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Preparing the Future, Healing the Past, & Being in the Moment with Teachers as they Indigenize the Way They Teach

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Preparing the Future, Healing the Past, & Being in the Moment with Teachers

as they Indigenize the Way They Teach

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Acknowledgments

I dedicate this work to my daughter Towana Marie Peltier who is the best thing that has ever happened to me, my family (those who are walking with me on this earth and those who have crossed over because their work was complete on this earth - - and those who are yet to be born), friends, fellow cohort sisters, faculty, co-workers, my community, my tribe and the Creator for giving me strength when I had none, and last but in no way least, to my mentor and friend Ken LaFountaine, although no longer with us – your inspiration and legacy continue to strengthen Indian Country.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education for many Native Americans is founded on the trauma of the Boarding School era, which can cause a negative attitude and mistrust of schools. Educators want to meet the needs of all their students; however, they may be nervous about trying to meet the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students because of the history of Indian Education. They do not have the skills or tools needed to repair the trust in the system for their American Indian/Alaska Native students. They may identify a need to improve their pedagogy and decolonize and need help knowing where to begin. This research study will interview participants from the first cohort of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute at the University of Washington Tacoma to identify common themes the participants experienced during the year-long institute.

Education creates knowledge, develops our political and civic goals, and systemically influences socialization and how we see ourselves and others; it determines our economic future and well-being. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Mandela, 2014). Education has been weaponized in Native American Communities. Rooted in a history of government relocation, forced separation of children and families/communities, and the stripping of cultural strengths (Native Hope, 2022). Despite education being included in most Treaties between the United States and Federally Recognized tribal nations, this promise has not been kept. Unfortunately, Native Americans have experienced insufficient educational opportunities. Native American students have disproportionately been pushed out (drop out), are taught by novice teachers (3 or fewer years of teaching experience), and attend underfunded schools; these failures have led to Native American Students achieving proficiency and graduating at the lowest rates of any other

student population (Red Road, 2023). These failures impact both K-12 educational experiences

and higher education.

Limits of this study

This study focuses on the experiences of five faculty of the twelve who participated in the

inaugural Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute from the University of Washington, Tacoma. The

backgrounds are unique to the participants, who came with their perceptions and knowledge of

decolonizing classroom spaces. Therefore, the findings are limited to the faculty who

participated in the study and cannot be applied to a larger faculty population. There is no

assumption that the strategies highlighted will work at other higher education sites or even with

cohorts participating in the following years.

Definitions

Belonging - "A sense of belonging at school means feeling a sense of acceptance, respect,

inclusion, and support in a learning environment" (Bowen, 2021).

Colonization – **"**denotes the exploitation of human beings and nonhuman worlds to build the

wealth and the privilege of the colonizers" (Mignolo 2003)

Culturally responsive teaching – "validates and makes aware the value of cultural differences in

the classroom and avoids "othering" (Morgan, 2009). May include the use of culturally relevant

examples and assessments and respectful classroom-management approaches" (Bazron et al.,

2005).

Decolonization – "challenging epistemological assumptions that are based on dominant

Eurocentric constructions of humans and nature as separate entities" (Mignolo 2011)

Historical Trauma – "conceptual framework of historical trauma that includes three successive

phases. The first phase entails the dominant culture perpetrating mass traumas on a population,

resulting in cultural, familial, societal, and economic devastation for the population. The second phase occurs when the original generation of the population responds to the trauma showing biological, societal, and psychological symptoms. The final phase is when the initial responses to trauma are conveyed to successive generations through environmental and psychological factors, prejudice, and discrimination." (Sotero 2006) "Based on the theory, Native Americans were subjected to traumas defined in specific historical losses of population, land, family, and culture. These traumas resulted in historical loss symptoms related to social-environmental and psychological functioning that continue today." (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004)

Indigenizing – "Indigenization of education is the inclusion of Indigenous thought, theory, teachings, people and pedagogy into spaces of learning." (Brule & Koleszar-Green, 2018)

Indigenous Pedagogy – "refers to the 5 R's of respect, rights, responsibility, reciprocity and relatedness as the core of an Indigenous critical pedagogy that has taught Indigenous children for millennia." (Atkinson, 2012, pp.1-2)

Land-based education – "in resurging and sustaining Indigenous life and knowledge, acts in direct contestation to settler colonialism and its drive to eliminate Indigenous life and Indigenous claims to land" (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014).

Racism – "is a form of prejudice that assumes that the members of racial categories have distinctive characteristics and that these differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others. Racism generally includes negative emotional reactions to group members, acceptance of negative stereotypes, and racial discrimination against individuals; sometimes, it leads to violence." (American Psychological Association, 2023)

Trauma – "is a kind of wound. Metaphorically, the mind can be pierced and wounded by events. The mind is flooded with a kind and degree of stimulation that is far more than it can make sense of or manage" (Garland, 2018).

I am a Citizen of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Cayuse band, and Showaway family. I am a great-grandmother, daughter, mother, grandmother, wife, friend, and educator who has dedicated over thirty years to improving the educational outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native youth and students. I purposefully include "youth" because, as a former colleague explained, so many of our American Indian/Alaska Native youth are pushed out of the educational system; (OSPI, 2022, Cross & Carman, 2021) and when we only frame our focus toward "students" we render these youth invisible.

There is a need for Data Justice as the complexities of inaccurate data on race and ethnicity collection have unintended consequences. The implications for sound and reliable data collection for race and ethnicity impact every aspect of our life and well-being; employment discrimination, housing, health, education, and incarceration rates are some of the significant areas policymakers, and researchers need to have accurate data to address disparities. Communities need to frame their identities without settler-colonial bureaucrats doing it for us.

Invisibility is problematic for American Indian/Alaska Native youth and students in several ways. Hidden identities can lead to a lack of engaging pedagogy or curriculum where we are invisible in history (Fletcher, 2010) and cause a decrease in American Indian/Alaska Native students' sense of belonging, thereby reducing a student's opportunity for success. I often tell superintendents, "When you can't see us, you're not accountable to us." Undercounting students may overlook resources and potential partnerships. In Washington state, the number of Native American/Alaska Native students in the 2020-2021 academic school year is reported as 16,460.

Federal policies require schools to record the race/ethnicity of students, and when families do not fill this information in, then someone at the school must fill this information out for them; it may be inaccurate and might be based on assumptions such as what the student looks like or the last name of the family. Also, when a child is registered in school, data is collected for ethnicity, asking if the student is Hispanic or Non-Hispanic. The Hispanic flag overrides all other categories. The next question is about Race. If an American Indian/Alaska Native student is identified as two or more races, they will not show up in the Native American count; they will remain in the two or more races category. For the 2020-2021 academic year in Washington, 26,929 American Indian/Alaska Native K-12 Students were hidden by the Hispanic Ethnicity flag in our data system. And for the two or more Races category, there were 20,949 American Indian/Alaska Native students hidden from the American Indian/Alaska Native student count. This means that instead of 64,338 American Indian/Alaska Native students being identified in Washington state (OSPI, 2021), there was an undercount of 47,878 American Indian/Alaska Native students. The result is "paper genocide." The potential funding loss for just one federal program is $9,575,600.00.

While this paper is researching a higher education Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, I hypothesize that many students of color need to prepare for the academic rigor of college courses. I based this on working in a financial aid office for five years. I saw many students of color take remedial classes, and it affected their self-esteem. They felt they were not "college material" instead of recognizing that the K-12 system was not adequately preparing them for college. Looking at the reduced funds from just one program should be enough to have all states vested in collecting accurate data. This is not unique to Washington State; collecting accurate data is a national challenge. Several State Education Agencies (SEA) and organizations I know

of, such as the Indigenous Education State Leaders Network (IESLN) Indigenous Student

Identification Project (AIR, 2023), education northwest, "Improving the Accuracy of Native

Student Identification" (education northwest, 2021) materials, and the National Congress of

American Indians, Using Science to Building Tribal Capacity for Data-Intensive Research,

(NCAI, 2023) to name just a few groups who are working on accurate identification strategies.

According to the American Indian College Fund, "invisibility is in essence the modern form of

racism used against Native Americans. This invisibility leads to a college access and completion

crisis among Native American students" (American Indian College Fund, 2023).

When American Indian/Alaska Native students are hidden in data collections, available

resources may not be obtained to mitigate the harmful impact and violence of the Boarding

School era. The mission of boarding schools can be summarized in the notorious quote, "Kill the

Indian, Save the Man" (Peterson, 2013). Assimilation was the only goal of Indian Boarding

Schools. I often hear the Boarding School narrative framed as a historical concept; even using

the term "Historical Trauma" situates the discourse as only being in the past. Yet both of my

parents attended Boarding School. Therefore, I am a product of Boarding School because their

experiences influenced how they raised me to think about formal education. Consequently, I

argue that the trauma of the Boarding School experience is a present concern and has a futures

impact yet unseen.

A common phrase utilized in mission statements in educational spaces I have worked is

"serving the underserved populations." However, it is discouraging to see the limited progress

made in the student opportunity gap for American Indian/Alaska Native students and youth. The

settler colonial impact can be seen in the 1928 independent investigation of the Indian Office by

the Brookings Institution, known as the Meriam Report, which named the deplorable state of

Indian Education and called for more child-centered, culturally appropriate education (Meriam, 1928). In 1969, a special U.S. Senate subcommittee released "Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge." This report again calls for reform of Indian Education (Senate, U. S., 1969). In 2013, "The State of Education for Native Students" unveiled no improvement in American Indian/Alaska Native student achievement (Education Trust, 2013). And finally, the "2014 Native Youth Report" states that "Native American Education is in a "State of Emergency" (Executive Office of the President, 2014).

When Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Whalen, 2016) law was passed, there were several requirements; one, in particular, was a plan for a "well-rounded" education. I asked several colleagues what they felt about that terminology. A few replied enthusiastically about how innovative that effort sounds, to which I asked, "Do you know when that term was first used?" Now, I watch enough court TV shows to know you should never ask a question you don't know the answer to, so after a long pause, I replied, "Eighty-six years ago in the 1928 Meriam Report!" Their enthusiasm waned. One leader I respected and had a good relationship with had much influence on school improvement plans and funding. I'd told him that when my great-granddaughter grows up and enrolls her children in school, I want her to look your name up and see what improvements you'd made to Indian education. He was uneasy when he replied, "Now, Mona, it is not all on me." And I said, "Oh yes, there is a lot you can do; you have much power."

I will explore how colleges can decolonize and indigenize the academy as a strategy to recruit and retain American Indian/Alaska Native youth (Minthorn, 2022). I am curious if this approach can address the dismal educational opportunity American Indian/Alaska Native youth receive, as these reports prove. Why are these reports and studies showing a need for

transformation, and yet are they ineffective catalysts for educational change (Faircloth and Tippeconnic III, 2010)?

What pedagogical shift is necessary to transform the education provided to American Indian/Alaska Native youth (Tharp, 2006)? What role can faculty play in fostering a student's sense of belonging (Gray, Hope, and Matthews, 2018)? What paradigm shifts and delivery methods need to happen to meet the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students? Where do these shifts need to begin to move from the violence of hegemonic pedagogical paradigms (Burk, 2007)? We must better prepare educators for the complexities they will encounter in the classrooms. Often, educators do not have a foundational understanding of American Indian/Alaska Native educational experiences because the accurate curriculum and histories about Indigenous people are either left out of the K-12 experience altogether or taught inconsistently (Shear, Knowles, Soden, & Castro, 2015, and Myer, 2011). The racist foundation of the Boarding School experience as a remedy to the "Indian problem" (Adams, 2020) is rarely understood. Until educational institutions intentionally teach about structural inequality, many students may not have the critical thinking skills to interpret the difference between group inequalities and individual shortcomings (Lopez, Gurin, & Nagda, 1998).

Native American Boarding Schools – created a lot of trauma and abuse, intended to assimilate our people, as the infamous statement, "Kill the Indian, Save the man" (Rich-Heape, 2008) reveals. The legacy of Boarding Schools often disenfranchises American Indian/Alaska Native students in the public school K-12 system. In 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Native Americans were pushed out at 9.6% compared to their White peers at 4.1% (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). How might this impact these students and society overall?

There is a direct correlation between high school graduation and financial

security. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with a high school

diploma make $10K more yearly than those without a diploma (Barrington,

2022).

Other consequences of not obtaining a high school diploma include a three times

higher probability of being unemployed, higher incarceration rates, (Choudhry,

2018) and young women without a high school diploma are more likely to

become single parents (Hales, 2014).

And underprepared high school students will find it challenging to navigate

higher education institutions. This paper concentrates on decolonizing and indigenizing

spaces to welcome and retain American Indian/Alaska Native students and youth. We can

only create decolonized spaces by standing with educators as they build the skills

necessary to decolonize and indigenize their classrooms. By ensuring American

Indian/Alaska Natives reach their academic goals, we are preparing for the future; by

decolonizing and indigenizing classrooms, we are facilitating the healing of the past.

I began my educational career at Shoreline Community College in 1990. Working there, I

met an Indigenous leader named Ken LaFountaine. I asked his family if I could mention him in

my dissertation, and they said yes. He was an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of

Chippewa. He was a tenured professor at Shoreline Community College for 34 years. And words

cannot convey the man I knew, who helped everyone he could and encouraged everyone

(including me) to get an education. I made him a promise I'd get this degree, and I know he is

still inspiring and his legacy will continue because when we share stories about Ken, we're

sharing how Indigenous men should live; they should have respect, have good relationships,

always find the good in others (even if you have to dig deep), fight for justice but live Peacefully, and care for others and the community, AND have a damn good sense of humor! Never take yourself too seriously. I can still hear how he'd often end class, "Any questions, comments, innuendos?" He was more than a professor, Advisor for the First Nations club, mentor, and friend; he embodied love. He taught not only in the classroom but by example. We often bought pizzas, went downtown Seattle, ate, and had community with our houseless brothers and sisters. And because of who he was and how he lived, he could call upon Mayors, college Presidents, and community leaders alike to meet on short notice to advocate on behalf of our Indigenous people, often bringing someone (like myself) to witness and learn advocacy in action. I hope every student has a "Ken" championing their success. While I only worked at Shoreline for 1/3 of my educational career, I will always consider it "home" because of the people and fond memories I hold in my heart; hands raised to you, my friend, you are missed. And will never be forgotten. Ken was decolonizing before we knew the term.

Many of my peers have retired, and I could retire too. However, my passion continues hoping I can change the educational experience my great-granddaughter who is in 6th grade and her grandchildren have compared to those my immediate family and myself have endured. Change can be accomplished by Decolonizing and Indigenizing the academy. And by Indigenizing the academy (Stein, 2018) the world she can raise her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in a post-colonial society. I hope their futures are filled with love and justice and that the dominant worldview understands the interconnectedness of bodies, minds, spirits, the land, and all living beings (Mate, 2023). In other words, a world that is healthy, healed, and more concerned with caring for one another, our earth, and all living beings so much that we change our behavior to mitigate the social-environmental problems we create (Muniz and Cruz,

2015) and the danger of capitalism and excessive material things have on indigenous societies (McCreary and Milligan, 2021). Decolonized education plays a significant role in preparing the future for my great-granddaughter and those generations who come after her.

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, too many of us are so busy surviving that we rarely have the time to recognize that we live in a racist (Wiecek, 2011) colonized society (Bacon, 2019). Racism is so rooted in school and culture that it is invisible (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Therefore, there is little understanding of the violent impacts of coloniality on our community (Beals et al., 2021). I assert we are so saturated in being colonized that we do not "see" it, as this citation exhibits,

> "There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to
> meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says,
> "Morning, boys. How's the water?" And the two young fish swim on
> for a bit, and then eventually, one of them looks over at the other and
> goes, "What the hell is water" (Wallace, 2009)?

We are inculcated by the "American Dream" myth to believe success is an individual accomplishment or personal failure (Wyatt-Nichol, 2011). Yet I challenge the current marginalization many groups face (Zembylas, 2018) due to the continued impacts of a colonized educational system that continues to reproduce class (Tichavakunda, 2019).

> "By class, I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of
> disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of
> experience and in consciousness. I emphasize that it is a *historical* phenomenon. I
> do not see class as a "structure," nor even as a "category," but as something which

happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships"

(Thompson, 2013, p.11).

Should we all desire a postcolonial society? Should we care if educational institutions decolonize or not? I maintain that we should unequivocally care, especially when we understand the impact of continued alienation of colonized institutions has on students of color, especially Indigenous students, (Minthorn and Nelson, 2018) and the hegemonic knowledge production of higher education institutions (Almeida, 2015) The danger of power and educations entanglement can be summarized in this quote, "The close and often intricate relationship between knowledge and power manifests itself as an instrument of reciprocal legitimation" (Weiler, 2001). Alarm bells should sound from all directions when we understand that the governmental branch can affect all our lives unilaterally (McCann, 1999) was educated almost entirely at two higher education institutions. I am talking about the current 2023 United States Supreme Court, whose eight out of nine justices went to either Harvard or Yale (The U.S. Supreme Court, 2023). This means that the checks and balances our democracy relies on are biased by the education and knowledge production of two institutions alone. Education must heal from the impacts of past practices and decolonize.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study gives voice to the experience of faculty participating in the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. I seek to understand how these educators experience and recognize the inherent settler-colonial foundation of higher education institutions built on systemic colonialism and assimilation (Brayboy, 2005; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). I want to consider how these faculty members felt supported as they began to decolonize and indigenize their classrooms, including examining their areas of praxis needing transformation – such as

decentering power structures. Using phenomenology, we can see the faculty's unique and shared experience at the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute (Mapp, 2008).

Research Questions

Given this political climate and push-back on discussions of race, (López, Molnar, Johnson, Patterson, Ward, & Kumashiro, 2021) what edifice facilitates the courage faculty display by their self-reflection of power and privilege? What benefits for faculty do decolonizing and indigenizing classrooms enable? What modalities of learning are conducive to decolonizing higher education spaces? Larger questions include:

1. What does decolonizing the academy look like on a micro level?

2. Are there benefits to the Institution and students by decolonizing pedagogy?

3. How can we support educators in their journey to transform their classrooms?

4. How can teachers decolonize their pedagogy to promote equal access and improve the educational outcomes of American Indian/Alaska Native students?

Significance of this study

Across both the United States and globally, there is a teacher shortage (Audrain, Weinberg, Bennett, Basile, 2022) supports to retain a quality teacher workforce should be paramount for schools (Holmes, Parker & Gibson, 2019). Our classrooms are becoming more diverse and have varied learning styles (Donally, 2022). To meet students' needs, we must prepare educators as change agents, which requires collaboration and supportive spaces to develop skills (Bendtsen, Forsman, and Björklund, 2022). This study looks at the experience of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute as a potential strategy for faculty and student retention.

Philosophical Frameworks: Tribal Critical Race Theory and

Cultural Reproduction Theory

I used the lens of theoretical frameworks of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005) and Cultural Reproduction Theory (Sullivan, 2002) as the construction of knowledge and meaning making in the academy. Tribal Critical Race Theory will allow exposing and challenging the colonization at the core of education (Writer, 2008). Bourdieu's Cultural Reproduction Theory examines education's role in maintaining class and social position (Robson, 2013, p.33). Like a river, my journey is winding. It changes direction with each article and discussion to find the right Theoretical Frameworks to use as a historical backdrop to explain my research. However, after considering various frameworks, the ones I felt most appropriate for my topic were Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), and Cultural Reproduction Theory (CRT).

Finally, I will utilize the analytical framework of the Transformational Indigenous Praxis model (TIPM) to unpack both the experiences of the faculty interviewed in this study and my educational career to understand how to begin decolonizing the academy. The fourth dimension of TIPM can build the capacity of higher education faculty to become leaders in resisting settler-colonial narratives in their pedagogy and thereby facilitate equitable futures (Pewewardy, Lees, & Minthorn, 2022, p.6).

I am glad for the self-reflection and time I took in this process. I recognize that this is an essential aspect of rightful knowledge production. I must take the critical step of taking myself, the articles I select, and my worldview into account before promoting new knowledge (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). Acknowledging my positionality when researching and identifying how I enter the research will enable a more honest account and interpretation (Alcoff, 1991, p. 16). It is essential for all of us within the academy to recognize that we operate from a position of privilege (Anderson, 2016, p.10). Even Indigenous researchers must check their colonial habits by

understanding power dynamics within teams and ensure they do not replicate it and have Indigeneity as a framework lived (Hart, 2017, p. 334).

Core Tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory

Tribal Critical Race Theory is commonly known as TribalCrit, (Brayboy, 2005). This is one of the best Theoretical Frameworks to research how American Indian/Alaska Native students experience the academy. This holistic approach is founded on the intermediated states of American Indians as racial and legal/political groups and Indigenous Ways of Knowing (Brayboy, 2006). TribalCrit brings concepts of theory, culture, knowledge, and power from Native Americans' point of view (Brayboy, 2021, p.92). The value of reciprocity is evident in this quote by a recently licensed teacher, "I have to give back; there is no other way" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 426).

To understand the foundation at the core of TribalCrit, we'd have to look to the 1970s when the legal system probes how the law pertained to various groups, and a significant focus was race and racism (Brayboy, 2005, p. 428). TribalCrit probes more profoundly, moving into the unique dichotomy American Indian/Alaska Natives face as a settler-colonial society impacts both legal/political and racialized identities. TribalCrit includes the sovereignty of American Indians (Brayboy, 2005, p. 428-429). Utilizing TribalCrit, the attempted assimilation and removal from our lands begins to clarify the white supremacy mentality (Brayboy, 2005, p. 432).

Entirely unpacking TribalCrit, the ultimate benefit is self-determination, self-government, and educational sovereignty (Brayboy, 2005, p. 435). This

understanding will reject assimilation in educational institutions (Brayboy, 2005, p. 438). Finally, TribalCrit will allow change and not only "research" to be performed (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). This should be the goal of any research. The reason TribalCrit resonates with me is that it summarizes my dream of moving theory into praxis and not just researching and stating the same dismal educational outcomes that have been generated since the Meriam Report (Meriam, 1928) and moving our attention to "how" we can Indigenize Pedagogy and change the experience of our Native students.

Core Tenets of Cultural Reproduction Theory

Turning our focus on Cultural Reproduction Theory, we examine the impacts of resources and social capital affords students. Available resources, which include social networks outside of school combined with opportunities to learn, increase the possibility of student achievement (Wilson and Urick, 2021). One example of social capital would be Catholic and private high school students having a lower drop-out rate than their peers in public schools, even if socioeconomic circumstances were considered (Robson, 2013, p.36-37).

Schools construct cultural reproduction as well as the dominant curriculum (Bernstein, 1990, 2001). In addition to examining the curriculum, we must analyze the structures generating the learning settings (Leonardo, 2009).

Cultural Reproduction Theory may provide insights into how society reproduces itself. And if something is reproduced, we can interrupt that reproduction, which gives me hope. Personally, hope is summed up in the word, Liminal, which Oxford defines as:

1. relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.

2. occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

This is how I look at learning when we are first presented with new knowledge, we are at the threshold of education, and when "we get it" as many teachers describe it, "seeing the light bulb go off in someone's head" (Bambridge, and Barraclough, 2016) we crossed that boundary into new knowledge. I have hope that while there is much to be discouraged about in the educational experiences of Indigenous people, we are at the liminal stage with the knowledge that we can foster decolonized spaces for educating our people. And I believe our best hope for our educational institutions is having teachers decolonize their classrooms. We'll discuss that process using the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model later.

Healing the Past

Before discussing decolonizing, we must begin with understanding the past and the need to heal from the traumatized foundation of Indigenous education. I want to share a poem I wrote for an assignment during this doctoral program which sums up my need for healing the past:

> I am From & I am Still Here
>
> By Mona Halcomb
>
> I am from the summary of quotes
>
> From "Hurting People Hurt People"
>
> I am from the confusion and chaos caused by colonization

Harmful Federal Policies, Underserved Communities, and

Commodity Cheese

I am from "Water is Life," and the sound of Water Rippling &

Roaring

From Streams, the Columbia River and the raging Sea

I am from the original land of, "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and "You'll

Be Okay"

My "PT mom" aka Miss Purple & Michael, I know you love me,

where are you?

I am from, "One Day You Might Need It" "Side by Side" and "Take

Two They're Small"

"Do as I Say, Not as I Do" and "Because I'm the mom, and said so,

that's why"

I am from "Amazing Grace…Once I was Lost & Now, I'm Found"

and Seven Drums

I am from the Blue and Wallowa Mountains, and from the Diaspora

of Concrete City Streets

Sidewalks going Up & Down as Mother Nature pushes up roots in

defiance of "Progress"

Rows and rows of homes with garages packed full of forgotten

ambitions and picket fences that lock people inside their own prison

of regret

Manicured lawns and shattered dreams

Salmon and Huckleberries

From the resilience and strength of a mother whose pain could not

overpower her positive loving nature

The absence of my father always looking for love, justice, and

acceptance since being ripped from his family and sent to a foreign

land called Boarding School

Opening Christmas presents purchased to atone for the prior year's

pain and the love and hope of the New Year being different

I am from, when walking around the neighborhood the beauty of

Don's Stain Glass makes me smile and the Little Free Library

displays my neighbors' interest and are full of Self-Help books

inspiring the promise of healing & hope

I am the answer to my ancestor's prayer and yes, mom, you are right

~ I am okay (Halcomb, Winter Quarter, 2021)

I believe many American Indians/Alaska Natives do not pursue higher education because of their K-12 experience. We have underserved our youth because we have failed to address the trauma and impacts of settler-colonial violence. "When a wound is not healed, it stays and is passed onto the next generation" (Duran, E. 2020). This concept takes my breath away. There is, as many recognize and do not dispute, historical trauma from the Boarding School experience. An article in MotherJones states, "According to a Department of Justice advisory committee, 22 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native juveniles have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – three times higher than the national rate" (Murphy 2014). Educational institutions need to understand that the emotional response to stress is an "amygdala hijack" (Gepp, 2021).

The amygdala regulates emotions. It also triggers the fight-or-flight response. Research has found that trauma is passed on genetically. The genes are changed in children whose parents experienced trauma (Thompson, 2015). Because I am an American Indian/Alaska Native woman, my genes were altered by trauma before I took my first breath in this world; that does not account for the trauma experienced in my life due to the impact of generational trauma that was left unresolved.

Another critical study is the Adverse Childhood Trauma known as ACE. The higher ACEs a child is exposed to are linked with chronic health problems, mental illness, and adolescent substance use (Chapman, Dube, & Anda, 2007), and these conditions can negatively impact education and job options.

Is it any wonder that our American Indian/Alaska Native Students have difficulty in school? Rather than doing the same things year after year and expecting different results, which has been said to be the definition of insanity, what prevents schools from looking at the ACEs scores children come to school with and understanding the genetic changes in DNA from generational trauma and find ways to mitigate these impacts?

Today we frame inequality in more politically correct verbiage, "the underrepresented," "disenfranchised," or "at-risk." It is sad that fifty-six years after I experienced the Watts Riots, I wonder if we are just changing the adjective and not the lived experience of people who share inequity. The pandemic surfaced a need for mental health care, hopefully, we will pay more attention to the barriers to our youth thriving in school do to the impacts of trauma.

Ancestral Knowledge is a code passed from generation to generation in our DNA, and it is the ancient stories and wisdom passed down from one generation to the next. In the Scientific American blog, we learn of Monarch butterflies taking a 2,500-mile trip from Canada to Mexico.

The journey takes three generations, so how is the route known? It is encoded, and the Monarch Butterflies have inherited the way and are born with the directions (Reppert, Gegear, & Merlin, 2010). According to Andrew Curry in ScienceMag.org, many studies are being done linking trauma experienced by parents and grandparents, changing the biology of their offspring (Curry 2019).

The controversy of nurture vs. nature will always be present in these studies. Yet, as someone raised by parents who survived the historical trauma of Boarding Schools, that debate is of little consequence to me. The attempted assimilation (Minthorn, 2018, p. 63) and loss of language is the most impactful and devastating result of Boarding School for me.

Anyone familiar with language will tell you that some things cannot be translated. That meaning is lost in the interpretation of one language to another. I heard that one of the impacts is even on our health. Some Native Americans had a word and story for a plant that cures diabetes. Due to the loss of language, this teaching was lost, and now many Natives have diabetes. Yet not all is doom and gloom. We still have songs and ceremonies that survived and are being passed down to our children. Our ways of being are taught by example and listening to the Old Ones share what they were taught long ago. Our stories and beliefs have kept us resilient in the face of those who would destroy us for greed. Since Time Immemorial, our people have listened to the land, (Minthorn, 2018, p. 68) have cared for one another, and have our knowledge written on our hearts where pages can't be burned or torn apart. So, we are still here. We pass on this ancestral knowledge by continuing our ways, attending our ceremonies, honoring our elders, and caring for our youth. We are more than survivors; we are all connected and part of the healing of our people.

My voice has always been strong, especially when people are mistreated. Living in such a

time of civil unrest shaped me to protest and to take a stand, whether by peaceful protest or more

forceful marches; I grew up believing change is possible and that social movements are the

catalyst for change. In the juxtaposed belief of "Peace, Love, and Brotherhood" and "I am mad

as Hell, and we won't take it anymore," - - we will be heard. I have worked in education for over

thirty years. I speak up every chance I can to center the American Indian/Alaska Native youth

and our responsibility to provide an equitable education to them. I would say that within the

walls of "learning," my voice is either rendered invisible (MInthorn, 2018, p. 70) or silenced.

I was a statistic, a student not meant to succeed, navigating poverty, a broken home, a

teen parent, and mobile. My counselor told me to "Join the Military" or "Go work in a factory

because that is all I'd ever be capable of." There was no encouragement, direction, or guidance

from my high school counselor. I thought this may have been a generational flaw in the system.

Unfortunately, my daughter and grandchildren experienced the same treatment from their

counselors. I met one Native American man thirty-one years ago who inspired me to attend

college. He encouraged me to pursue a degree, and I want to inspire other Native American

youth to follow their dreams. No matter their educational experience, I want our children to see

how brilliant and gifted they are.

Decolonizing our education is necessary. We cannot expect American Indian/Alaska

Native students to thrive in higher education if the K-12 foundation has not prepared them to

succeed. We need institutions soaked in Cultural Humility and Cultural Sustaining Practices to

increase an educational experience that supports communities in their world views and

associated lifeways, honors the connection to one's home, family, community, and world, and

embodies confidence and grounding for Native students while providing a perspective from which to investigate and understand the world at large.

As our community is equipped to succeed in college, it will benefit our children, community, and world. This will happen when adults actively address and heal soul wounds so that we can live up to our full potential. And will heal our world. "When we heal ourselves, we heal our ancestors from wounds deep in our family. When we heal our ancestors, we heal the world from wounds that run deep in humanity." — Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Aboriginal Elder (Whitner, 2020). This healing will be stimulated by decolonizing our classrooms. Let's look at the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM).

Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM)
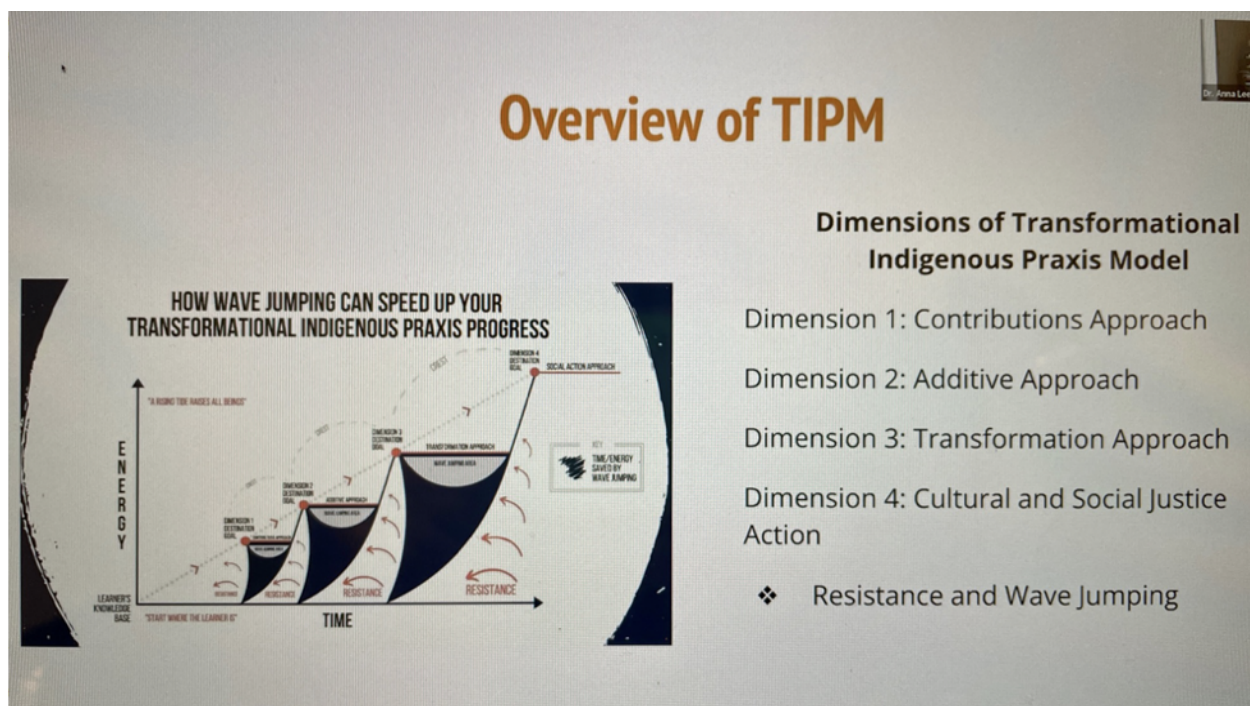
Figure 1.1 Overview of TIPM

The TIPM central tenets include:

We must acknowledge that Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being existed long before contact – Since Time Immemorial. We have resisted cultural genocide and assimilation. And we

must understand that the settler-designed school system has caused harm and is detrimental to the well-being of Indigenous children.

We need to reform to decolonize educational systems. We are ready to discuss the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM) (Pewewardy, Lees, & Minthorn, 2022) TIPM expands on James Banks and Michael Yellow Birds models of multicultural education and decolonization (Pewewardy, Lees, & Minthorn, 2022, p.2). TIPM is not linear – using waves as a metaphor because water is always in motion. Waves can allow one to gain forward momentum while facing resistance. TIPM requires long-term commitment both for individual and collective work. We will go into greater detail later; for now, we'll begin with a broad overview of the TIPM framework.

There are four dimensions of TIPM:

Dimension 1: Contribution Approach – Educators who have not developed their consciousness and examine school structures are generally satisfied. They are satisfied with the school-based curriculum and are unaware of schools' erasure and assimilation purposes. They may offer tidbits of Multicultural awareness, also known as "Heroes & Holidays."

Resistance: They would face little opposition around multicultural or Indigenous education. They would be aligned with many schools' improvement goals. They don't put any effort to go beyond what is required.

Dimension 2: Additive Approach – Educators are curious about settler-colonial education structures and have a "burst of critical awareness." They may feel overwhelmed and not know where to start. They may build a Multicultural library.

Resistance: Other educators feel they are adding unnecessary content and will promote standard curriculum. They may think, "They are trying to show off." They may be told the standard curriculum is so rigorous that there is no room to add, and they are taking away from their jobs, and that the content is inappropriate. Their jobs may be at risk.

Dimension 3: Transformation Approach – Educators understand the impact of settler-colonial policies. They recognize a need to decolonize critical pedagogies and curricula. And they experiment with implementing such approaches. They become mentors to other colleagues, and they move past the resistance. They imagine a post-colonial future where axiological, epistemological, and ontological diversity is upheld.

Resistance: Active efforts to obstruct endeavors and opposition from others will take the form of policy leaders to maintain the status quo. Educators are accused of overreacting or making something out of nothing. It can become exhausting.

Dimension 4: Cultural and Social Justice Action – Educators demonstrate deep understanding of critical consciousness and actively and consistently uphold Social Justice. Decolonizing is embedded in their daily work. They become leaders, centering Indigenous Knowledge in their teaching. They resist neoliberal and settler-colonial narratives in school policy.

Resistance: This is intense and can turn violent. Institutional resistance and they face isolation from their colleagues daily. They are labeled "Difficult to Work With" and "Never Satisfied." (Pewewardy, Lees, & Minthorn, 2022).

I examined how engaging in the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute and employing TIPM transforms teaching praxis for non-Indigenous faculty. What impact on their pedagogical approach might we expect faculty to have implemented due to intentionally utilizing TIPM? And how faculty can be supported in the transformation of their teaching practice.

Overview of Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute

I asked Dr. Robin Starr Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn, director of the Ed.D. Program and Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Washington Tacoma, who also leads the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute (IPI) to provide background on IPI. She said the intent is to decolonize the academy to create a sense of belonging for Indigenous students. IPI is focused on non-Indigenous faculty at UW Tacoma. Through community building and including Indigenous methods, the university will benefit from student retention and faculty self-awareness. The IPI can be a process for building UW Tacoma's capacity to focus on Indigenous stories and ways of being.

In the first cohort of IPI, 15 members with three, were not in designated full faculty roles but were connected to professional learning or part-time instructors. Of the 12 full-time faculty, the following schools were represented: School of Engineering & Technology (SET), School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (SIAS), School of Education (SOE), School of Nursing & Healthcare Leadership (SNHL), School of Social Work & Criminal Justice (SSWCJ), School of Urban Studies (SUS), and two professional staff.

IPI commitments included a 1-day virtual Indigenizing Pedagogy September Engagement and quarterly webinars with faculty and community as part of the reciprocating nature of the IPI.

The Puyallup Tribe Language director presented at the winter quarter engagement, and during

the spring quarter, Cinnamon Bear (Indigenous Forest Educator) met with them at

Muckleshoot's Tomanamus Forest.

Monthly, participants had an opportunity to share in discussion boards/reflexivity time.

Dr. Minthorn also met with all Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute participants one-on-one via

Zoom from 1-3 times for about 45 one-on-one meetings with the faculty participants. The faculty

worked to create a lesson or approach to Indigenizing classroom space by the end of spring 2022.

An Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge Gathering was also held in the spring of 2022. Here

the IPI participants shared with the Tribal/Native community/educators and Native

undergraduate and doctoral students what they learned and how they were Indigenizing their

pedagogy (Minthorn, personal communication, 2023).

The Context of Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute

On May 23, 2022, I attended the Inaugural Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge

Gathering at the University of Washington, Tacoma campus. This day was the culmination of the

Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, where faculty could share with the community and doctoral

students their intentionality in Decolonizing and Indigenizing their classrooms. This inspired me

to switch from my original dissertation topic, "How the Government-to-Government Process

Can Improve American Indian/Alaska Native student outcomes." I chose that dissertation topic

because the state of Oregon, where I was working at the time, witnessed an increased graduation

rate of American Indian/Alaska Native high school students by thirteen percent; I assert it was

because of the intentional, consistent, and meaningful Government-to-Government structure

between the nine federally recognized tribes and the state. As an enrolled Tribal Citizen, I value

and support the Government-to-Government framework, yet only a few are privileged to participate in the process directly.

Therefore, I was excited at the potential ripple effect that Indigenous Pedagogy and Knowledge Gathering could have on a larger scale. So, I felt it would benefit the Academy and American Indian/Alaska, Native students more if I interviewed faculty from the first Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute (IPI) cohort. I used a phenomenological method to interview faculty participating in the first IPI. I imagined students going home and excitedly sharing what they had learned in their class taught by a professor who had participated in the IPI.

The Context of My Thirty-Plus Years in Education

As stated earlier, I have been in education since 1990; using a Cultural Model of "Witnessing" combined with a qualitative technique, this research I examined some educational policies, practices, and attitudes in educational spaces I have witnessed for the last thirty-plus years that relate to the faculty interviews. I combined these interviews with a self-reflexive autobiographical inquiry. I used self-reflexive autobiographical inquiry to dissect how I have experienced the impacts of educational policies within a larger frame of co-occurring current events happening both locally and globally, which includes the IPI. I used artifacts from my career and how I interpreted events and educational policies.

Why Phenomenology?

Phenomenology compliments Cultural Reproduction Theory as participants have a "history" which informs their experience. Depending on their journey, some participants may be more aware of their positionality. Since these participants spent one year intentionally leaning into Decolonizing, they gained some understanding of power and privilege in educational settings.

Through the philosophical phenomenology method of interviewing faculty to gain their insights, (Mapp, 2008) participating in IPI illuminated practical tools and strategies to improve educational opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native students. Combined with my continued observation and participation in education for the last thirty years, the promising practices were explored, and future educators may benefit from understanding how these faculty members began to Indigenize their teaching praxis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Tribal Sovereignty must heal the educational system to prepare better our future doctors, educators, and policymakers so they can help create a world where we are connected, loving, and live in a just society. This paper examines decolonizing and indigenizing the academy by ensuring a comprehensive foundation of the structural inequities in Indian education is understood and re-imagined. To effectively stand with faculty as they begin to decolonize and indigenize their classrooms, I reviewed literature encompassing Boarding Schools, Trauma, Belonging, Culturally, and non-Culturally Relevant teaching practice, Indigenous Pedagogies', and Land Based education.

Boarding Schools

I've shared that both my parents went to Boarding School. I've heard students would be punished if they spoke their Native languages; I did not know that the older children were forced to punish the smaller children. My father told me once that one of his greatest regrets is beating a young student for speaking Indian, or he would face being beaten. I believe this is the beginning seed for what is known as Lateral Violence in Indian Country. Lateral Violence is also known as "internalized colonialism," which can lead to misplaced anger against their community (WeRNative, 2023). Any serious study of American Indian Education will be significantly

informed by reading "American Indian Education: A History" by Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, which gives an extensive historical context of the boarding school experience. Indian education had one purpose, it was to replace *everything* for American Indian children, their language, religion, and economy, and replace them with Americanized ways (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2002).

In the book Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian residential school, the author examines both specific stories from survivors of Kamloops Indian Residential in British Columbia and a more general look at Canadian residential boarding schools. Common themes told of the disturbing effects of being separated from home, family, culture, community, and language. There are stories of all forms of abuse; however, what is also shared is the resistance and strength to hold onto their culture (Haig-Brown, 1998).

Trauma

Gabor Mate argues in his book, "The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness, and Healing in a Toxic Culture," "Humans are biological, psychological, social, ecological, and spiritual creatures. He goes on to say we can't separate history and culture" (Mate, 2023). Wounds that have not healed can be passed to the next generation" (Duran, 2020). There is unresolved grief passed down in American Indian/Alaska Native communities, which creates similar outcomes for Natives as survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. Unresolved grief is "anxiety and impulsivity, intrusive Holocaust imagery including nightmares, depression, withdrawal and isolation, guilt, and elevated mortality rates" (Heart and DeBruyn, 1998). Charlene Teters says during the struggle over mascots for the University of Illinois, "I saw my daughter try to become invisible." She explains how hard it is to see your child so hurt by the mascot, Chief Illiniwek, leaping and

twirling, mocking a dance while fans with "war paint" screamed chants (Rosenstein, Baylis, Miller & Teters, 1997). There are many studies about the children who survived Boarding schools and the legacy of trauma, yet there are fewer on the impact of having a child removed from mothers. One study in Manitoba, where children were removed from the home, showed higher rates of depression, substance use, mental health visits, and prescriptions for psychotropic medicine compared to women whose children died (Kenny, 2018). Current realities many Native Americans face today should be viewed in the context of a long legacy of oppression (Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011).

Science is confirming the transferring of intergenerational trauma phenomena too (Iyengar, Kim, Martinez, Fonagy, & Strathearn, 2014). Parents experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may pass it on to their children and inflict childhood trauma (Yehuda, Halligan, & Grossman, 2001). A concise explanation is shown in this study by Brian Dias and Kerry Ressler in animals:

> They begin by conditioning mice to panic over a specific olfactory stimulus (acetophenone). The mice experienced the predictable, enhanced fear response to the stimulus smell. They confirmed that the observed behavioral change was facilitated by epigenetic upregulation of the acetophenone receptor. This was in line with previously published literature.
>
> The team was surprised when they extracted sperm from the fear-conditioned mice, performed in vitro fertilization, and then raised the offspring separately from the biological fathers.
>
> An unusual outcome was that these offspring—and another generation beyond them—demonstrated increased fear responses to acetophenone. Moreover, their

sensitivity stemmed from the same increased olfactory receptor expression, owing

to epigenetic changes. These findings offered potential mechanistic proof that a

learned behavior could be passed from one generation to the next via an

epigenetic mechanism. In addition, they demonstrated the plausibility of

Yehuda's (study of Holocaust survivors) suggestion that physical symptoms of

posttraumatic stress disorder could be passed directly from one generation to the

next (Gillson and Ross, 2019).

Anxiety is the fastest-growing diagnosis among young people. Anxiety and stress

interfere with brain development (Mate, 2023). In a 2019 study from the University of Colorado,

boarding school survivors had 44% more chronic physical health problems, and their kids had

36% more health problems than those who did not attend (Pember, 2022). These studies confirm

that generational trauma is passed from generation to generation. Ethically, we have no choice

except to be agents of healing and repairing the harm done to American Indian/Alaska Native

people. The first step should be dismantling the white supremacist settler-colonial institutions.

One way to do that is by decolonizing and indigenizing the academy.

To humanize the trauma, let's turn our attention to two quotes from Indigenous men born

over 100 years apart:

"I did not know then how much was ended. Looking back now from this

high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying

heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with

eyes still young. And I can see that something else died in the bloody mud and

was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream"

Black Elk (Neihardt, 2000).

Black Elk's quote brought to my mind a commercial I saw on King5, where musician Gene Tagaban replies to the question, "Who are you?" with tears in his eyes and a quiver in his voice, "I am a dream," Tagaban said. "I am a living dream of my ancestors. And that's who I am, and they walk with me." (Robertson, 2022).

It is imperative to avoid the narrative of American Indian/Alaska Natives as "victims" or "damaged" and instead focus on Indigenous resilience, possibilities, and agency (Tuck, 2009). Narratives shape our view of the world and its people and framing American Indians/Alaska Natives and other groups sometimes "freezes them" in a single history of trauma (Adichie, 2009). At the same time, holding the tension that too often abstract terms gloss over the genocide to uphold records of "freedom" (Mailer, 2022).

Even in the face of trauma, Native peoples have practices to deal with the trauma, "A long time ago, when a warrior experienced trauma in battle or when someone was traumatized or hurting in some way, we used certain ceremonies to call our spirits back to our families, our communities, and to ourselves" (Eagle Shield, 2020, p. 57). Put another way, "The Spirit of sadness is visiting you" (Duran, 2020). This reframes mental health as a process versus a condition. Reframing healing as a process is a form of self-care. American Indians/Alaska Natives communities and other people of color still face adversities and have experienced immeasurable trauma at the hands of the US government. The outcomes from those experiences linger today" (Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020, p. 59). In "An Open Letter of Love to Black Students" (Paris, 2014) explains oppression as violence "Oppressive language does more

than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge" (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020).

Laws have been designed and intended to improve past trauma, but they have not worked in all communities. Again, using terms referencing trauma in the past when explaining Native American/Alaska Natives disparities, knowing the trauma inflected by colonial systems is not historical. The government perpetuates the trauma, and therefore, it must assist with revitalizing the languages and traditions they once tried to exterminate (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020, p. 60).

In addition to the government's role in oppressing our people, The National Indian Brotherhood and the band councils denied Indian women's rights by claiming they were interfering with fundamental sovereignty issues. Kathleen Jamieson, a Canadian legal historian, described the compliance as a "'gentlemen's agreement'... a powerful blanket of silence . . . temporarily imposed on the discussion of the status of Indian women. Even mentioning the topic became taboo and unwise in certain circles" (Million, 2008, p. 271). Either consciously or not, Indian men reinforced colonialism's most robust defense: silence (Million, 2008).

"Our soul and spirit have been wounded - western society does not understand" (Duran, 2020). We can live in stress and trauma having the combination of work, living, and education driven by racist policies (Carter, 2007). Is it realistic to think Native people can learn in an environment hostile to their collective history, identity, and worldview? Conditions for learning include a sense of feeling safe. Often, the Indigenous brain is in a hyper-alert state, ready to fend off threats to the cultural self, which causes us to be less available to engage in critical thinking (Cross, Pewewardy, & Smith, 2019).

It may seem trivial, but when I read signs like "Olympia founded in 1882," I feel disappointed. You will likely learn about the doctrine of discovery and manifest destiny in school. Rarely is there mention of the colonization of America or the cost of human lives to achieve it (Cross, Pewewardy & Smith, 2019). I have not been to Olympia's Capitol tour yet; it is on my "things-to-do list." I experienced trauma when I toured Oregon's Capital; the artwork was not strength-based and had a negligible representation of Native Americans.

Worst yet, the tour guide said, "People came to Oregon for the "Free Land." I gasped. The rotunda has excellent acoustics, and many people could hear my reaction on the tour. My colleague and I took the tour because a few Native American Interns working in our office reacted to the tour in the same manner. They wrote a letter stating why the tour guide's description was problematic for Native Americans. We followed up, and unfortunately, the reply was not as hardy as I'd hoped. The unconcerned reply was, "They are volunteers." As if this gave them a free pass to provide misinformation. I quickly offered to provide Professional Development for the "volunteer/representatives of the state." One of my primary concerns was that this tour was popular with all fourth-grade classes, and teachers routinely brought this age group to tour the Capital from across the state. Planting seeds at an impressionable age when there was no struggle to take Native American Land can set them up for a lifelong path of never fully understanding our painful history of genocide and colonization. These microaggressions build up over time and can become exhausting.

Belonging

Rooted in inequity and practices that reinforce assimilation is what our educational system is founded on (Brayboy, 2005). Systemic colonialism and assimilation foundations in higher education created bias and skewed policies (Brayboy, 2005, Quijada Cerecer, 2013).

History shows the federal government thought we were an inherently inferior culture (Brown & Strega, 2015) and tried to assimilate (Adams, 2011) by banning cultural and religious traditions to Americanize Indigenous people (Moehrle, 2011). These actions of colonization, white supremacy, and imperialism are evident in educational and federal policies toward American Indian/Alaska Natives (Brayboy, 2005). Resulting in a diminished sense of belonging for American Indian/Alaska Natives in educational settings (Tachine, 2017).

Systematic efforts like the Boarding Schools obstructed the basic psychological need and motivation common to all humans for belonging (Osterman, 2000, Henning, 2022). Belonging is also an important higher education motivator and key to student success (Strayhorn, 2018, Ahn and Davis, 2020). Having a sense of belonging is a predictor of graduation (York & Fernandez, 2018).

It may be no surprise that women of color have a lower sense of belonging (Vaccaro, Swanson, Marcotte, & Newman, 2019). When I was earning my master's degree in cultural studies at the University of Washington Bothell, we created out of necessity the Women of color collective (WOCC). We had one honorary male in our group. We shared our culture and recipes, created a safe place to ask questions about assignments, and supported each other in our academic pursuits. When I posted a picture of us on Facebook recently, one of my fellow cohort members in the WOCC said, "This memory and the three of you are etched in my heart forever. My sisters for life!" The picture is from twelve years ago; we still feel our bond. Ironically, we call each other sisters in my current cohort of doctoral students. We have created a support network and made a "promise that we all graduate together!" We encourage each other, help answer questions about our research, and celebrate our accomplishments together.

Another example of creating a sense of belonging is the positive effects of service learning on transfer students' understanding of belonging. A multi-institutional study proposed that service learning was a form of active learning pedagogy. Promising outcomes of service learning were an increased sense of belonging and increased college retention (York and Fernandez, 2018). In middle school math, teacher emotional support that made students feel loved, cared for, and respected provided students with academic enjoyment and self-efficacy beliefs (Sakiz, 2007). This study caught my attention because math was my nemesis in school. I am sure I have post-traumatic stress over STEM classes in general. I remember one science teacher telling the class, "What are *you* doing here?" I arrived a few minutes late and walked up to get his syllabus. As I returned to my seat in the back, I had to fight back tears, not because I was hurt and embarrassed, I was mad! And when I get angry for some reason, I cry. His demeaning comments only made my resolve to get my degree stronger. I could focus on his negative comments and others dating back to high school, where cruel remarks about my academic abilities flourished, or I could concentrate on the brilliant educators who have supported me along the way. I chose the latter; however, overcoming the challenges of condescending remarks about my belonging in school took a lot. Hence, I am a great-grandmother earning a doctoral degree despite those who said I did not belong in the academy. A sense of belonging is rooted in the need to be respected (Vaccaro, Swanson, Marcotte, & Newman, 2019).

Finally, one more example of a well-constructed strategy for belonging is "creating a group routine" (Bryk,Yeager, Hausman, and Muhich, and et al, 2013). This approach resonated with me because there is only so much one person can do. And by distributing the effort, you increase the impact. The faculty assigned "groups" in class, and the students got to know each

other outside the classroom. They were responsible for telling the teacher who was missing from

class and connecting with the missing student to check in on them and give them the assignments

they missed. As a result, there was an eighty-five percent attendance rate. I believe two

promising practices were a) the students felt seen and b) the faculty-created community. Also, I

think this strategy worked because, often, my fellow cohort played a part in my retention and my

persistence in school. I remember feeling overwhelmed and like I could not continue with school

sitting in-between classes one evening, then having a classmate sitting next to me excitedly,

asking, "What classes are you taking next quarter?" Without their knowing it, they turned my

wondering if I could go on in the program to, "Let's see, what are you taking?" Their enthusiasm

bubbled over to me and filled my cup with hope. So having students feel responsible for their

other students is a wise effort toward creating a sense of belonging and ensuring no one slips

through the cracks.

Maslow's work listed self-actualization at the top; the order of other needs, according to

Maslow, are esteem, love and belonging, safety, and physiological conditions. (Simons, Irwin,

and Drinnien,1987) There is little attention given to the fact that Maslow spent time with the

Blackfeet Nation. As with many contributions, people of color rarely get credited for their

epistemological and ontological bases for knowing. Before colonization, the Blackfeet nation's

view of self-actualization, according to elders Robert and Roselyn Beaker, Maslow's hierarchy

was upside down. And caring for people in need is at the top of the Blackfeet's values (Broomé,

2017). Self-actualization enhances participation, success, and retention (Attiyeh, Ficklin, Isaacs,

2023). Love and belonging are having friends, intimate relations, family, and kinship ties above

safety and security needs. Attachment happens when infants get their needs met, and bonds are

formed. Original patterns of attachment will determine all other relationships, causing them to be

trusting and protective or not (Bowlby, 2005) and impact the way they will parent their children (Schneider, Atkinson, and Tardif, 2001, Shaver, Mikulincer, and Cassidy, 2019). However, Baumeister and Leary, (1995) consider a universal need for belonging. They contend that belonging equals happiness and a sense of well-being, and if diminished, it creates anxiety and depression. Evolutionary theory states we were hunter-gatherers and nomadic small groups. It is human nature to strive and form group belonging (Caporel and Baron, 1997, Mák, Fowler, & Gibbons, 2018, Mate, 2023).

Neuroscience of care says that in the first few months of life, efforts of the caregiver make to comfort, soothe, and respond to infant distress shape the neural pathways associated with the memory of care and instigate cues for the release of hormones (Schore, 2019, Cobo-Vuilleumier, Lorenzo, Rodriques, Herrera, Gomez, et al., 2018) Eisenberger and Lieberman, (2004) say an overlapping neural circuitry processes physical pain and the distress associated with a social rejection or exclusion.

Non-Culturally Responsive Teaching Examples

In addition to the classroom, institutions can cause harm in other ways; I had a boss who was particularly cruel to me, and it was not just my interpretation; co-workers and even students would comment on her inappropriate behavior toward me. One example is she called me into her office (usually a bad experience) and asked me with a snicker, "Mona, we gave your people blankets with smallpox and starved your people. How does that make you feel?" At first, I stared at her trying to walk through what just happened and thinking, "Did she just say what I thought she said?" This, unfortunately, is an exercise I have had to go through to make sure I am not being "too sensitive," and after I realized she was trying to get under my skin and hurt me, I smiled and replied, "It makes me feel pretty damn good, you gave it your best shot, and here I

am, still here." She turned red and no doubt tried to find another way to victimize me. Believe it

or not, we lasted about seven years doing this dance of who would outlast the other.

There are many examples of non-culturally responsive pedagogy; however, given the

scope of this research paper, I will only concentrate on three that, in my mind, would not take a

lot to find solutions to address. I've mentioned being invisible, and the pain exclusion can create,

and there are two forms of invisibility. One is being counted or "seen." Data collection is

imperfect and hides our American Indian/Alaska Native identities in schools, the medical field,

and significant areas of concern, such as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People epidemic

of violence. Native women are murdered at 10X the national average, and it is not discussed in

the mainstream media (Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, 2023). When faculty

do not include current topics impacting Indigenous concerns, the burden falls on Native students

to talk about these topics whether they have the capacity or not (Cross, Pewewardy & Smith,

2019).

The other type of invisibility is when we are not captured in the data. Of the many

excuses for American Indian/Alaska Natives' exclusion from the data and research (Cross,

Pewewardy, Smith, p. 102, 2019) is hiding behind the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy

Act (FERPA)" or the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

both laws are meant to protect sensitive information from being disclosed without consent. And

what happens is that American Indian/Alaska Natives are hidden from longitudinal studies.

Thereby limiting any hope of improving their outcomes. I explain to superintendents that if you

"don't see us, you're not accountable to us." There are ways to disaggregate the data if only

political will existed.

Lastly, another exclusion American Indian/Alaska Native students face is a disconnect between what is being taught and the career possibilities available to students. (Wax, Wax, and Dumont, 1989). It does not only work that is disengaged; due to the Boarding School era, we have yet to recover from language loss. There are stories of students being kicked out of an English class for speaking their tribal language. "The Bureau of Indian Affairs teacher told the boys, "I don't allow dog grunts in my classroom" (Cross, Pewewardy, & Smith, 2019). A sharper picture of a classroom that is not culturally relevant could not be shown than this example.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Educators have said, Intelligence Tests are not measures of ability but of cultural experience (Reyhner, and Eder, 2017). Yet, little has been done to revise the Eurocentric tests; I would love to create a Native American SAT with questions regarding Whaling, Buffalo Hunting, and Spirituality & Interconnectedness and see how well non-Indigenous students do. Culturally responsive teaching should begin in teacher preparation courses by challenging inequity and its interconnections (Kelly and Brandes, 2010). Not just "checking the box" methods, but rather these teacher preparation programs need to avoid over-generalizations and focus more on lasting systemic changes when serving our Indigenous youth (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

The only way to be successful in teaching is to be culturally relevant (Hookimaw-Witt, 1998) and anti-oppressive (Kelly and Brandes, 2010). Growing research establishes that Indigenous children's ability to read, write in English, and do math is practical with the inclusion of language and culture. (Castagno, and Brayboy, 2008).

Relationships are essential for favorable conditions for learning. Indian children are taught that we are all connected and should be relational and reciprocal with all things (Cajete,

1994) instead of linear and individualistic learning normative of Western worldviews. Indigenous peoples look toward the pursuit of wisdom rather than collecting facts or knowledge for knowledge's sake. We do not compartmentalize and separate learning into granular subjects; Native students are culturally positioned to understand patterns and relationships (Cross, Pewewardy, & Smith, 2019). Learning and dreaming are facilitated by Stories. Sharing our Ways of Knowing maintains our Indigeneity (Marin, 2020, pp. 2200 and 2204).

Another characteristic contrary to the Westernized worldview of the individual is the epistemology of standing for love and building community (Shield, Paris, Paris, San Pedro, 2020, p. 31). Sustaining culturally based knowledge systems, philosophy of existence, and teaching practices, Indigeneity is reflected in education, research, economics, and health (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020, p. 69).

> "We believe if we can see each other and understand our foundational
> connections through stolen land, stolen labor, and stolen lives and through
> ongoing resistance and joy, love and desire, that we as Native and black
> people can, together and apart, offer the educational and cultural future we
> are living and that we need" (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020).

How can we change the teaching praxis? We can be vulnerable in the community and let our students teach us in the classroom. This philosophy was introduced by both Paulo Freire and bell hooks when they said teachers should resist the "banking" method of teaching, where students sit quietly and learn from "the expert" as the teacher dumps knowledge into their minds. Rather the classroom should be a place of questioning and dialogue, so the teacher and students learn from each other (Freire, 2021, hooks, 2014). Adrienne Keen said she was learning with her

students while teaching at the #NODAPL Movement (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020).

I work at a State Education Agency (SEA), and I am privileged to go on on-site visits. Some of the fantastic examples of Culturally Responsive Teaching is opening the week with a Circle on Monday mornings and drumming and singing to start the week well. On Friday afternoons, many schools also close with a circle. One of my favorite site visits was on May 5th. One school focused the entire day on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls, and Relatives (MMIAWGR). Small groups rotated between making signs, face painting a red handprint, and taking a class on the statistics and safety measures to keep each other safe. We ended the day by marching with a local tribe. After the march, we went to their longhouse, and families were able to share about their loved ones. It was saying their names and keeping their memories alive. As with so many tragic things our community faces, we ended with songs and drumming, and I left a little early to call my spirit back from the pain.

Indigenous Pedagogies

To Indigenize teaching, one method is changing the teacher-learner relationship, which includes being unhurried and sharing food. It helps to allow students to exercise their agency as part of their education by asking if they are comfortable. And finally, learning through stories Indigenizes pedagogy (Archibald, 2008). Reclaiming language, culture, and identity are essential to decolonization (Laenu, 2000).

Learning should be grounded in oral traditions through elders and value their knowledge over book knowledge (McNally, 2004). Songs, ceremonies, and stories all convey knowledge. Learning does not only happen within four walls; the only purpose should not be gathering Western knowledge. Indigenous schools can reconsider themselves as a place where indigenous

knowledge is allowed and can regenerate Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in a contemporary context. All inquiry is political and moral and should value the transformative power of indigenous subjugated knowledge (Semali & Kincheloe, 2002).

Indigenous pedagogy makes room for holistic reflection that produces a mixture across the accepted boundaries of modern Western knowledge: distinguishing religion from politics and differentiating knowledge about "religion" from the spiritual experience (McNally, 2004). Indigenous story work educates the heart, mind, body, and spirit (Archibald, 2008). To counter the impacts of colonization, we need "the freeing up of the Indigenous mind from the grip of dominant hegemony" (Smith, 2003).

Learning does not just happen in-doors; when an agency I was formerly employed by, was trying to advocate for passing a law about teaching accurate American Indian/Alaska Native history, we came together with the community and made beaded necklaces; we taught our youth how laws were made and assisted them in testifying to the legislature why this law should be passed. I am glad to say it passed, and we gave the necklaces to our allies who stood with us, and I look forward to seeing what those young people will do next. Who knows, they may run for public office themselves and continue to create policies to help heal our nation.

Land Based Education

The Navajo ideology teaches children that the whole world is sacred and our relationships protocol for living in this knowledge (Begay, 2001). Health is holistic in Australia's Indigenous worldview; well-being is connected to the physical, social, cultural, and environmental. "If the land is healthy… it makes the people healthy" (Townsend, Phillips, & Aldous, 2009). Health and healing have to do with the power of a harmonious relationship with nature, according to many Native American perspectives.

Additionally, life is a whole, not divided separately, and must be considered with all the interrelationships with nature. Dissonance with nature is unhealthy (Rybak, Eastin, & Robbins 2004). One Indigenous community realized, "To maintain our Indigenous culture, we must have buffalo as a vital part of our communities. And we must restore them" (Gather, 2020).

Land knowledge is the foundation, and Indigenous educators should honor the land they teach and embrace language, culture, and land knowledge as the highest truth to Indigenous peoples. Being in the right relationship by calling upon language and knowledge keepers for guidance. Indigenous education should recognize and further develop the inherent power that has existed in everyone Since Time Immemorial" (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, & San Pedro, 2020, p. 79).

We need to recognize the Land as a teacher (Raffan, 1993). Use examples in nature to learn from the land. As demonstrated in the "Story of Maple Sugar." The protagonist, Kwezens, is connected to the ground. She is perceptive and can apply what she sees to learning, she is creative, and she collects and shares maple sap with her family. Her mother uses it to cook, which teaches Kwezens about reduction as she observes the juice being made into sugar. She learns about discovery. She knows traditional values and community. This quote is a perfect summary: "Like governance, leadership and every other aspect of reciprocated life, education comes from the roots up. It comes from being enveloped by land" (Simpson, 2014, p.9). Some of my most memorable times in this doctoral program have been, Walking the Land in Silence and going out on the Puget Sound with the Muckleshoot Canoe Family for a day; Land & Sea are influential teachers.

Learning from the land is a form of healing for the broken spirit. Our ancestors always knew this and learned from all that Mother Earth has to offer. Our teachers are elements,

animals, and plants; our ancestors left them to us so that we could learn to sustain ourselves healthily (Gather, 2020). Walking, reading, and storying land in a forest can help us understand the physical and biological world (Marin and Bang, 2018).

The impact of white settlers in Puget Sound on Native Americans' habitat destruction and nutrition is mainly due to commercial fishing and logging destroying the forest ecosystem and a lack of government response. The demand outweighed the Indigenous ways of being, and seasonal use of land and sea was abandoned (Barsh, 2003). Some Indigenous educators ask themselves, "Is teaching an act of further oppression or an emancipatory opportunity?" (Markides, 2018). Neighbors with legitimacy have a responsibility to learn how we came here, and we replicate settler-colonialism when we only see the "view from the boat and not the view from the shore" (Mazo and Pender-Cudlip, 2021). One way to override settler colonialism is with environmental education. Place-based education counters "manifest destiny" perspectives (Calderon, 2014).

Water relates to land-based pedagogy. I worked at a community college when the Makah fought for their treaty rights to hunt whales. It seemed like everyone was in an uproar, mainly Prevent Cruelty to Animals (PETA). Our First Nations club organized a Symposium, and we had workshops on Treaties and invited a panel of Makah Tribal people to speak. That is an excellent protocol to remember; no one should ever talk "for" a tribal nation if they are available and willing to share. Of course, prudence should be used to ensure they are sanctioned to speak "for the tribe" otherwise, it should be noted that the talk is not a speech on behalf of a tribe. I am a citizen of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. However, I cannot speak FOR the tribe. I always explain it like, just because I live in Washington does not mean I can go to Paris (even though I'd like to) and speak on behalf of the United States or Washington state. It is good to understand

Tribal sovereignty and know the difference between an Indian woman's opinion and someone designated to speak on behalf of a tribe.

Another water connection was in our doctoral program, where we spent time with the Muckleshoot Canoe family. What a privilege and honor to go on the Muckleshoot Canoe. It was on my bucket list almost as long as the Paddle to Seattle in 1989 began. I started working at Shoreline Community College in 1990. My friend, mentor, and teacher of Native American Studies would take us to experience seeing Canoes come ashore, asking for permission, hearing heritage languages and songs, and ending with food and celebration. Sharing the canoe journey from the shore is one thing - - and completely different from being on the water. So many teachings came to life, and I felt an instant connection. Because this was my first time in a canoe, I will share how I felt by comparing it with what I know a little more about.

As with so many Indigenous traditions, there are place-based features that each tribe passes on from one generation to the next. My father told me we could recognize where tribes are from by the color of their beads and designs; (funny story, when I went to Gathering of the Nations pow-wow and saw many neon colors, I asked where the Nike tribe is from? lol.) Similarly, tribes can recognize the unique profile of canoes specific to each tribe. Paddles have logos and different shapes. There are protocols for holding a paddle up while out of the water. They are to be pointed up to display that you are coming in peace and to keep the power in the paddle. Many non-indigenous people may not understand "keeping power in the paddle" because they don't recognize that all things are living - - we have a similar belief, this is how we view our drum. We consider drums living entities with a heartbeat and treat them respectfully, never putting anything on them or reaching over them.

There are other similarities between canoe families and pow-wow families, where dancing and drumming are not an activity; instead, it is a lifestyle. I know when my grandson had some difficulty in middle school, he was able to talk with a canoe family who shared the values of living in a "good way," bringing honor to your family and community, being drug and alcohol-free, and living in a way that honors your ancestors. This is how pow-wow families feel and say it is, "being on the Red Road" or the "Pow Wow Highway." The teachings go beyond instruction for pulling or drumming, it goes to the core of understanding that you are the answer to the prayers of your ancestors, and I believe we will one day be the ancestors for future generations who will look back to see how we carried ourselves. That is a huge responsibility. Therefore, neither venture is accomplished without a lot of preparation. The preparation strengthens your physical and mental abilities. Practices that teach you how to live in a community.

I have participated in several "team building" experiences like Ropes Courses. I have often said that if I had company, I would take someone out and see how they carry themselves in new settings like kayaking, skiing, or hiking. First, because it is outdoors, I would watch to see how comfortable they are outdoors and how they treat our Mother. Do they litter? Automatic "No Hire." Are they kind to others? All individuals? Or do they show respect to "the boss" whom they are trying to impress? And finally, do they trust? Some people were nervous when we were in the canoe, and I kept saying, "You're okay." "It's okay." Trust is something that we need to develop with one another. Sometimes we are not good at something and must know that our community has our backs. Trust that the skippers know how to handle a crisis. They are prepared and have thousands of hours of being on the water. I am not a strong swimmer, yet I chose to feel connected to the water, the sky, the land, and my cohort. We were told to think of

what would happen if there was a huge wave to keep paddling and to imagine if we were going 60 miles an hour and throwing on the brakes. That is a good life lesson when adversity comes our way, and it will; do not stop going forward. We might think about quitting, but to get through the trouble, the best course of action is to keep practicing and moving forward toward our goal. I chose to trust the Creator and wanted to enjoy every second I was blessed to be in the canoe. I recognize that trust may be an issue of being hurt, and people need healing to trust, and being involved in traditional lifeways like pow-wows or canoe journeys can assist in that healing.

Summary

Education is vital to all students; when educational opportunities and outcomes are analyzed, we see that it sets the trajectory of the futures. Following data analysis examining racial and ethnic inequality in poverty and affluence, Deadric T. Williams argues that this does not explain racial disparities among black Americans and American Indians, as it masks racial domination and oppression (Williams, 2019). While some strides in education reform have been made, we still must go further with decolonizing our pedagogy and look at innovative ways to be culturally sustaining and recognize our students' strengths (Sabzalian, 2019). Otherwise, as Paulo Freire argues, education produces and maintains oppressive societies.

Williams uses the American Community Survey to discover patterns and relative changes in predicting poverty and affluence and if individual and family level characteristics explain changes in racial and ethnic inequalities over time. Race variables can mislead due to presumed racial differences that are inherent. Race did not produce inequality; inequality grew. Settler-colonialism is not the only conceptual framework. Race can be the by-product of imperialism and colonialism. Otherwise, race is viewed as if it had always existed before domination. Therefore, racialized groups were for the benefit of European hegemony.

Move from "What factors account for racial inequality" to "What factors maintain racial inequality." Examining policies like marriage and male dominance or races being left out of programs like "The New Deal " supports institutionalized discrimination. This article considers how White is the standard other races are compared to. As a standard, all other races must "catch up to." Interesting facts arise, such as white single-parent families have more wealth than married Black and Hispanic families. Racial domination shifted from overt to covert racial inequalities.   Resistance to school authority puts poor kids on track for working-class jobs, which only maintains the connection between education and class stratification (Skeggs, 2003, Willis, 1981). We cannot unlink the impact of schooling and work (Dolby, Dimitriadis, (Eds) and Willis, 2004). Education policies, especially with borders between white communities and Indian reservations, display institutional racism and the fall of public education (Huff, 1977). According to the National Science Foundation, in 2021, there were 1,023,650 doctoral degrees awarded, and American Indian/Alaska Natives earned 1,700 of those (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2023). That equals 0.00166072388%; if that does not adequately alert the academy to the need for decolonizing and indigenizing the academy, nothing will. Scholars need to understand how racial ideologies maintain racial domination. When we know how racial power is maintained, we have no choice but to demand the decolonization of our classrooms.

Chapter 3: Methods

Using purposeful sampling, I sought out faculty who participated in the inaugural Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. I tried to take care listening to the *story* the participants were telling me (King, Brass, & Lewis, 2019). In addition to listening to the participant's stories, I wanted a more holistic research study that could challenge the settler-colonial "whiteness" of the

academy (Kovach, 2010). So, I shared my personal experience and scholarship throughout the study.

Participants

Along with myself using the autoethnographic approach as a backdrop, I used a purposive sampling method. I asked the facilitator to send an invitation to participate in my research to the 1st Cohort of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute (IPI) at the University of Washington Tacoma campus.

Sampling Procedures

I used Purposive Sampling and intentionally invited faculty to interview so I could gain some understanding from their having participated in the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. Dr. Robin Minthorn, the IPI facilitator, sent a call for research participation to all who participated in the 1st cohort of the Indigenizing Institute on my behalf. Five faculty agreed to be interviewed. I will use pseudonyms to uphold confidentiality and ensure their discipline is undistinguishable unless permitted to disclose. The aliases I selected all have a nature theme as a nod to one of the six critical orientations for the Indigenous Studies Curriculum, "Place" (Schmitke, Sabzalian, & Edmundson, 2020, p.4). The pseudonyms are Autumn, Ginger, Iris, Opal, and Violet. The interview questions were identified as "conversation starters," and interviewees were invited to share what they felt was vital for me to understand the IPI. All interviews were conducted over Zoom. Open-ended questions included:

•How will you pass on your learning from the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute?

•How did you examine the ways teaching can reinforce structures of power? What strategies did you employ to decolonize your classroom?

•What tools did you offer students to communicate and engage meaningfully and effectively in Tribal communities?

•What will you continue, and what will you reexamine in the next academic year for your classes?

•Anything you'd like to add?

Data Collection

Interviews were done over three weeks. Each interview lasted at least one hour. The questions were open-ended and done over Zoom.

Data Analysis

Recording and transcription. I recorded the interviews and then transcribed them. I sent the participants a copy of the interview transcription to double-check accuracy and asked for any necessary clarification or corrections. I destroyed the recordings of the interviews once the transcript was done and sent to the participants.

Coding: I analyzed the interview content from the transcriptions; I color-coded themes and created a chart and read the line by line of the interviews and drew out significant pieces; and I listened to the recordings several times utilizing Tribal Critical Race Theory and Cultural Reproduction Theory tenets.

I studied the shifts in attitudes and educational policies between 1990 – 2022 as I have been a "witness" to throughout my career that applied to my research. For my autobiographical portion, I have kept all my job descriptions in education, evaluations, and several flyers from major events I participated in since 1990. I have some conference flyers which reflect the changes in terminology used, especially regarding Multicultural workshops. In the early years, we can see titles like "Tolerating Diversity" or "Managing Diversity" and finally, the title,

"Embracing Diversity" or "Celebrating Diversity." I believe the titles mirror attitudes changing in the approach to Diversity. During one of my positions, the agency put in many resources both in employee time and in money spent for training on Diversity, and I wish I could say I was surprised at the resistance some colleagues displayed in appreciating Diverse ways of being. There were a lot of "I don't see color" or "I'm not racist" responses to the training instead of the much-needed self-reflection necessary for change to occur. An even more painful example is in another institution, the word "assimilation" was used and centered as a positive work goal. This activity was done despite several conversations about the potential harm that word would cause American Indian/Alaska Native employees. This type of institutional white supremacy racism is not even a "1" on the TTIPM scale. I will use these artifacts against current events happening locally and globally. For example, when I was working at the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon students faced the impacts of the pandemic, wildfires that destroyed entire towns, and floods. Because a former president often could be heard saying, "The China Flu " bullying toward Asian students and communities reported 3,785+ incidents between March 2020 and February 2021 (Act, 2021 and ADMERASIA, 2021, p. 1). Covid-19 disproportionately affected America Indian/Alaska Native tribes, having some of the highest rates of COVID-19 (Weeks, 2021). Systemic racism and inequities in health care, education, and infrastructure were revealed and exacerbated during the pandemic (Zingg, 2020). Examples were compared to educational policies and efforts made during that time frame. I am proud of the "Every Student Belongs rule, prohibiting recognizable hate symbols (the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology, and the battle flag of the Confederacy) sanctioned by Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Board of Education (Oregon Department of Education, 2021). And I wish I could also report that this rule ended all racial discrimination and acts of violence in Oregon Schools. However, we know that

change is usually faced with opposition. Since 2020, reports to a confidential Bias Response hotline have tripled, indicating the gravity of Oregon's hate. Even more disheartening is the small number of cases with charges filed. In 2022 there were 903 reports, and only 98 resulted in charges being filed. State Senator Lew Frederick, D-Portland, said, "It's tragic, but it comes as no surprise." "That's the nature of our culture" (Green, 2023).

These examples point to the dire need for our universities to decolonize and indigenize the academy. We must ensure educators and students feel in a "safe" place that facilitates learning and success. The more people of color and Indigenous students can be successful in the academy; the more space will be open for their voices to be heard. And they may bring cultural ways of being that can help heal our world. It is problematic how some states ban even the discussion of "true" history. By falsely claiming it is divisive and promotes hate. This is a bizarre irony of white settler-colonial attempts to maintain their power and privilege and use and twist terminology for inclusion.

Human Subjects Considerations

Human subjects' considerations included respect for persons and obtaining voluntary and informed consent. And participants' right to privacy and confidentiality (Fujii, 2012).

Confidentiality. I obtained informed consent from interviewees regarding the study. Pseudonyms have been used in all data analyses.

Protection of human subjects. I confirmed with the participants their understanding that this was a voluntary research study. If they had any questions or concerns, they could reach the chair of my committee, Dr. Robin Minthorn.

Summary

As an Indigenous woman/educator, I examined some of the impacts of the Boarding School era to make meaning of my experiences. In addition, it questioned why, despite the abundant education reports calling for change, minimal improvement and structural changes could be seen in Indian Education, thereby denying American Indian/Alaska Native students an opportunity for adequate and equitable education. I researched the fundamental strategies for decolonizing and indigenizing education as an opportunity to help recruit and retain American Indian/Alaska Native students to remedy the social impacts of the lack of educational opportunities.

I unpacked my journey since I have worked in education for over thirty years. Could decolonizing and indigenizing the academy rectify the disenfranchised experience many Indigenous and people of color experience in educational spaces? I looked at the Inaugural Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute as a possible solution that may benefit faculty, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and the institution. See figure 3.1. I used TribalCrit and Cultural Reproduction frameworks in tandem with the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM) as a guide for my inquiry.
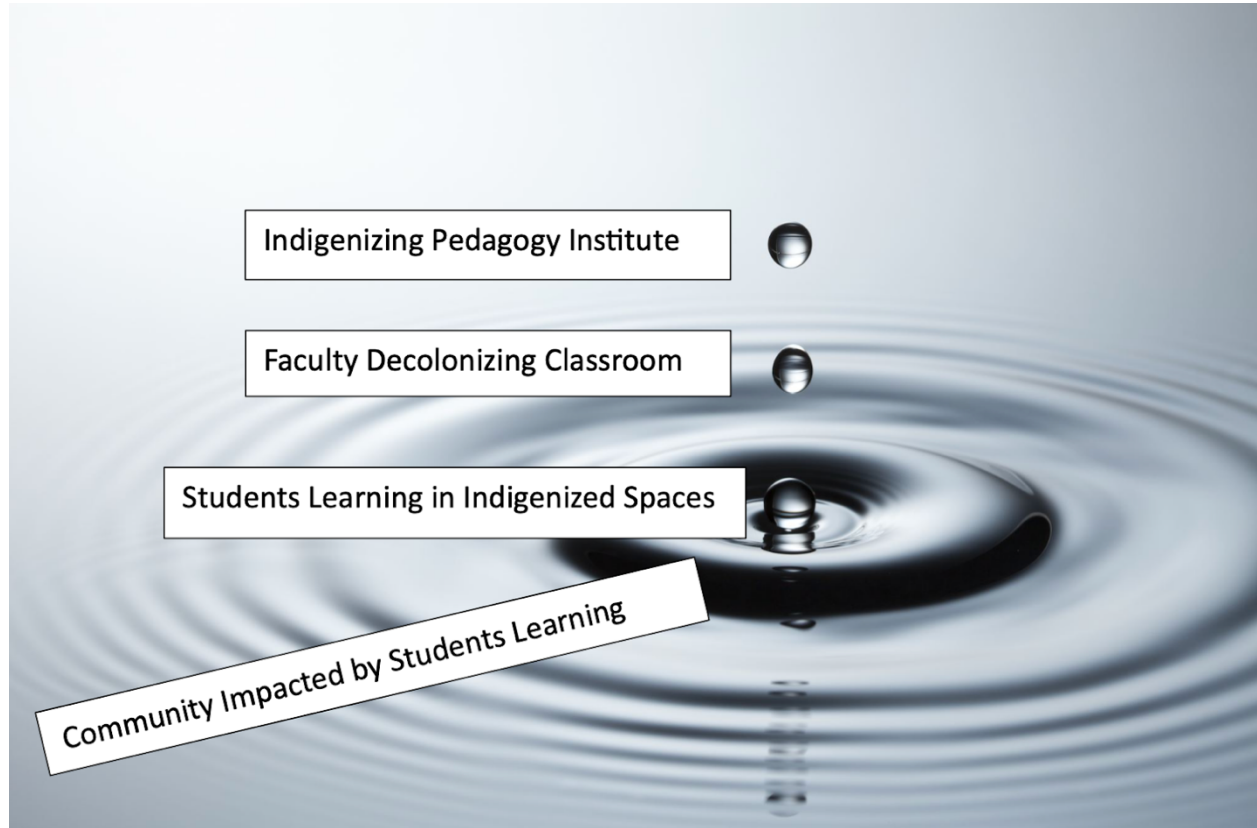
Figure 3.1 Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute - Circle of Influence

The visual shows how the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute can have a ripple effect by influencing the professors in the cohort. Then that will spread out to their classrooms and influence their colleagues, and finally, the community will benefit from the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute.

Chapter 4: Findings

All five faculty members I interviewed from the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute at the University of Washington Tacoma experienced a sense of community where they could share ideas and learn from like-minded individuals. Dr. Minthorn provided each faculty with personalized learning and mentoring. The Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute gave them confidence,

courage, and a common language to articulate and express concepts when decolonizing the institutional processes. They felt like their experiences and history were honored and valued.

I used pseudonyms to keep my participants' identities confidential and only listed the central branch of knowledge rather than the specific disciplines they teach. Also, if they shared where they were born or grew up, I replaced cities with regions like the Pacific Northwest or Northeast. If they were born or grew up outside the United States, I would only say, "Another country(ies)." I listed some details shared with me about what attracted them to the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute if they mentioned it. These details may provide insight into their positionality. I purposefully wanted to have a "conversation" with the faculty and the reader; later, I identified themes that seemed to resonate or be outliers for the interviews.

Autumn

Autumn teaches in the Applied Sciences field. After working in her field for twenty years, she returned to get her Ph.D. She became a professor later in her career and is a self-professed "newbie" to the concepts of indigenizing pedagogy. Her colleagues and some people from the School of Education collaborated to refresh her field's curriculum before the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. When she learned Dr. Minthorn was starting the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, she felt it was an excellent opportunity to continue learning about the concepts Dr. Robin Minthorn introduced her to.

She was not much of a talker, and we finished our interview early. She was still finding her confidence in the Indigenizing Pedagogy conversation. I applaud her for stretching herself, being willing to commit to the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, and being interviewed. She is dedicated to researching further and appears to be a deep thinker.

Ginger

Ginger teaches in the Social Sciences field. She is a woman of color who grew up in poverty. Her family had expectations of her marrying right out of high school and may not have understood her decision to choose college over love and relationships, which were her family's values. She attended several community colleges and earned her bachelor's degree in her 30s. She believes in the power of transformative education. Getting an education shaped her choices in a partner and how she is raising her children, and she acknowledges that there is something lost with every gain.

And yet, she explained how she appreciated being in the conversation for a year and learned a lot. She has a deep understanding of issues of systemic oppression, institutional inequality, and American history. The institute gave her confidence and literacy to speak to those issues, not as an expert, but as "someone who is trying to do the right thing in the right moment."

Ginger and I seemed to connect. Conversation flowed easily, and time flew by. I felt connected, and she was open about her thoughts and life. She displayed a sense of vulnerability and trust. I appreciated how honest and forthcoming she was.

Iris

Iris teaches in the Formal Sciences. She grew up in the Pacific Northwest and knew the original inhabitants' tribal names where she lived. She is very excited about the institute and all that she learned. Her class assignments were rich examples of decolonizing and indigenizing. A quote from one of her students displays how successfully Iris created a "community" environment.

Heather

Heather is committed to sharing about the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute. She is writing journal articles, planning to share her experience of attending the IPI at conferences, and getting her colleagues involved. She is a great ally.

Opal

Opal teaches in the Applied Science field. She was born in another country and traveled back and forth between her country and the United States. She has a deep understanding of power & privilege. She understands the concept of learning together and prefers to call herself a "guide." One of the statements she made during our interview that I appreciate is that she is going deeper and calling her pedagogy "a pedagogy of love" and "pedagogy of care."

Opal and I connected; she was a deep thinker and shared a lot of insightful perspectives.

Violet

Violet teaches in the Humanities field. She was born in the United States and returned to her parents' country. She is transparent with her students that her experiences have shaped who she is. Before becoming a professor, she was a Community Organizer; social justice is her core value.

Violet and I would be friends, I could tell. She is full of energy and committed to social justice. She seems like the type of person that would be fun to take a road trip with.

Major Themes

There are several topics I could concentrate on for the major themes that surfaced from the interviews. It is always challenging to frame an issue because, with every choice to include something, I exclude something else. However, I have chosen to highlight themes mentioned by all the interviewees and the ones that resonated with my personal experience in higher education for twenty years of my career. I also selected these five themes because they highlighted some of

the themes I discovered in my literature review. I will list the topic, highlight some examples the participants gave, and, where appropriate, provide an example from my work experience.

Agency

It is imperative to avoid the narrative of American Indian/Alaska Natives as "victims" or "damaged" and instead focus on Indigenous resilience, possibilities, and agency (Tuck, 2009). Self-determination results from centering the voices of American Indian/Alaska Native students and families (Mackey, Schettler, and Cournia, 2022).

Autumn creates space for students to exercise their agency by negotiating some assignments because she sees time structures as colonizing. She is trying to be compassionate, mainly because the stress of the pandemic revealed how hard life can be for her students. Ginger shared that the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute customized learning outcomes based on everyone having a different understanding of indigeneity and the history of colonization in the United States. The learning was customized because the faculty taught other subjects and brought something different to the institute. When we recognize individual identities and meet the needs of each student, we are creating, as part of their education, a place for them to exercise their agency. Iris lets her students explore and choose to research their culture or another culture they are interested in. Opal recognizes that education is a colonizing process. Even when talking about herself as an educator, she feels that she is forceful, so instead would instead be called a guide. The institute facilitated a shift in how she views what she is doing at the University. She honors, values, and invites students' experiences into the classroom. She recognizes the shared knowledge that is in the room. Violet says they learn together and co-collaborate.

At Shoreline Community College, I was privileged to co-teach a class that prepared students to be successful in college. It was a two-credit weekend class; we asked students to bring in their favorite music and snacks and dress comfortably. We had three simple exercises:

- Write an attribute/quality about yourself that you appreciate for each year you've been alive. So, if you are twenty-four, you would list twenty-four qualities about yourself you are proud of. It can't be I like my hair, eyes, etc... instead, you'd write, I am loyal, caring, and so forth.

- Throughout the weekend, observe your classmates and be prepared to write a quality you noticed about them. What you can pick up about a person in a short period; for example, if someone saw the coffee pot was low, making a fresh pot was a way to care for others. We sat in a circle, and at the top of the blank page, we'd write someone's name and write something about them and pass it around the circle until it came to that student. Once everyone's list was complete, we'd have them read both lists out loud. Seeing people cry and unable to acknowledge the good in themselves that others saw so clearly was incredible.

- Finally, we'd take a trip to a store or coffee shop, acknowledge people by their name, and interact with them by saying something kind or being polite. We recognize people's humanity when we treat them as human beings instead of having interactions where we have no more humanity than if we were doing a transaction at the self-checkout or ATM. I remember one time when my grandson was only about five or so, we were at the checkout, and he was looking up saying, "Hi, Dan," over and over, only to be ignored. I finally told him, "Don't worry, Jordan, not everyone was raised to say hi." My co-teacher/friend said feeling seen and acknowledged is a universal need.

I was grateful that my friend invited me to co-teach this transformative class with him. There is no better way to create space for someone to express their power than allow people to recognize the good in themselves and others around them. At the time, my grandson was four years old. I'd tuck him into bed and ask him to say "four-good things." He laughed once and said, "Oh Nana, when I'm twenty-four, will you still ask me to say twenty-four good things?" I am happy to say we've continued with this tradition. And we've passed it on to my great-granddaughter, who once said to me on the phone, "Nana, you didn't ask for my good things!" Often, it is easy for us to think of the negative rather than the positive. I imagine what the world would look like if we all instilled a sense of personal power in our children, who would then pass it on to acknowledge the good in others. What futures would we see in people?

Community

Another characteristic, contrary to the Westernized worldview of the individual, is the epistemology of standing for love and building community (Eagle Shield, Paris, Paris, San Pedro, 2020, p. 31). We begin Indigenizing and decolonizing the academy by co-creating with Indigenous students and the community, curriculum, and spaces where their knowledge and culture are welcomed (Minthorn, 2022).

Sometimes community can be harmful. Autumn shared that her research background is in workplace bullying; unfortunately, there are high rates of workplace bullying. Her research taught her that some of it begins with how we're socialized in our education processes. They've been socialized in very negative ways of dealing with each other, and the classroom can have some very hierarchical ways that she thinks came from colonized behavior. This institute has given her some language to understand what she already knew.

Ginger says she incorporates authors that put all our communities back into the history where they belong. She also shows videos of the voices of the Puyallup tribe. She is aware that this generation is tender. She knows they need lots of emotional support. And sometimes wonders why the academy puts so many barriers for students to navigate. She says all she can do is carve out a niche and create, hopefully, a supportive space for students so they can thrive and make it and make something of themselves in this imperfect institution that we've chosen to be in.

Iris said the institute is an opportunity to learn about different ways of knowing and being and focus on community. The institute allowed her to bounce ideas off colleagues trying to do the same thing. It's pretty innovative. She questioned how to build community and get students to talk with one another. Getting the students to engage with one another was necessary because there were many transfer students. By talking it over and being mentored in the institute, she incorporated asking students to talk about their favorite music. She hopes to push past music into more profound cultural questions and issues. She had them write weekly prompts and interview each other. She gave a tour, and a student who had gone through the class recently was on the tour and was talking about how they had such a close-knit community in their cohort. She asked, "How did that happen?" the student replied, "It was in your class; you forced us to talk to each other." She knew community building was working when she heard they had made a goal for their cohort that they were all going to graduate! This was so exciting to me to hear because, in my doctoral program, we made the same pact with each other.

Opal said, "I see it's like we are a group of people moving together through time because we're together for a period in our journeys. But our journeys will look very different, and I understand I must ensure my fellow learners feel supported. She believes in community and

shares how the current policies create "little castles" where these little buildings are insular and not about community. And that hurts everything: our relationships, planet, and animals; no one benefits from this approach. She's interested in decolonizing and eventually indigenizing housing. Some cities were set up with large living quarters; they were not insular. They were communal, and the more she learned from indigenous groups and found examples of how this is better for all purposes; the environment, society, and supporting generations.

Violet said she was so glad to be part of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute and think about ways to build community. Through only some of her education, she felt that she understood community or belonging well. It has always been central to think about how to develop a sense of belonging. And she thought, "Boy, I could have thrived in so many other ways if I had felt like I had, you know, had a structure where I could lean on somebody, and they can lean on me."

When I worked at a community college, I was an ethnic club advisor. I would take the students to the Students of Color Conference. Several people would introduce themselves as "I am so and so, and I am the Multicultural Director for "x" community college. The students asked me, "Why don't we have a Multicultural Center?" When we returned to campus, we began researching, building allies, and promoting the idea of a Multicultural Center. Once we were approved, the college president, knowing how involved I was in creating the pathway for a Multicultural Center, asked me to be the Program Manager. At the same time, they performed a national search for a director.

We had a center with no funding, yet we had a vision and a purpose. I wanted to create a community, so I brought a couch, television, food, and games. I had a friend who had an antique store, so I asked if I could display artwork in our new Multicultural Center. It still warms my

heart to remember how the students had a place where they built a community of peer support—seeing students from various cultures playing games and laughing together. They would study together, plan things to do, and find speakers to bring to campus. The center added a lot to creating community. We had a place where we felt safe and could "be seen," as Violet said, they "had a structure where they could lean on somebody, and they can lean on me."

I believe this has become my leadership style, "seeing people," helping them see who they are, and creating community. We don't always have to agree on everything when we lead with these values. The home, the classroom, and the workplace can become a place we show up as our authentic selves, we get to recognize the good in ourselves and others, and this will release us from competing and thinking there can only be winners and losers. We will see that we all have gifts and talents. I remember an elder once saying, "Don't teach your kids all the same things. Otherwise, they won't need each other when they grow up." And when we begin to recognize the good qualities in people, we can give grace because we won't typecast them in a single story. If you have not seen this Ted Talk, I encourage you to take the time to watch "The Danger of a Single Story" (Adichie, 2009).

History

Gabor Mate argues in his book, "The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness, and Healing in a Toxic Culture," "Humans are biological, psychological, social, ecological, and spiritual creatures. He goes on to say we can't separate history and culture" (Mate, 2022). We cannot understand Indigenous Peoples' problems without acknowledging the impact of colonization and epistemological genocide that attempted to eradicate Indigenous cultures through American Indian Boarding schools (Clark-Shim, 2022). Many do not have access to knowledge about

Indigenous communities because teachers and administrators who should know our history do not know themselves (Mackey, Schettler, and Cournia, 2022).

Autumn said the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute gave her the language and courage to discuss things she wanted, like connecting the lack of funding for some services because the government failed to keep the promises made in treaties. She said, "It's funny that it was hard for me to say that. I don't know why." She said that now she has courage, and her eyes are open to what she is teaching and questioning if that is how things should be conducted.

Ginger said students need to get what they need in their K-12 curriculum, and she thinks it is important to tell them the truth about the boarding schools, land theft, and so on. One challenge she has is naming the problem, illuminating the history, and then saving one day at the end of the quarter to cultivate hope. So, she and Dr. Minthorn talked about ways to cultivate hopefulness and joy. And they are looking at indigenous communities and their thriving and well-being and how they do that for each other and the community.

Iris allows students to discuss their culture, history, background, and identity. Their assignments are about half on culture and half on the subject matter she teaches. After the students explored their cultural heritage, they were asked to share it with other students. And if they were not connected to their own culture, they picked a research project tied to a culture they didn't know anything about. One student did a deep dive into some Caribbean drums and how they were used for communicating. During slavery, they could not use them, but they'd call them dance lessons and use the drum to push back on the colonizers.

Opal said she is looking forward to doing more. Making sure it's the tribe speaking their language and sharing and putting in more work to have more opportunities to acknowledge and honor the contributions of the stewards of the land. Even in casual conversations about maybe

the history of a city, she says, "Whoa! Are we going to go there? Then let's go back. We won't just go with the story that's been told or that we want to believe. If we want to look at history, we will learn and acknowledge it."

Violet wants to be in service to the tribe. She wants to make sure to give and not just take, take, take. She thought it was an excellent opportunity to offer the students a lesson in reciprocity. They would center on indigenous history and embed it in the kinds of readings and discussions they had. But they didn't want to decide what was essential to research. They asked the tribe to determine. The tribe selected Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the Canoe Awakening Ceremony, and the efforts towards Land Back. This research project was incredible because it was designed with and for the tribe. The students had to get feedback from assigned liaisons in the tribe, and once the research project was done, it was given entirely to the tribe.

Power

The danger of how power and education reinforce one another can be summarized in this quote, "The close and often intricate relationship between knowledge and power manifests itself as an instrument of reciprocal legitimation" (Weiler, 2001). For equity to advance, predominantly white teachers and administrators must be vulnerable and examine their biases and understanding of privilege. Transformation happens with challenging beliefs, power dynamics, tangible resources, policies, and behavior modification (Mackey, Schettler, and Cournia, 2022).

Autumn sees the power in "gatekeeping" for her profession. She said it is sad that more Native Americans do not see themselves in her field; while recognizing they have "preferred blonde women" or people who look like her. So, she tries to encourage Native Americans to recruit other Natives to consider her field of study. And some colleges were moving to a more

holistic admission acceptance and dropped requirements, creating hoops. She is not in control but can plant seeds.

Ginger brought up several examples of power. First, in the hiring process, having access to dominant cultural norms and potentially gatekeeping under the guise of "a good fit." The institute gave her the confidence to disrupt and advocate for inclusivity. The following example is "fear" and the courage to speak up because we've been silent for so long. Many of us depend on our employment because we have bills, and we've seen what can happen in Tennessee (Breen, 2023). They can remove you. Finally, she tries to diminish unequal power dynamics in the classroom. It does not make sense to get into power struggles over things that don't matter.

Iris asks, "What do we want to be in this country?" What do we want our society to look like? Look what's happening in our national sphere, and it isn't enjoyable like this is not the best we could be as human beings to one another. We must start in the academy and teach students a worldview so they can become political leaders of the future. It's essential to teach students that now. We can teach students facts, but at the end of the day, facts alone don't matter. We can dismiss anything that does not come out of Western epistemologies.

Opal shared power with her students by providing multiple options for engagement. Every assignment has different ways to take it. Sometimes they could read, watch a film, or whatever they choose for their final project. And her students get to select the role they want to take; they can lead or be content with taking a secondary or respondent part. Again, it is shifting the power dynamic as much as possible to ensure I get out of the way.

Violet wants to create spaces where students feel more welcome, and being themselves is essential to her. The other thing she has been thinking about is cross-racial cultural solidarity. It's always been important to her, an important question rooted in her community organizer role. She

is working with multilingual, underserved poor communities lacking representation. She wants a different kind of literacy that allows us to see each other as humans from the first step and then build from there.

Time

"Enduring Indigeneity" is when Indigenous people "exist, resist, and persist" (Drywater-Whitekiller and Corntassel, 2022). "I also want to acknowledge that works such as these are only made possible because my grandmother and mother have protected our identities as Cheyenne and Arapaho women, regardless of various spaces we traverse and occupy" (Minthorn, 2022).

Autumn sees time structures as being colonizing because, you know, European cultures tend to be very time-structured, right? And other cultures, well not all European, Spain isn't, but from what I know, I mean…I try to create some looseness within the structure, but that is so artificial. There's this fear that if you let go of deadlines, there will be chaos, but it isn't.

Ginger said, "We're still here, so yeah, let's bring our indigenous communities into the present and the future." She felt the institute's structure was ideal for faculty because it was yearlong, and they were given time to reflect. This gave them time to get to know each other and have an ongoing conversation.

Iris said Dr. Minthorn spent much time coaching her. This year went smoothly; I have one or two things I'm excited about thinking about the future. The first is, how can I do this in all my classes? Because every one of my classes needs to have a heart. I'm also passionate about how we spread this to more faculty. One of the things I am committing to is because I don't think this is widespread. I want to get the word out. So how do I start to give talks at conferences? How do I ensure that more of my colleagues read books like this? How do I help my friends get into the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute? I hope to do the work over the next couple of years.

Opal wants to communicate with her colleagues and share how she took the time to reflect on some of her practices in the classroom intentionally. And it motivated her to want to do more. She is examining and reflecting on how teaching can reinforce structures of power. Knowing it's a journey. She thinks the institute was a generous gift from Robin in particular.

Violet said going through the process of getting feedback from the tribal liaison was important. Thinking about the praxis or pausing and moment and having students reflect on their work was significant to understanding. It's not just about the process; the students and she were making sense of it about our lives.

Summary

Culturally responsive teaching occurs when faculty incorporate the history and current experiences of the student's cultures. This creates a sense of belonging and makes their classrooms more engaging and exciting to the students. Decolonizing classrooms include shifting power dynamics and letting students direct learning topics they want to explore. Finally, taking time and creating community is essential for students and will enhance their academic journey and future.
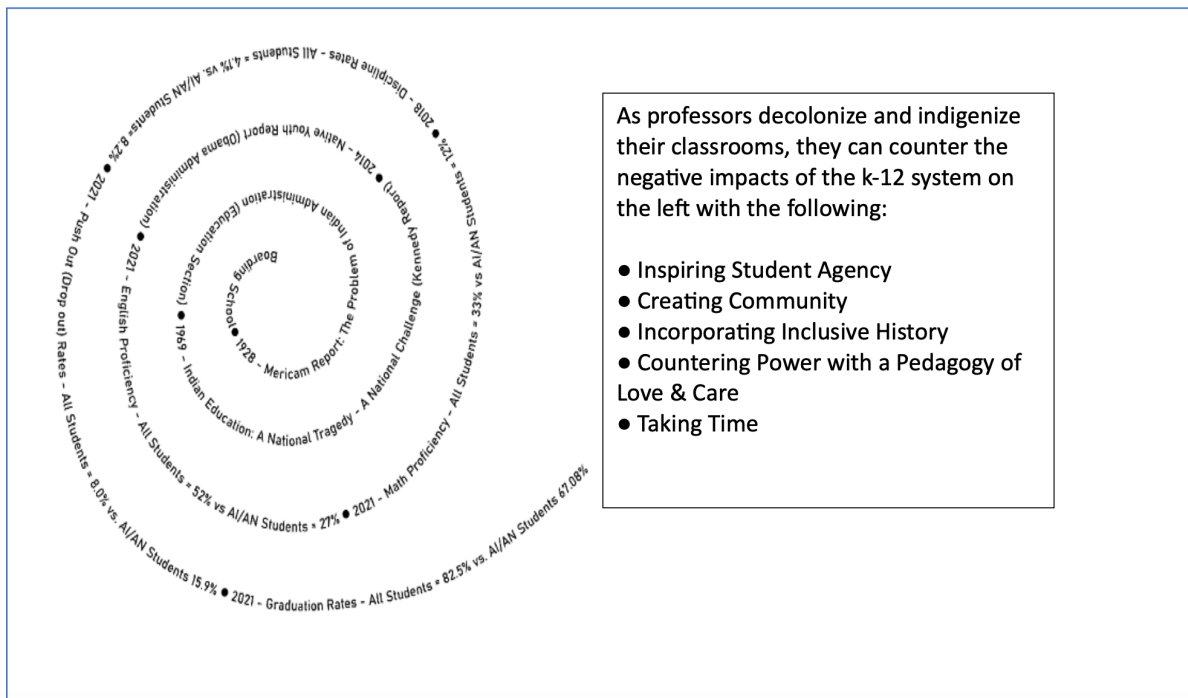
As professors decolonize and indigenize their classrooms, they can counter the negative impacts of the k-12 system on the left with the following:

● Inspiring Student Agency
● Creating Community
● Incorporating Inclusive History
● Countering Power with a Pedagogy of Love & Care
● Taking Time

Figure 4.1 Decolonizing & Indigenizing to Counter Impact of American Indian/Alaska Native Education Policies & Outcomes

Chapter 5: Implications for Educational Leadership

Decolonizing and Indigenizing the academy will improve American Indian/Alaska Natives' education by making sure American Indian/Alaska Natives are not invisible and having a strength-based curriculum. See figure 4.1. Personalized learning objectives will allow American Indian/Alaska Native students to be supported and "seen." Incorporating Land Acknowledgments and inviting the voices of local Tribes will benefit all students. And it is essential to go beyond Land Acknowledgments and find ways the academy can serve the Tribal Community.

A well-known adage is, "You can't pour from an empty cup." I found the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute an umbrella that helped educators decolonize their classrooms. Faculty received resources, and they mirrored what they learned in their classrooms. Some of what they implemented in their classes was taking time, providing access to knowledge gaps, and time to

discuss and reflect, and honoring what each student brought to the class, their histories, identities, and learning interest. Dr. Minthorn provided a lot of personalized learning opportunities for faculty. And paramount, she created a sense of community and belonging.

I recommend additional research on the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute, comparing interviews with the second cohort of participants to determine if commonalities surface between the two cohorts. It would be beneficial to continue building the capacity of faculty who have completed the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute and to have these faculty invite their fellow cohort members to continue learning and leaning into Decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts together. When they are comfortable enough, they can reach two peers who have not participated and begin introducing concepts of Decolonizing and Indigenizing to expand the sphere of influence of decolonizing. When enough capacity has been built, running more than one Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute at a time might speed up decolonizing the academy.

Simple low-hanging fruit could be for educators who have gone through the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute to write journal articles about their experiences and share them at conferences. Other recommendations would be to explore intersectionality and create partnerships with other Universities. The study could benefit from a more diverse sample of participants, including those from other higher education institutions or with different experience levels in decolonizing classroom spaces. This would help ensure the findings are more generalizable and applicable to various educational contexts.

Creating a class to teach in Teacher Preparation programs would be beneficial. It is much easier to mold a decolonized educator than to try to have seasoned educators unlearn and re-learn later in their careers. Finally, funding the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute and hiring a person to

oversee the logistics would show the commitment to decolonizing and indigenizing by the academy.

I want to be a changemaker within the education system, take the weapon of assimilation and miseducation and transform it into an agent of healing for our youth. I want to help decolonize our systems of education. I hope this paper articulates the importance of decolonizing the academy. To make what was meant to destroy us into what heals us.

The courage to see systems of inequality and the determination to change these systems is critical to student achievement (El-Amin, et al, 2017, p. 20). Teresa McCarty explores what culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy is and argues it requires an "Inward gaze" (McCarty, 2014). Pedagogical reform must de-center the teachers as the only resource of knowledge (Saltmarsh, 2010, p. 331). We must move toward a pedagogy that provides success in traditional education settings and sustains the cultural and linguistic competence students bring into the classroom (Paris, 2012). Since cultures are still growing, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy should be growing too (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75). It must change and remain current. I have seen an odd phenomenon in educational settings sometimes, especially in higher education, where I spent twenty years of my career, for an institution of "learning," which means "the process of acquiring new understanding, knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, attitudes, and preferences" it has one of the slowest "change" track records due to bureaucracy (Birnbaum, & Snowdon, 2003). I have worked with many colleagues stuck in strategies that are twenty years old or older. It doesn't matter what the discipline is; even in learning Cultural lessons, the concepts are often from the 1970s to early 1990s. They may be excellent concepts; however, new tensions and realities should encourage a balance of "foundational" concepts with innovative hypotheses. And we need Indigenizing Pedagogy Institutes in every significant higher learning institution.

One thing resonated loud and clear, all the participants had so many good things to say about Dr. Minthorn and Gabe. One person said the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute was a gift and a treasure. I could not believe how many participants mentioned the personalized attention, coaching, and mentoring they received from Dr. Minthorn. I am humbled to know how busy she must have been and yet had the time to nurture and create a community for our doctoral program. At the same time, she is a mom of a young one, a wife, and a daughter. I don't know where she got her energy because she always seemed smiling and calm. Other comments were, how they could not believe how much was accomplished in the short time she had been with the institution. I hope she finds time one day to document the process of creating a collaboration between the Muckleshoot Tribe and the University of Washington Tacoma while at the same time hosting the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute and teaching.

The success of the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute is time intensive. I like what Iris said, it is a wise strategy so that the college can have many allies and people who can support the work, and it won't have to fall on one person. In a way, I think our doctoral cohort had a similar experience as the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute because we, too, had a community and cared for each other. We had excellent reading materials, and I felt "seen." Our cohort of strong Indigenous women (and one honoree) have walked together through a lot, a pandemic, moves, births, people crossing over, stressful jobs, and the list could go on and on.

There has been much focus on trauma and the impact it has had on Indigenous people, so I would like to end with a quote from poet John O'Donohue:

> "Your identity is not equivalent to your biography. There is a place
> in you where you have never been wounded, where there's seamlessness in
> you, and where there is confidence and tranquility."

And from that place, we can intentionally prepare for the future, heal the past, and stand with

educators learning to decolonize their pedagogy. To All My Relations… \o/

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Faculty Participants of IPI

•How will you pass on your learning from the Indigenizing Pedagogy Institute?

•How did you examine the ways teaching can reinforce structures of power? What strategies did you employ to decolonize your classroom?

•What tools did you offer students to communicate and engage meaningfully and effectively in Tribal communities?

•What will you continue and what will you reexamine in the next academic year for your classes?

•Anything you'd like to add?