way over here. I will not be here forever. I need to know if you're OK." Providing the structure that he lacked growing up is important for Chad. He does this for his own children as well as his grandchildren.

Chad also shares that he was often frustrated in school by the lack of rigor and the prioritization of following expectations rather than experience. He shares, for example, "The way you guys do it now is so different compared to how we did it back then. Like for math, they wanted to see how you got your answers. My way, how I got the answers was in my head, I guesstimate everything. That's how I do it. So I would say, "Tell me I'm wrong!" They would say, it isn't wrong, but you can't get credit for it. We need to see how you did it. I always

thought that was strange too. How, at a Native school, we focused so much on having everything written, when historically, we wouldn't have written things down. We had an oral tradition." Chad was a bright student with a high IQ, but wasn't able to explore or make decisions in his learning - what he studied, how he showed his learning, or how he engaged in the content. He shares here an understanding of the conformity to public school models that can limit opportunities for Native students. When asked about how more choice would have affected him as a student, Chad shared that he believes that choice would have made a big difference for him. It could have helped keep him engaged and involved in his learning, especially when his education was a choice for him.

Tribal School Settings

Chief Leschi. Chad spent time in several tribal schools. At Chief Leschi, he recalls staff trying to get him involved in school and making attempts to hold him accountable and teach him the value of following expectations and engaging in a positive way. One story he shared, "I remember one time, for the basketball team, Mike William was the basketball coach. I didn't make the team. Back then everyone made the team, but I didn't make it on the team. I asked Mike Williams about it and he said, "Look man. What are you acting up for? I know you. I know you know how to behave in school, but you won't do it. Behave for two weeks and I'll put you back on the team. So that tells you how I behaved at school." This shows that Chad struggled to follow appropriate behavior expectations in school, but it also shows attempts by staff to hold Chad to a higher expectation than he held for himself.

Chad also shared that he enjoyed the social aspect of Chief Leschi, but that he was never really challenged academically, "I enjoyed the socialization of school. Chief Leschi wasn't challenging back then. It was very easy. I did the work fast or just did not do it at all. That free

time in the end, led to trouble. They did have special education back then. That was for behavior. I was very intelligent. When I first took an IQ test, I scored a 161 or165, so I was very,very intelligent. I just chose not to do the work." Here, Chad shows us that he was capable of more. Without support or accountability at home, he struggled to push himself beyond the minimum expectation, but he also was never challenged and often bored, leading him to opt out of work and never reach his potential in his K-12 education.

Chemawa. Chad also attended Chemawa, a boarding school that serves Native students. He arrived at Chemawa at a time when he had nowhere else to go. "My mom, she got into trouble and I was there for two years. I went there just to survive. I remember I wrote a letter to them saying that I didn't have anywhere else to go. That's how I got in." In this sense, Chemawa was important because it provided a home when no other home was available to Chad, but it did not provide much else. He shared, "Chemawa was a school where they just were there to take care of you. That was it. It was like a little city for teenagers to go around to get in trouble because you were out the door at 7:30 and then went to school, which got out at 3:30 and we had to be back by 9. That's all they cared about. That you left at 7:30 and were back by curfew." Despite this, Chad was able to connect with other Native peers who were able to provide support for him. He shared, "The first night, I remember I was put in a room by myself, and I remember walking in and I looked up, there's a picture on the wall, and it's Ramona Bennett's entire family! It was one of her children. He's how I got through it there. We were the same size, and he gave me clothes." In this way, Chemawa may not have provided academic support, structure, guidance or resources for Chad, but it did provide access to a community in which Chad could connect.

Experience of Chad's Children

Chad has sent his children to public school, private school, and tribal school. Each of his children are different and have had different experiences in each setting. He described his children in general, " I got three different kids here, but I have had four total go to school. They were all different. One daughter is happy to sit in class, get it done, and get out of school. My son gets along with everybody, does his work, and his teachers never have a negative thing to say about him. And my younger daughter, she is smart and she just isn't as confident." Chad is extremely invested in his children and values their education. His role as a father is important to him because he struggled as a youth without a father. He describes his fatherhood in the interview. "I say, I'm a T.V. dad. What I mean by that is everything for dad that I saw, that I wanted, I am that for my kids." Fatherhood for him means that he sets high expectations for his children, but he also listens to them and advocates fiercely for their well-being.

Chad has recently re-enrolled his children at Chief Leschi Schools. In regards to that experience, he shares, "My experience here has been very supportive to them and is really bringing up personalities. I don't think they would have come out if they had gone somewhere else." In general, he feels that Chief Leschi is a home for his students. It offers a rare opportunity for them to bring their entire selves into a space. They are able to connect with their community and freely be themselves. When asked if he feels welcome in the schools his children have attended, Chad reported that he always feels welcome anywhere he goes. He makes sure that he tells staff from the beginning that he is serious about education, and that it isn't really about him, but his children. In regards to Tribal School, however, he feels more welcome than in public school because it is the school that serves his community, " I feel very welcome here, where everyone calls me Uncle, but I always make myself welcome wherever we are. I make sure people know that I am here, and I am serious about my kids. I will hold them accountable if the

school is right, but I will also support my kids if they are right. When Amy was here, I would come in and say, “Get Amy in this room right now.” Because there was a lot of bullying here and I wanted it addressed.” He also shared more details about the impact that the school today has had on his own children, and how it is different today than it was 25 years ago, “When I went to Leschi, we knew general things about culture, like to respect elders and things like that, but we didn’t have a lot because our longhouses were burned and things. It wasn’t like it is today. Today, this school feels like home. I think being able to know who they are has a lot to do with my daughter and son’s behavior. They know how to be helpful. And my youngest too. She’s also a young and fiery personality so I think it’s yeah they have it. I think it helps them center here at Leschi. My son says he's home when he’s here. When he said he was coming back, he said, “I’m going home.” I was thinking about it the other day, and he is having one heck of a high school experience. ASB president your Junior year, a football player also.” Today, the tribal school that Chad’s children attend offers more opportunity, rigor, and cultural connections than it did 25 years ago when Chad attended. Before re-enrolling his children, he had multiple meetings with administrators to ensure that his children would have opportunities he didn't see at the school when they were younger or when he attended as a youth.

Intergenerational Trauma

As an Native youth, Chad felt that there was a need to be strong and be able to protect oneself and one another, “We were all raised to the 80’s and 90s. We knew we had to take care of each other, because if we didn’t look out for each other, who would? I got into trouble.” He shared more insights that may have led to this dynamic. He shared, “My mom had a really hard time. Her parents were alcoholics, so she was an alcoholic. I always say my mom was a good mom, but she’s an awesome grandma! Anyone that knows my mom today would not recognize

my mom from a teenager. She had me young. I love her, my mom, but she was young and she struggled. She gave me to children services when I was 12 years old and that was it. I was jailed for two years because they didn't have a foster home for me, so I would go to the jail and then off to school, and then at 16 I was emancipated." The trauma that his mother was healing from and his own traumatic experiences also affected his education. It was difficult for the school to hold him accountable when he was his own parent. He also had responsibility for raising his younger sibling as well. While his mother found her path to healing after she had her own children, Chad considered himself lucky to find his identity and culture before he started his journey as a parent. He shared, "I was lucky. By the time I had kids, I had all that partying out of me. I had all that stuff behind me. I was ready to make that next jump, and it was very easy for me too. When I was younger, in my twenties, I got married, just so I could show the world that I had changed. There were a couple other reasons that I won't mention, but the main reason was to show that I was different. It didn't work out. When I had kids, I was really ready to jump in, and you really see that in my children. I was blessed to find a canoe journey and the smokehouse in my twenties. I found them in life prior to having children, well, I didn't have biological children until I was 30 to 31, and it was a blessing. If I'd had my kids early, it would have been different. So, I was able to give them to them very early." Chad's mother had to do her own healing and had her own healing journey. Chad had his own healing journey but was able to complete some of that journey before he became a parent, and has been able to invest in his children and provide stability and safety for them that he never had. At times when reflecting on these opportunities he was able to build for his children, Chad became emotional. It has been a life's work for him to show his children what is possible for them.

Native Identity in K-12 Schools

Chad also shared about Native Identity in K-12 schools. He shared that back when he was in school attitudes about Indigenous identity were different than today, “Nowadays, everybody wants to be Indian, but undertones are still there, it’s just not as out in the open because it’s not okay to be racist today, although I guess it is now again, but when the kids were little, it wasn’t.” He acknowledges in his interview that attitudes about race are different today than they were years ago, but that his children have still experienced some of the racism that he experienced as a child, it just hasn’t been as overt. In regards to access to culture in tribal school, at Chief Leschi, he shared, “ I don’t remember. It was different back then. We had Cantrell’s class and we had circle each day. It’s almost like we were just starting to remember ourselves. We didn’t have Culture to really learn.” He shared in another section of his interview that because of the history of colonization in the area, the Puyallup tribe, along with many other local tribes, had lost community knowledge about Cultural practices and traditions. He shared generally about how there was a focus on pan indianism, and community revival of powwows, for example, but there wasn’t a lot to share about local Coast Salish culture of the Lower Puget Sound. That is why it was so powerful for him to find Canoe Journey. He shared that when he saw the canoes on the water, it just felt like home. He knew it was his from the beginning. So while he had Native teachers and access to some Native cultural experiences at Chief Leschi, it didn’t provide the deeper context and experience that is available today.

In public school, Chad did not have much access to Native teachers. He did have some access in tribal schools he attended, but did not feel that it made a significant difference for him, “I think that Native teachers have to face so much already to be a teacher and they do not want to seem biased or like they are favoring Native kids, or baby them.” He felt that, in general, the Native teachers were harder on Native students than non-Native students. In general, he did not

feel that there was a lot of opportunity for him to access his culture, even when he had Native teachers, because he grew up at a time when culture was lost to a lot of families.

Lisa

Lisa's interview stood out as different to the other respondents. Lisa's educational experience was exclusively in public schools, though some of her time was spent in public schools on the reservation. Her parents were very involved and supportive of her education, attending her school events. Her parents and Lisa herself have felt generally welcome at these schools and were very involved. Lisa also had unique experiences as a student in another state, and her daughter attended a school with a predominately black student demographic, which is different from experiences of the other two respondents.

General Educational Experience

Lisa attended schools in Maryland and in Washington. She went to preschool and kindergarten on the reservation, and then transferred to an off reservation school. In general, Lisa's educational experience was very positive. She had a small group of staff who were really invested in her and cared a lot about what she did. Lisa is the oldest of six kids, and was seen as a role model for her siblings. She was very invested in her education for this reason, because she wanted to show her younger siblings how to succeed in school. She shared, "I loved school…I am the oldest of six kids, so I kind of had the expectation to be the role model in a lot of ways…for me, it was making sure that I was doing positive things to show my siblings…I had a very positive time in school."

Lisa was very supported by her parents in school, and reported that they felt very comfortable in the school when she was growing up. She also reported that her own child goes to

the same school she attended, and that some of the teachers are even the same. Lisa felt that her educators could have better supported her by learning more about her as an individual, especially her identity as a Native woman. She shared, “I think in retrospect for me, it would’ve been that not a lot of them really took the time to get to know me, or that side of me [Native identity]. Since stepping into my role as education director, a few of them didn’t even realize that this was a part of my identity. I think having conversations with me and opportunities that exist out there would’ve been really beneficial to me and probably more engagement with culture. Just having more interaction with the tribe and having more open dialogue.” This is something that Lisa takes on now as an educational leader for her tribe. She works to bridge this gap so that students today feel more supported.

In regards to her educational experience, Lisa shared that they really did not have much choice or voice in their learning when she was growing up. She shared, “Not, I mean, outside of the standard curriculum in middle school high school. No, it really wasn’t until college that I actually got to choose where I was going to go in my path. I started off going to school for college and I have switched to general history and then I have a masters. I think it definitely would’ve helped knowing what options are out there to explore different, you know, ideas, topics, and subjects. It would’ve really been nice. Our school is very small. We had like one AP class. The only alternative language art was Spanish outside of your English. So it was just very small.” Due to the limited size of Lisa’s school, few options for courses were available to her. She also was not able to have a voice in how she learned or what she learned in her classroom settings.

Native Identity in K-12th Grade Settings. Lisa shared that she did not have much opportunity to learn about Native culture in her off reservation school experience, “I would say

for me, a few of us that went off reservation kind of had little, very isolated culture. It wasn't a huge part of the day to day at school for me. I think it was just because I live on the reservation. I said every day for myself as I got older there were definitely times where I noticed in the off reservations schools, where I'd have to explain myself kind of a lot or educate. I would have to explain or justify." In her schools, she was one of only a few tribal members who attended the public schools off reservation. Because of this, her peers had very little experience with Indigenous students, but she still had mostly positive experiences where she felt mostly included and supported. She shared, "Overall, I would say I had a fairly positive experience. I didn't really experience a lot of microaggressions or a ton of it anyways. There were definitely remarks made or questions, but I was able to be successful, because my mom was able to come in through the situation." Lisa shared, for example, times when she had to combat negative stereotypes, but because she could lean on her mother, who was able to be there for her, she was able to successfully navigate these situations.

Even though she did not have many negative experiences, Lisa shared that she did not often get to explore Native identity while she was in school. She shared that, "...sometimes it would come up, just in passing, especially like in Washington. It wasn't very direct …wouldn't even really ask me. It really wasn't until college that those conversations were a lot more open." Because she attended school off the reservation, she had very few opportunities to discuss her cultural identity or see it modeled in the classroom. When Lisa was in Washington state, she had a lot more family and friends that were Native around her. Because she was away during high school and middle school, she missed out on this being part of her educational experience during these years. She shared that most people that she encountered in public school off of the reservation had very little background with Indigenous people or history. She shared an example

of how this affected her in school. “In high school, I don’t know that they knew enough to really have an opinion. I think that’s kind of where some Russian immigrants would come in sometimes and say things like, they would call me chieftain princess and things like that and I would pause and say, ‘You know that is really inappropriate.’ I would say, ‘here is how I feel about that’ and I would try to correct them in situations where I felt comfortable. Sometimes I did not speak up when I should have. I really believe that each encounter like that takes a piece of yourself. I think a lot of my friends and peers in high school didn’t know enough about Native peoples or the reservation, or Quinault, when we were three minutes away from the reservation. I don’t think they had opinions, and in the few times they would engage, it was negative.” Despite having a generally positive experience in education, Lisa had to correct peers often about Indigenous peoples and how to appropriately speak about her community. I wonder how these interactions affected Lisa socially and if it limited opportunities to engage with others. Lisa also shared that she did not have Native teacher, even in college.

Lisa’s daughter, however, mostly grew up in Maryland. She was one of very few Native students in a school that served a predominately black student body. This was a unique experience for her daughter. Lisa shared, “ She [her daughter] experienced some strange, like lateral oppression. Yeah they were telling her, no she’s not, ‘you’re not brown you’re white.’” Lisa shared that it was difficult, because, “You know one Native American person over there.” Lisa expressed that being away from the west coast, it was difficult to find and build a Native community around her family. Since returning home, it has been easier to find people who understand the Indigenous experience, “...coming back home I would say it’s definitely been a lot more positive. Like her teachers have been very open to having dialogue with her and they had dialogue with me, her school does a good job of making sure that culture is part of their

conversations and they follow the STI curriculum and I am the education manager. So it's been a lot more positive for her." Due to connections to her tribal community, her daughter is able to obtain a more culturally sustaining educational experience. In fact, Lisa shared that, "My daughter, like I said she experiences a whole other kind of climate. They really communicated with us and were really open to dialogue. I know last year her teacher asked for a presentation to come in and actually talk with the kids. You know, actually see that Native people are still here. I think that's really the biggest thing so I would say it's been a positive experience." This is very different from what Lisa was able to access in her own K-12th grade journey.

Analysis of Artifacts

Two of the three interviews showed that the caregivers of Indigenous youth experienced difficulty in the education system and often did not feel fully welcome or accepted by peers. Interview One and Interview Two also both expressed the difficulty of their childhood, and having a home in which love was not often expressed and parents did not often check in or support their education. This aligns with observations from other interviews of children of boarding school survivors. "Teresa said when she was growing up, her mother did not express love to her. Her mother did not touch her or ever tell her that she loved her (Kivalahula-Uddin, 2018, pg 84)." The third interview stood out as different from the other two. In interview three, the respondent indicated feeling loved and valued by their parents. Their parents were actively involved in their education. They reported feeling accepted in school by peers and teachers. All three respondents indicated some level of overt racism in schools, the scope and context of these experiences varied significantly by each respondent. Each respondent indicated that they had at least some college experience and had earned either a GED or diploma. In reaching this level of education, each respondent is a manifestation of resilience in facing racism and school systems

that did not fully meet their needs. None of the three respondents indicated having many Native educators while attending public schools, and did not see themselves represented in public school settings.

Portraiture Centered Data Analysis

The data analysis methods for this research project uses categorical data taken from a survey to find trends showing if caregivers of Native youth felt that Universal Design for Learning strategies were supportive of their students' learning and their cultural identities. The research project also analyzed interviews through a portraiture and narrative method to provide a deeper context to the data provided in the survey. Smith (2018, p. 29) says, “For those who want to live in a deeply sacred and intimate relationship to Land must understand that … coming to an understanding of the stories and knowledges embedded in those lands, a conscious choosing to live in intimate, sacred, and stories relationships with those land.” To separate the person from their story, to cut it up in little pieces for analysis, removes part of its complexity. It makes it less whole and pulls a false context. The educational experiences of those who were interviewed are part of the Land on which they occurred and part of the person who shared their story. Smith later says, “an acknowledgement of the ways one is implicated in the networks and relations of power that comprise the tangled colonial history of the lands one is upon (2018, p. 29).” To separate the person or Land from its story would be a reinforcement of colonialism in research and a false narrative, preventing us from understanding the full complexities of their experiences. For this reason, a narrative analysis and portraiture analysis were the most appropriate data analysis models for this research.

Chapter 6: Survey Analysis

The analysis of the interviews and the survey data both show that the caregivers of Native youth overwhelmingly found Universal Design for Learning practices to be supportive of their child's learning and cultural identities. The survey found that very few of the 258 respondents disagreed with a Universal Design for Learning approach. In the interviews, no respondent shared that they had access to choice in the classroom in regards to what they learned, how they learned, or how they showed mastery of their learning. Each interview respondent shared that their experience in public schools was predominately based on non-Native identities and that they saw their cultures only minimally reflected in schools, and not usually in a positive way.

Survey Analysis and Finding

The survey collected 258 respondents. These responses came in a very short period of time. All 258 respondents indicated that they were caregivers of Indigenous youth. The survey showed an overwhelming amount of support for Universal Design for Learning, as well as a high number of caregivers who indicated their children were at grade level in reading and math. Most respondents also shared that they had experienced some college. For each individual component of Universal Design for Learning explored in this survey, caregivers reported that they believed it would be helpful for their child's learning.

Respondent Characteristics

Figure 3

Percentage of Respondent from Various Ages

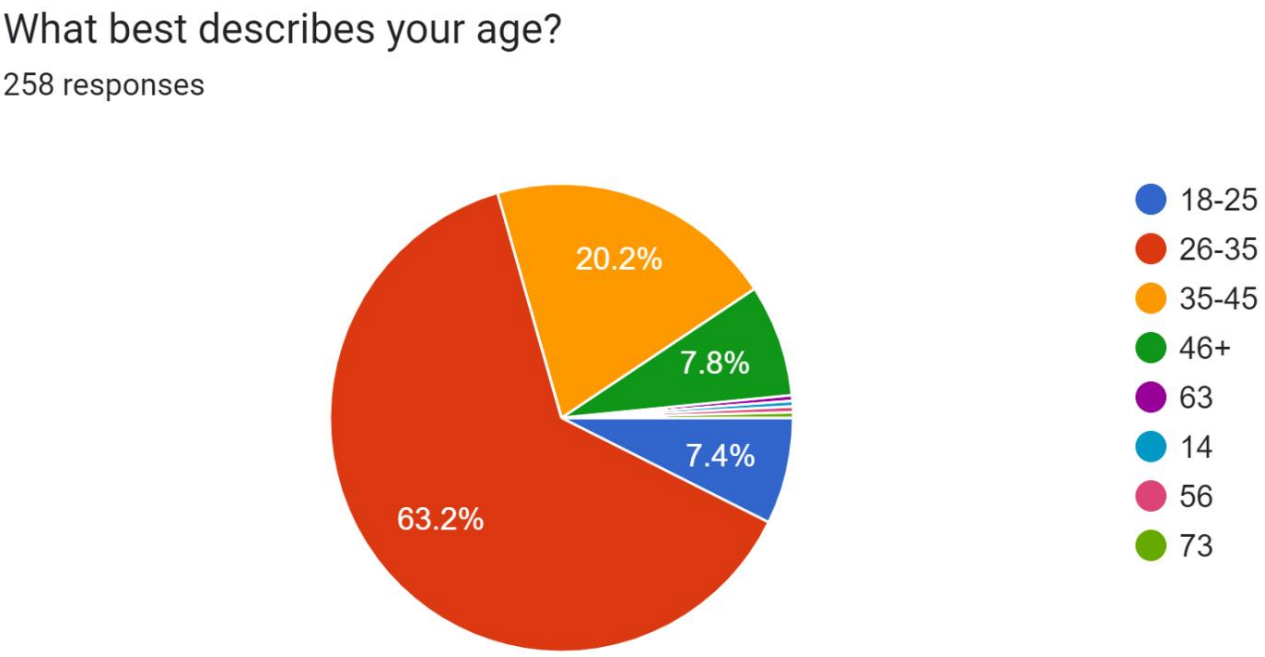


Figure 4

Percentages of Respondents with Various Education Levels

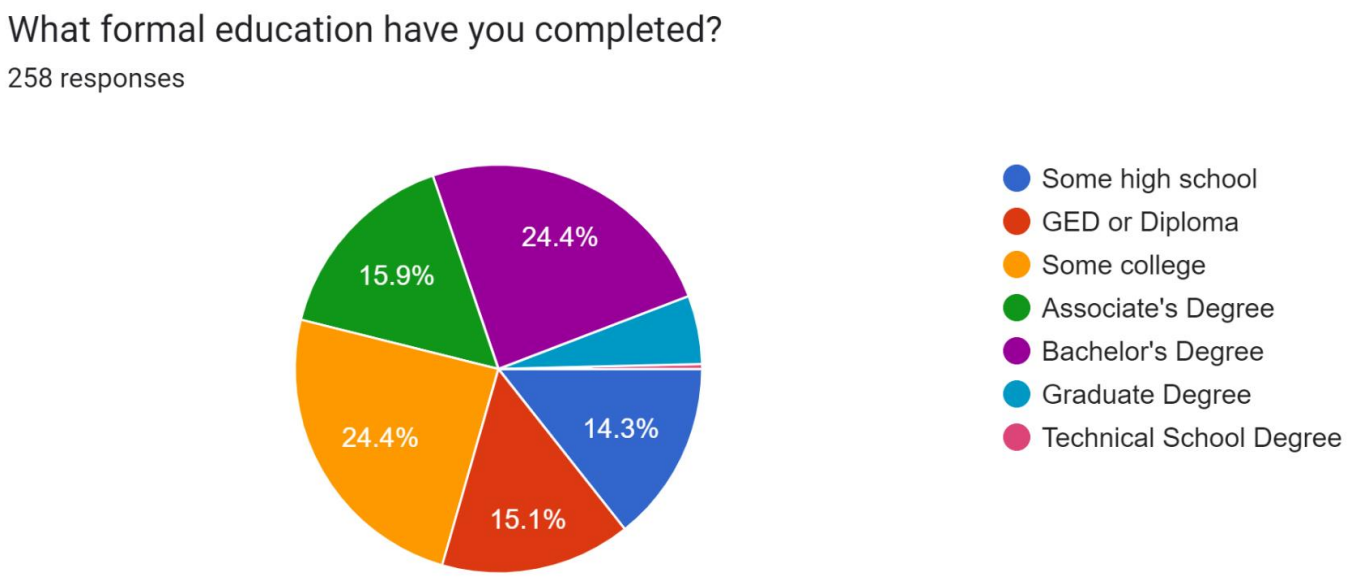
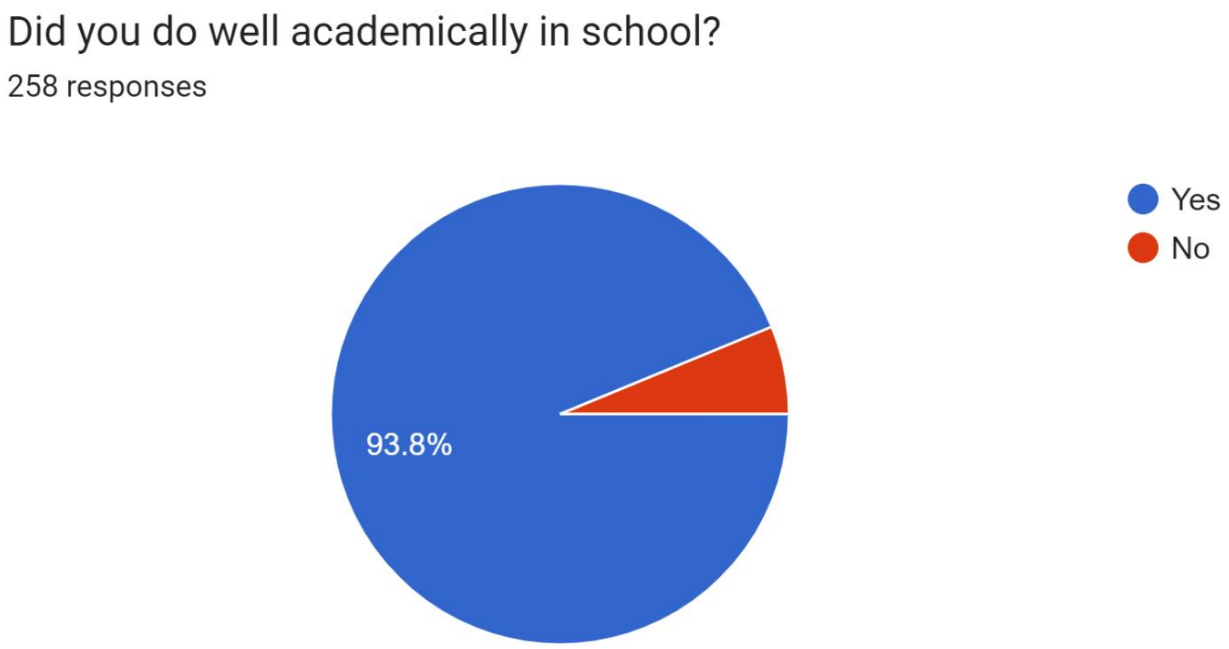


Figure 5

Percentage of Survey Respondents who Identified as Performing Well in School



For the purposes of this study, parents and caregivers of Indigenous youth were asked to complete a survey that required approximately twenty minutes to complete. The survey had 258 responses. Caregivers all indicated that they had an Indigenous-identifying child enrolled in kindergarten-12th grade. 223 respondents indicated that they had a child enrolled in primary grades. 171 indicated that their child was in late elementary school. 168 indicated that they had a child enrolled in middle school, and 155 indicated that they had a high school aged youth.

Interestingly, when answering questions about the Indigenous identity of our youth, four parents indicated that their child was not Indigenous, despite 100% of respondents indicating that they had an Indigenous-identifying child. 63% of parents indicated that they were between the ages of 26 and 35 years old. Eleven of the respondents indicated that they were not Indigenous, with one parent indicating that they had adopted their child. Most of the caregivers who responded to the survey had at least some college experience, with 5% holding graduate degrees. Only 30% had less than "some college," and 14% had attended "some high school" without achieving a degree. These educational statistics do not align with national averages for Indigenous people, and this may skew some of the data for this study.

Perceptions of Education

Figure 6

Percent of Survey Respondents who Believe that their Child's School Meets their Social Emotional Needs

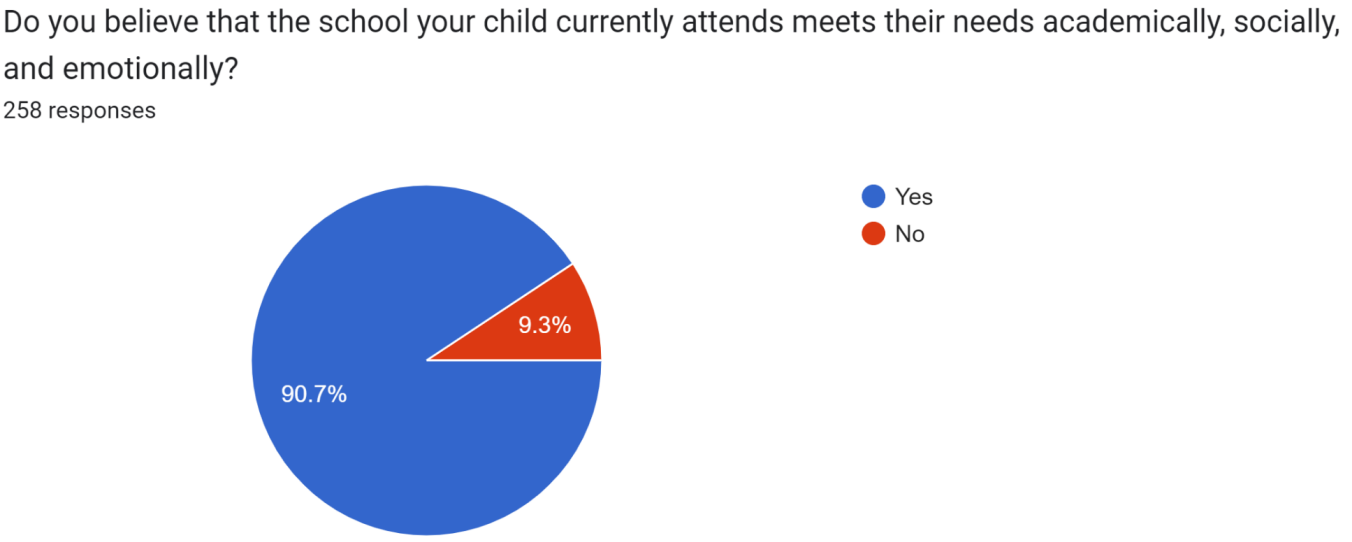


Figure 7

Percent of Survey Respondents who Identify their Child as Proficient in Reading and Writing

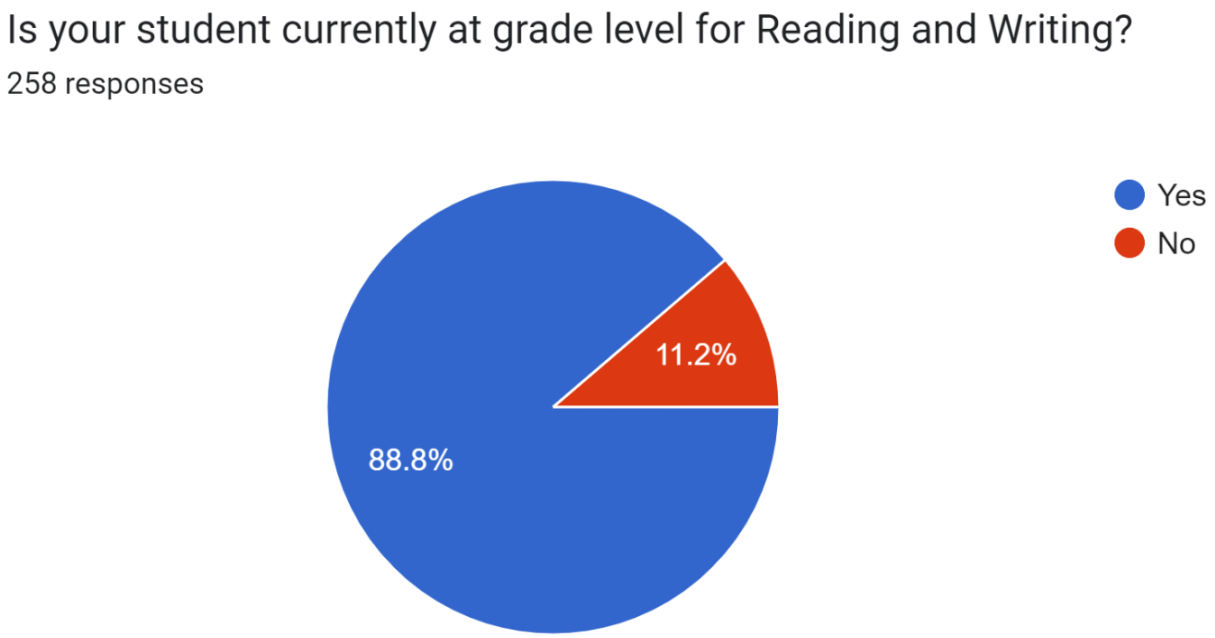
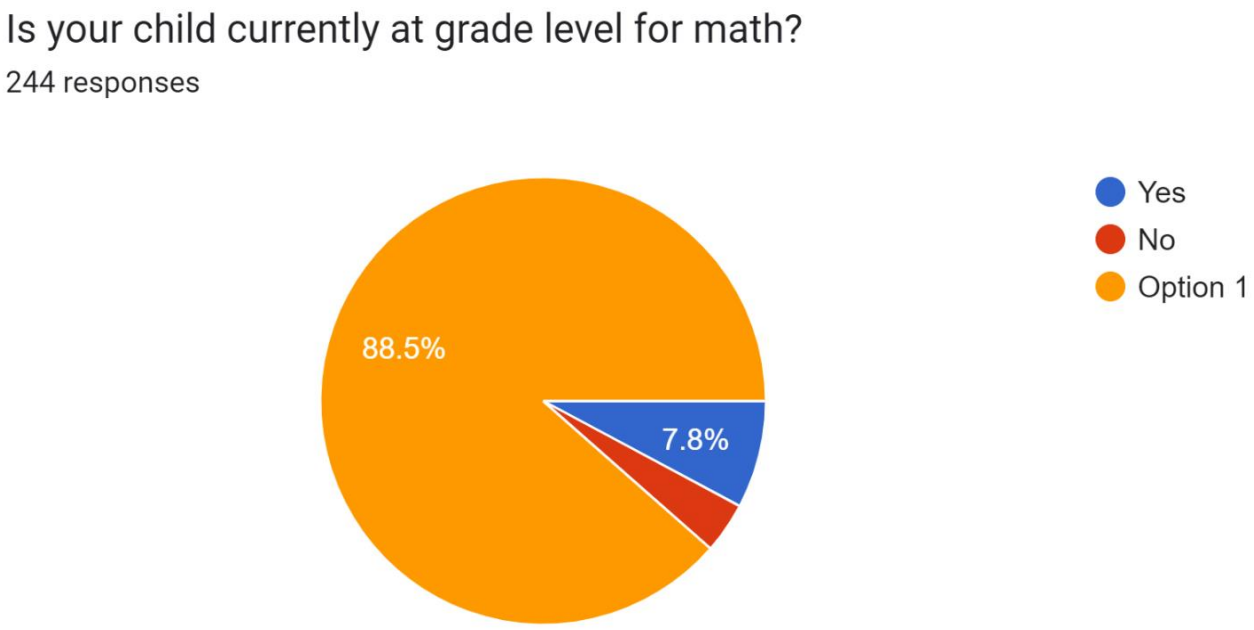


Figure 8

Percentage of Survey Respondents who Identify their Child as Proficient in Math

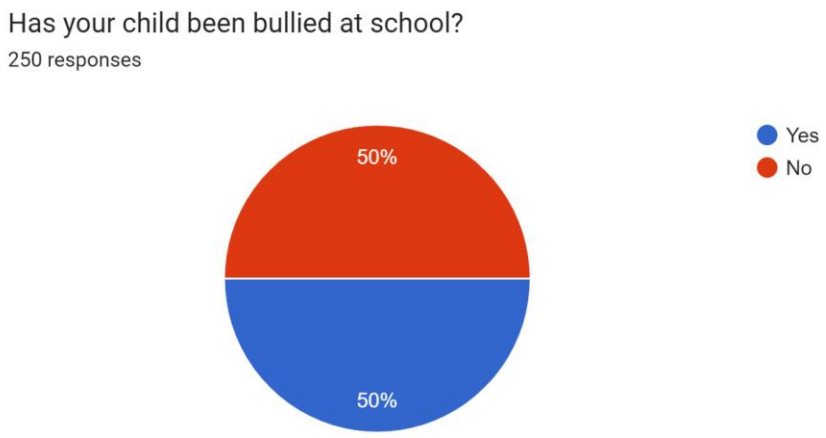


Most caregivers responded that their child received a quality education that met the needs of their child. They also reported that their children were overwhelming at grade level for math and ELA. There was originally a typo on this question for math, but the answers that asked for further insight into what schools could do to better support students in math indicated that most students were, according to their caregivers, proficient or close to proficiency in math. The data from the survey showed that most parents indicated that their children were proficient in school.

This does not align with national statistics. This could be because the survey was completed by families whose children had more success in academics than the national average for Indigenous youth, or it could represent a lack of understanding of parents of their own child's proficiency data. In terms of social skills, parents overwhelmingly reported that their child had positive relationships with peers and had close friendships with peers. Interestingly, about half of all parents reported bullying at school.

Figure 9

Percentage of Survey Respondents who Identify their Child as Experiencing Bullying



Parents/caregivers also indicated that they generally had positive school experiences and feel welcomed at their child's schools today. This included positive social interactions with peers and also that they felt positively about school when they attended as children themselves. There was an indication that most did very well academically as well. This does not align with the experiences of many Native families that I serve. One possible bias in this data is that many respondents had higher levels of education, skewing the results towards a positive feeling

towards education. This could also influence student outcomes, and may influence the data around their understanding of Universal Design for Learning.

Universal Design for Learning

Figure 10

Percent of Survey Respondents who Identify Universal Design for Learning Engagement Practices as Supportive of their Families Values

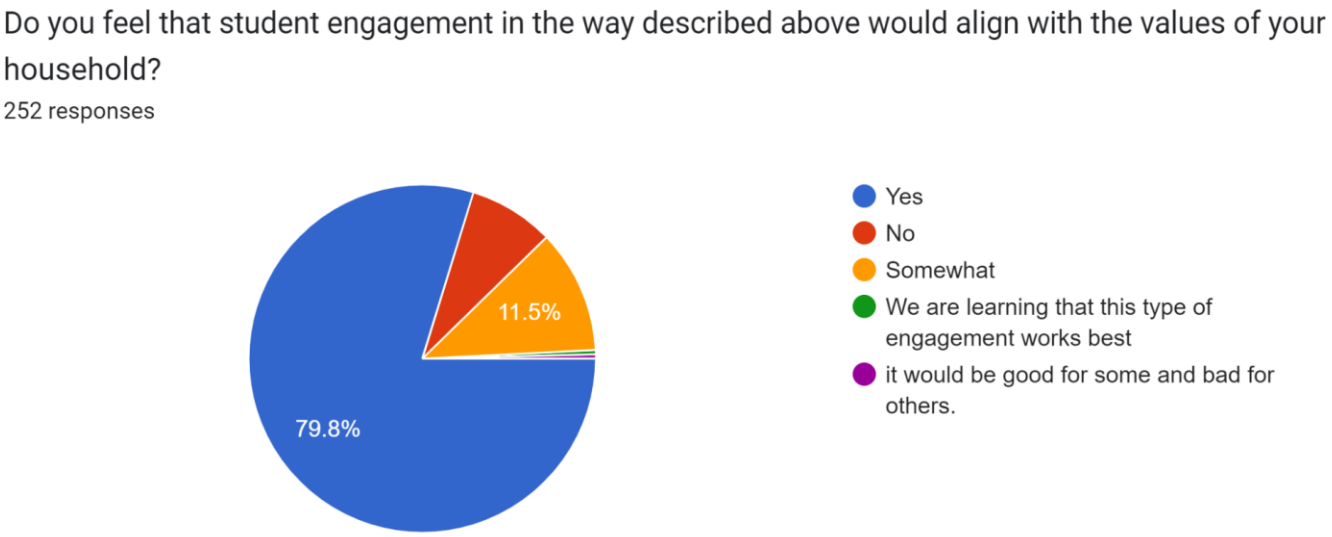


Figure 11

Percent of Survey Respondents who Identify Universal Design for Learning Engagement as Supportive of their Family's Culture

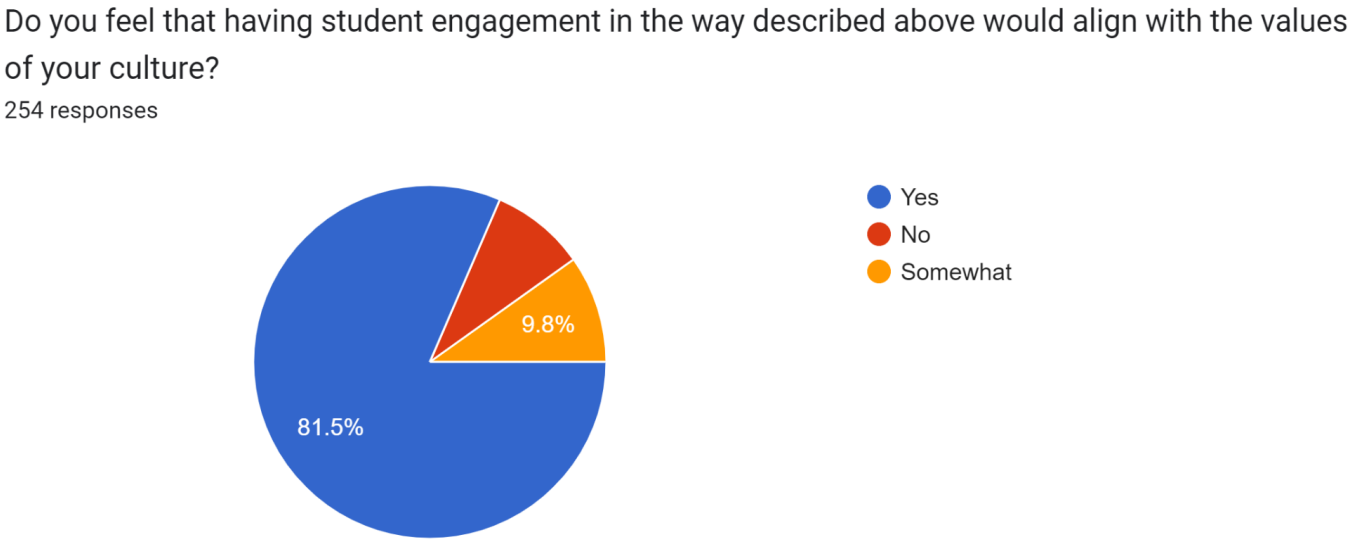


Figure 12

Percentage of Survey Respondents who Identify Universal Design for Learning Practices for Multiple Means of Representation as Supportive of their Child's Household Values

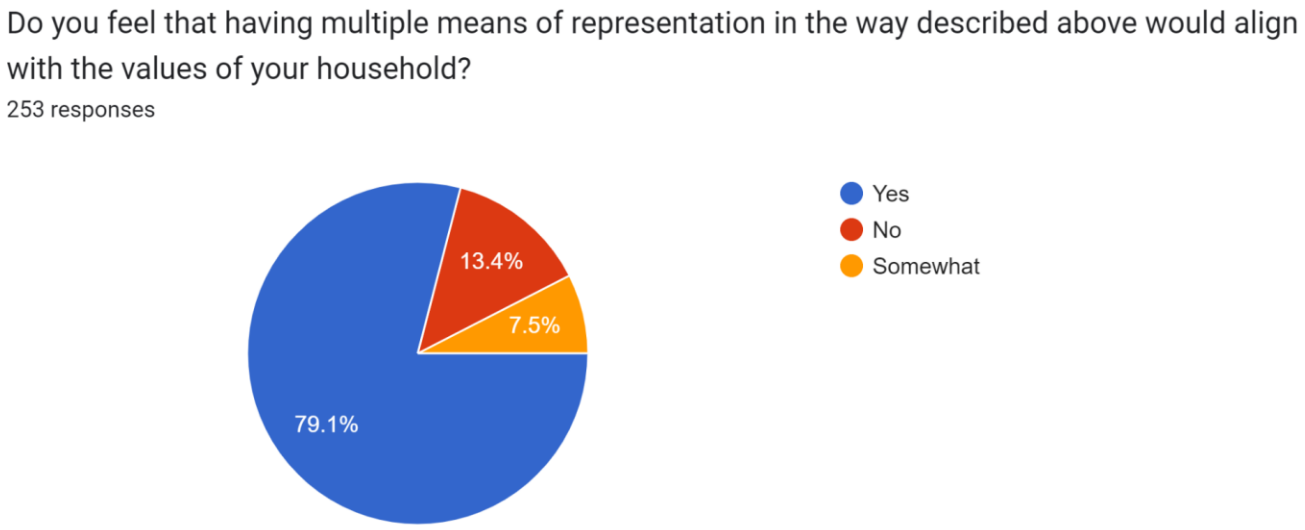
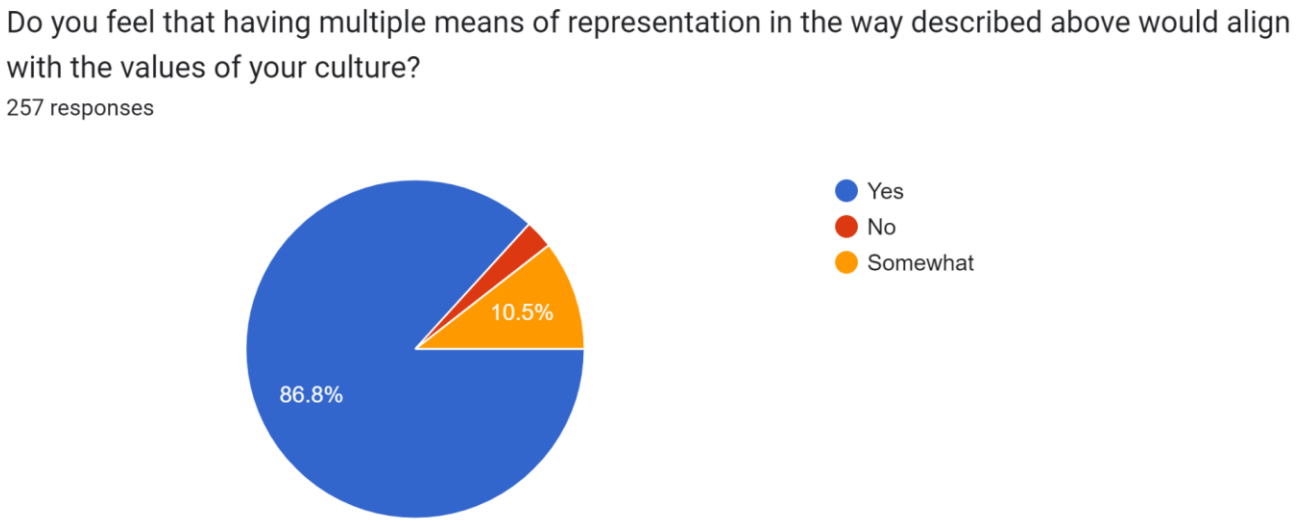


Figure 13

Percentage of Survey Respondents who Identify Universal Design for Learning Practices for Multiple Means of Representation as Supportive of their Family's Culture



For Engagement, respondents reported that having voice in classroom rules and consequences would be helpful for students to find success in classrooms. They also felt that their child would learn best if they had the opportunity to work collaboratively with peers. They also overwhelmingly indicated that their child would learn best if they had the opportunity to set their own individual goals for academics and behavior. In fact, for all choice based questioning, parents/caregivers indicated that their children would learn best if they were allowed to have choice or voice in areas such as activity type and the sorts of tools used to complete the lesson. This also included the choice of challenge level for students. 80% of respondents indicated that the Engagement section of this survey aligned with their personal household values. Similarly,

there was a feeling that these strategies also aligned to their cultural values as Indigenous people. Based on these responses, this is one aspect of Universal Design for Learning that may be worth exploring for Indigenous students and communities. For Representation, there was an overwhelming indication that families felt these strategies would best support their students. They also felt that these strategies aligned to the values of their families and their culture. The data was even more skewed towards support of this strategy than that of Engagement, with 86% of families agreeing that it aligned with their cultural values. These data points also indicate that there may be a reason to continue exploring Universal Design for Learning as a positive support for Indigenous students. Action and Expression results were similar, with families indicating that their child would learn best by employing these strategies. Overall, the data showed that Universal Design for Learning could be a support for Indigenous students.

Interview Analysis

Data from the survey was interpreted from pie charts and bar graphs to show trends. For each respondent of the interview process, survey data could be pulled to determine education level, tribal affiliation, and other relevant contexts. To interpret the overall findings of the interviews, first interviews were reviewed for common themes and ideas through narrative and portraiture analysis model. This allowed common themes of participant interviews to be highlighted while also allowing each participant's words to be shared in a full context, as a whole person. These themes were gathered and represented in a venn diagram to identify shared and individual experiences.

This approach showed that parents whose children attended tribal school and non-tribal school settings reported that tribal school settings provided more support and connection for their children. Interview Two Respondent shared, “Today, this school feels like home. I think being

able to know who they are has a lot to do with my daughter and son's behavior. They know how to be helpful. And my youngest too… My son says he's home when he's here. When he said he was coming back, he said, "I'm going home." This mirrored a statement by the respondent in Interview One, who raised four boys, one of whom graduated. The son who graduated attended a tribal school. She compares these experiences by saying, "My kids all went to Tacoma Public schools, mostly my middle son is the only one that switched over at six grade. So, he was the only one who had those experiences. I was most grateful personally on the, on the parental side, I was most grateful for the Chief Leschi experience for him because he was provided for on a different level. Like he had smaller classroom size and the school was able to help him to work and focus on his growth as a person, versus, just, you know, test scores or handle a school's agenda." Both parents also reported the greatest exposure to identity affirming practices through their experiences in tribal school settings.

In general, there were some common experiences shared by interview respondents. No respondent who attended public schools indicated that they were able to access culturally relevant learning. They also indicated that their peers had negative impressions of Native peoples. Two of the three respondents indicated that they had found tribal school settings as more welcoming and supportive of their students. There were also common experiences between two different interview respondents that were not shared by all three. To best demonstrate these similarities and differences between interviews, a Venn Diagram was created. The diagram highlights the many commonalities across experiences of all three respondents, and raises questions as to whether these similarities would continue to be present if more interviews had been available.

Figure 14

Venn Diagram Comparing Lived Experiences Shared in Each Interview

Chapter 7: Discussion and Recommendations

Several important findings and questions come from this study. Reviewing survey responses and interviews show that parents performed better in environments in which they felt connected and welcome. Similarly, caregivers reported that elements of Universal Design for Learning that allowed students to connect to their identity or with their peers would support positive learning outcomes for their children.

Findings and Implications

This study found that most parents felt that these specific strategies of Universal Design for Learning would better support their children in the classroom. Families also felt overall that the practices outlined in the survey were also appropriate to their cultural context. The survey also indicated that the average respondent had attended at least some college, was 26-35 years old, and were either enrolled in a federally recognized tribe or a descendant from a federally recognized tribe. The survey showed that the vast majority of caregivers believed their child was on grade level for reading and math. This survey also showed that almost half of respondents felt their child had been a victim of bullying while at school, but also that their children had friends at school that they could connect to.

The survey and interviews included in this study lead to several important questions. First, do caregivers for Indigenous children in k-12th grade schools have an accurate understanding of their child's proficiency data? Did this study have a disproportionate number of respondents whose children are at grade level for reading and math? Understanding an answer to these two questions is essential to a better understanding of the data from the survey.

Another question raised through this study is the purpose and role of tribal schools in supporting Indigenous students. The stories of Colleen and Chad share the power of tribal schools in supporting their children through connection to community and culture that they could not find in other educational settings they explored. Colleen's children were non-traditional students, diagnosed with emotional-behavioral disabilities. In Tacoma Public Schools her children were pushed out gradually, and some experienced incarceration, while her son who attended tribal school from 6th-12th grade graduated with his peers, though he did not have an EBD diagnosis. In light of this, a further study could be conducted to describe the unique supports that tribal schools offer their students and to provide insights into their purpose and scope. A further question would then be, if tribal schools focus is to support Indigenous students from diverse experiences, should they be focused on graduation and proficiency data, when such a scope may encourage school leaders to exclude non-traditional students from enrollment?

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Survey respondents may have not been aware of the experiences of their youth. Further, the sample size was relatively small, at 258 respondents. Having a larger body of respondents would have provided important information and would have better ensured that anomalies would not be able to skew the data. Additionally, this survey collected data at one point in time. Survey respondents may have answered some questions differently based on their mood and circumstances occurring proximate to completing the survey. Additionally, the survey had an error on the math proficiency question. Neither Yes nor No was written as a response choice. There was one, unlabeled, box available for some of the respondents. Following this being reported to the researcher, the question was edited, but the research data was still impacted by this error.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research is needed to determine the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning in supporting culturally sustaining instruction students. The parents of this survey indicated that these practices would be supportive of their child and that these practices are also appropriate for their child's cultural identity. This means that it is now appropriate to engage in further study to determine the efficacy of Universal Design for Learning in meeting these goals. A future study would determine if implementing Universal Design for Learning strategies had a positive impact on the learning of Indigenous students in diverse settings. It would also be important to measure the identity and feelings of welcomeness and engagement throughout the implementation process. At this time, there has not been a study such as this for Indigenous communities.

Through the interview process, each of the three respondents indicated that they had experienced various degrees of discrimination and limited access to their culture or histories. They reported having minimal exposure to Native teachers outside of tribal school settings. A future study could shed further light on this by exploring how this may have affected the academic environment for Native students during this time period.

Reciprocity Statement

The goals of this project are to support the k-12th grade experience of Indigneous youth. As caregivers of Indigneous youth, this is a goal shared by the researcher and the participants in this research project. This work seeks to determine how Universal Design for Learning may provide support for Indigenous students in the k-12th grade classroom. It identifies how the approaches embedded within Universal Design for Learning align with identified components of Indigenous leadership frameworks and pedagogies. This comparison identifies tools to better

support Indigenous students in k-12 settings. It will potentially support the participating community by sharing these tools with other researchers for further study. It also models the inclusion of Indigenous caregivers into the research process. Prior to conducting research in Indigenous communities, it is important to ensure that the research project will positively impact the communities involved, and also to determine if the community agrees that this research would positively support their community. In this study, the goal was to determine if parents saw potential value in the guidelines and approaches of Universal Design for Learning. Since the responses were overwhelmingly positive, there is an indication that there should be further research in this area. By modeling the inclusion of Indigenous caregivers and community members, I am contributing to a body of research in a manner respectful to Indigneous people. By conducting my research in this way, I am providing a path to further research that continues to support my tribal community. In these ways, I hope to give back to the caregivers, as well as their children, who participated in this research project.

Researcher's Reflection

This research project changed over the course of the three years since it began. Initially, I had wanted to study the implementation of Universal Design for Learning at my current school site, Chief Leschi Schools, and share the outcomes for our students. Over time, as I reflected on the nature of this project, and I realized that it would be inappropriate to begin the research without first inquiring with families about if they saw value in this approach. I would never want to exploit my own tribal community to further myself. I wanted to approach this project with as much respect as possible for my community and the youth within it. As my work continued, I wanted to better undrestand the experiences of the caregivers who responded to this survey. As I engaged in the interview aspect of this project, I was deeply affected by the stories that were

share with me. I see great value in continuing this work by interviewing additional Indigenous caregivers to learn more about the generational stories of education for Indigneous peoples in the lower Puget Sound. It made me reflect on our path to healing and our story of resilience and survival against systemic oppression, and how that path has looked differently across generations of experiences. In the process of exploring the state of Native education today, I describe data such as the rate of Indigneous youth below grade level, the percent that are experiencing suicidal ideation, and our graduation rates. We, however, cannot be defined by this data. We have survived assaults on our communities - physical, emotional, spiritual attacks - that continue today, and yet when we look across the generations, the healing and growth of our people is undeniable.

Recommendation for Future Praxis

The results of this study show that parents and caregivers believe that their own educational experiences would have been improved if they had been given the same opportunities for representation and support as is offered in Universal Design for Learning. The study also shows that parents and caregivers also identify the instructional and leadership practices of Universal Design for Learning as supportive of their child's learning and cultural identities. Based on this, there are important recommendations for how Indigenous youth can be supported better in ethnically heterogeneous classroom settings, such as those found in public schools. Public school classrooms often serve students from diverse backgrounds and communities. Universal Design for Learning provides a framework and structure to ensure that all students have the opportunity to bring their identities, world views, and cultures with them into their educational settings. In the 2017-2018 school year, 79% of all teachers identified as white (2017, NCES). This may indicate that there is a lack of diversity in the voices leading

classrooms. If these classrooms use a traditional teacher centered leadership model, many students may never have an opportunity to participate in classrooms where their culture and worldview are represented. In a classroom environment in which the students have a voice in developing the classroom expectations, their method of engagement, and topics of study, for example, these students will have opportunities to have their identities represented in their classrooms, which is not only culturally affirming, but sustaining. Decentralizing the classroom leadership model to a more collaborative approach is more welcoming and supportive of students who are not from the same cultural group as their teachers. Moving to this model would allow Indigenous students to bring their cultural identities into school projects. For example, a student who is learning engineering standards in a second grade classroom and the project calls for them to develop a water bottle holder, and instead the students designed berry baskets could bring their culture into the classroom, without requiring all students to learn the same content. Similarly, how a teacher defines aggression may vary by cultural norms. Allowing students to define these terms communally will help avoid forced assimilation and reduce the need for non-hegemonic groups to code switch. This could have significant implications for reducing the achievement gap.

Recommendation for Policy and Practice

This research did not seek to determine the impact of Universal Design for Learning for Indigenous youth in a specific setting, and it would be premature to make policy recommendations related to Universal Design for Learning. Should future research confirm the positive outcomes this study suggests may exist for Indigenous youth, policy and practices should be implemented to ensure that Indigenous youth have access to a safe and effective education that meets their needs. This could look like requiring diversity, equity, and inclusion

training for all k-12 staff in Washington state, shifting instructional models to allow students more voice in the classroom instruction, and increasing opportunities for students to collaborate, and decentralizing the authority of the classroom from the teacher to the collective voice of the students. I would also advocate that additional state dollars should be allocated to support our Indigenous students in public education settings, based on the disparate impact of boardings schools and the resulting intergenerational trauma. Funding could be provided to support the implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training with a focus on supporting Indigenous students in k-12 settings as well as training for Universal Design for Learning for schools serving Indigenous students.

Conclusions

This study demonstrated that there was a large number of respondents who felt that Universal Design for Learning strategies were supportive of Indigenous culture. The parents who completed interviews mostly described their K-12th grade experiences as positive and welcoming settings. For one respondent, their children really struggled in school. For the other two respondents, their children did very well academically and socially in school. All respondents felt that if their schools had more opportunities for choice in their studies that they would have performed better and been more successful in their academics. Each respondent also reported that there were some racist comments made about them by peers. This may also have negatively affected their own school experience. Most of the respondents to the survey had attended some college. This demographical data would need to be compared with national averages to understand if this demographic mirrors the experience of the average Indigenous parent today. The data from the survey, however, indicates that Native American families

overwhelmingly identify Universal Design for Learning approaches as supportive of their cultures and their students as individuals.

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