

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL COLLEGES AND STUDENT RETENTION

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NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL COLLEGES SUCCESS  
IN RETAINING STUDENTS

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By

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL COLLEGES SUCCESS IN RETAINING STUDENTS**

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The paper explores why Native American Tribal Colleges are more successful than state universities and colleges in retaining Native American students. In addition, a companion piece and critical component of this investigation is to examine various retention programs that have been successful in other learning institutions. The suggests identified methods of student retention could be extremely effective in improving the graduation rate of Native American students currently enrolled not only at tribal colleges, but also at state universities and colleges. The understanding of the Native Ways of Knowing can lead to effectively fostering and advocating tolerance and multiculturalism in all education systems.

## **PREFACE**

This study was designed to combine an American educational approach to the review of literature and educational research methods with another more distinctly intuitive approach that is coming to be known as “Native Ways of Knowing”. The author of the study also combined a historical time period research approach with the more cyclical approach to history which is more commonly associated with the “Ways of Knowing.”

Single-spaced indentation is used as an easily identifiable device to delineate interview comments as verbatim quotations from the tribal Elders who were most generous in expressing their views on the Waasa Inaabidaa (We Look In All Directions). This pattern will help the reader to easily and quickly identify the Elders’ comments. In addition, “I” is used for expressions in the first person in order to clearly identify who is speaking.

The reader will also find some exceptions to American Psychological Association (APA) style. The need for meeting University of Wisconsin-Platteville course expectations as required by the adviser of the paper overrode some APA conventions. Clarity of citations and references was sought throughout the paper. The Elders preferred to be identified by name, tribe, and nation.

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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

Tribal Colleges face many challenges, but the most basic and the most difficult obstacle is the task of teaching the members of the tribe about the value and importance of Tribal Colleges to the community. Recently, an employee of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, who was the Director of the Tribal College, expressed to the writer of this paper that the tribe greatly needs trained Mille Lacs Band members to fill many skilled positions on the reservation, such as teachers, police officers and other jobs that are essential for strengthening the community. To thrive, this tribe needs a vibrant workforce. The director went on to say, “It’s important to teach the tribal members about the importance of education for improving the tribe. And I would love to do it, but I don’t have the time and my staff doesn’t have the time to develop the idea or a college program.” (J. Maudrie, personal communication, August 1, 2010). The director then concluded by saying that although his hope was to develop an excellent Tribal College in his community, there was a major hurdle: The newly appointed administrative head, the Commissioner of Education, considered further development of the Mille Lacs Tribal College to be a low priority.

In 2009 on November 9, during the opening of the Tribal Nations Conference and Interactive discussion with Tribal Leaders, President Obama said, “We know that Native Americans face some of the lowest matriculation rates and highest high school and college dropout rates. That is why the Recovery Act (also) included \$170 million for Indian education and \$277 million for Indian school construction. That is why my budget provided \$50 million in advanced funding for Tribal Colleges that are often economic lifelines for a community. Students who study at a Tribal College are eight times less likely to drop out of higher education; they continue on to a four-year institution at a higher rate than students in community colleges; and nearly 80 percent end up in careers that help their tribal nation” (para. 21).

Native American students at mainstream United States colleges and universities are still struggling compared to their peers. In American high schools, teachers and administrators face a huge motivational and retention dilemma for students with special challenges in identified racial and ethnic groups. One example is that nearly one in three students drop out of high school. In the United States, African American, Native American and Hispanic students account for one-half of this number, a dramatic statistic which later results in their lack of college participation. (Bonk, 2009, pp. 58-59)

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problems and challenges addressed in this study are the following: “Why do Native American Students have higher dropout rates in Western (and especially American) colleges?” “Why do Native American communities need to invest in Tribal Colleges?” “Why are students who attend Tribal Colleges eight times less likely to drop out of higher education in Western colleges?”

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Algonquian:** 1 *usually Algonquin a:* An American Indian people of the Ottawa River valley **b:**

The dialect of Ojibwa spoken by these people **2 usually Algonquian a:** A family of American Indian languages spoken by peoples from Labrador to Carolina and westward into the Great Plains **b:** A member of the peoples speaking Algonquian languages. (Fire, 2009, p. 235)

**Anishinaabe:** Ojibwe person or “the good being or beings. The word is to be understood as meaning that human beings derive their goodness from their intent. Generally, men and women intend to do what ought to be done and what is of benefit” (Johnston, 1995, p. 239).

“Several related tribes nearby the Ojibwe also call themselves Anishinaabe. The Ojibwe also refer to all Native Americans as Anishinaabe, although each tribe designated with a preceding pre-noun describing a tribal characteristic.” (D . Aubid, personal communication, June 14, 2011 ).

**Elder:** Any individual tribal member over the approximate age of 50 who has gained life experience and knowledge through work, hunting, fishing, gathering, parenting, etc. is considered an Elder, and therefore has great respect within the community. Elders are sought out to give advice, make decisions, teach, supervise, and other tasks within the community. Elders are served by community members and encouraged to eat first at feasts. The words of an elder are often held in the highest regard. It is the responsibility of the young people and the tribe to take care of the needs of elders and to respond to their requests (Norrgard, 2011).

**Native American:** a.k.a. Turtle Islanders: A member of any of the aboriginal peoples of the Western hemisphere, *especially* a Native American of North America (usually the United States). “However, some Native Americans’ world view, like some traditional Ojibwe, still refers to North America as Turtle Island.” (D. Aubid, personal communication, June 14, 2011).

**Ojibwe:** A member of an American Indian people of the region around Lake Superior and westward. Also, Ojibwe can be a language classified as a member of the larger Algonquian Language Family.

**Traditional Native American People:** These Native Americans live close to other members of their tribe on or near tribal lands or reservations. Their Tribe has specific traditions, beliefs, language and worldview. These people practice the traditions of their Tribe as an integral part of their lives. They may or may not speak their Native language. (Fire, 2009, p. 235)

**Tribe:** A group of Native Americans who, as the group, have a sovereign status recognized by the U.S. Federal government. A federally recognized tribe can negotiate treaties with the federal government. The tribe determines who is a member of the tribe, because of the tribe's inherent rights. (Fire, 2009, p. 235)

**Success:** Is defined by and based on the "Native Ways of Knowing" (NWOK), a process for seeking life that American Indian people represent and reflect through their special connections to nature, family, community, and spiritual ecology. The Native Ways of Knowing addresses the ways that Native Americans consider the origins and nature of their way of life and how they come to know about this way of life (Fire, 2009, p. 15).

**Ways of Knowing:** This refers to worldview and beliefs about the origins of knowledge and learning. It consists of both epistemology and pedagogy (Fire, 2009, p. 235).

## **DELIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The literature review for the research was conducted in and through the Karrmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville over forty-five (45) days. Primary searches were conducted via the Internet through EBSCO host with ERIC and Academic Search Elite as the primary sources. Key search topics include "Native American Tribal College"; "Diversity";

“Teaching Native Americans”; “Deculturalization”; “ Native American Retention Programs”; “Successful Retention Programs”; “Successful Programs in Diversity”; and “Tribal College Succeed.” Article reviews and academic books are included. Definitions are a small part of this seminar paper.

The interviews for the study were limited to four Elders. Three Elders were from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota and the fourth was Rick St. Germaine, who grew up on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin. Joe Nayquonabe, Sr. Mille Lacs Band Elder helped the writer to learn about the Anishinaabe. Rick St. Germaine helped start the tribal college with and for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and remains very active with Mille Lacs. Informal interviews and e-mail exchanges were conducted with David “Niib” Aubid and Candi Aubid to discuss retention programs and Anishinaabe Philosophy. David “Niib” Aubid, a Mille Lacs Band Elder, is an Indian Studies Faculty member at the Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College. Candi “Ozhaawash” Aubid, a *Minisinaakwaang Community Member*, is also an Indian Studies Faculty at the Minnesota Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College.

In order to learn about the history of education, multicultural education and Native American Culture in the United States, the writer of this study investigated two books which focused on the following topics: The intersection of cultures; multicultural education in the United States; the global economy and decentralization; and the struggle for equality. (*The Intersection of Cultures: Multicultural Education in the United States and the Global Economy* and *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of the Education of Dominated Cultures in the United States* by Joel Spring.)

## **METHOD OF APPROACH**

The Method of Approach was based on a review of literature relating to research, studies, interviews and anecdotal evidence of Native American Tribal Colleges and Western Colleges and their impact on Native American Students. The findings were summarized and synthesized, and recommendations are made using a methodology borrowed from Fire's dissertation (which helped to develop a problem-solving approach to researching the Native American Tribal Colleges).

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to increase understanding of Native American learning from the perspective of the epistemology of the learners who have lived Native American experiences and attended or taught at a Native American Tribal College. Fire, 2009, p. 61). Another researcher helped to explain the usefulness of a case study approach, especially with a racial/ethnic focus: Yin (2003) says a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). This study provides an opportunity to listen to the stories of the elders and others involved in the administration and facilitation of learning at Tribal Colleges.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The chapter describes the methodology of the qualitative research completed, based on the following questions:

1. Why do Native American Students have higher dropout rates in Western colleges?
2. Why do Native American communities need to invest in Tribal Colleges?
3. Why are students who attend Tribal Colleges eight times less likely to drop out of higher education in Western colleges?

In order to capture the essence of the experience of the point of view of the Native Americans, a qualitative methodical approach was implemented to better understand the Native Way of Knowing.

#### **Core Components of this Study**

##### **Component 1: Qualitative, Descriptive Research**

Native American Tribes themselves are comprised of a diverse group of people, each with their own unique culture and traditions. The Anishinaabeg were selected because of their location, accessibility, and because it is my heritage. Some of the research was qualitative ... interviews ... conducted out of respect; this is the traditional way of learning: listening and observing. The study also included elements of my own experience and examples from my life's path. All research was grounded and reflected in the wisdom of the Anishinaabeg Elders. This naturalistic observation and introspection was a deep and personal self-examination of my past experiences, and includes an awareness based in intuition, analysis, and descriptions of my life experiences. This approach provides experiential examples of a Native American perspective to the research. The research explores the essence of what it means to be Anishinaabeg through a phenomenological approach, selected because this method looks for meaning. "Phenomenology is the study of events as they

appear in human experiences and not as discrete entities in themselves” (Granberg, 2002, p. 241).

Research on American Native history and culture must consider Indian perspectives.

Methodology using tribal histories and other information about historical and cultural processes not found in primary and secondary source materials avoids perpetuation of stereotypes. [American Native] scholars need to become involved in producing research rather than serving as subjects and consumers of research. Measures such as these will ultimately introduce a more accurate depiction of Native Americans experiences and lifestyle into the classroom (Granberg, 2002, pp. 241-242).

## **Component 2: Indigenous Research Methods**

This study also followed Indigenous Guidelines by conducting research that is meaningful to the Native American community in a way that serves a purpose for them. (Fire, 2008, p. 67)

This research method includes Tribal Feedback: A tribal member reviews the research before it’s published. The tribe will be given a copy of the final report for tribal libraries. Establishing the Trustworthiness of the researcher is an important element of the Indigenous Research method: “Triangulation can be used to ‘disconfirm major assertions.’ Also, in order to improve construct validity, during the writing phase, the researcher has drafts of the report reviewed by participants in the case study. This way, facts and interpretations can be corroborated and an opportunity is provided to make corrections” (Karlberg, 2008, p. 142).

## **Research Setting**

There was one interview conducted in the Native American community for two important reasons: Following the indigenous guidelines, and out of respect for Native American Elders. The Native American Elder was approached in the traditional Anishinaabe way, which is the offering of tobacco following by the request for an interview.

### **Millie Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band Elder**

Anytime you ask Elders or anyone for advice, you must always offer tobacco first. My brother says it is not proper to use the telephone; the tobacco needs to be handed to them. The proper way to offer tobacco is to take a pinch out of the tobacco pouch and hand that pinch to the person, then roll the pouch back up and give the whole thing to the person. You know it's sincere when somebody does it the proper way (Benjamin, 2011).

Tobacco is an essential part of any Native Americans culture, and tobacco is especially to Ojibwe culture. Tobacco or "asemaa" in Ojibwe, is a gift from the Creator ... a way of communicating with the Great Spirit ... the smoke delivers prayers.

An interview on the Mille Lacs Reservation, in East Central Minnesota: Some of the research will be qualitative, out of respect, and is the traditional way of learning by listening, observing and experiencing my life's path, which will be a reflection from the Anishinaabeg Elders' wisdom. "The nature of choosing words in an indigenous setting was to honor Native work or Native description by capitalizing words such as Native, American, Indian, Indigenous and Tribal" (Fire, 2008, pp. 68-69). The phenomenology archaeology approach was selected based upon on understanding cultural landscapes from a sensory perspective, learning from the "human experiences and not as discrete entities in themselves." It's important that this study is about "meaning and not explanation or cause, as most research on Native Americans" (Granberg, 2002, p. 241). The researcher provided gifts for all the Elders that participated in the research.

### **Research subject recruiting and informed consent**

Originally, the researcher planned to interview four elders in the Anishinaabe Nation and two others from other nations to learn more about Native American culture and insights related

to successful students in tribal colleges. Permission to interview the participants was granted by the University of Wisconsin – Platteville.

It was planned to interview Patty Loew to learn more about the “Native Way’s of Knowing”. However, no interview was conducted due to schedules. Patty Loew is an associate professor in the Department of Life Science Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Patty is also a producer for WHA-TV (PBS) and co-host of “In Wisconsin”, a weekly news and public affairs program that airs statewide on Wisconsin Public Television. Ms. Loew is a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. Ms. Loew suggested interviewing Faith Smith, to learn more about the Tribal Colleges Model for success. The researcher was unable to find Faith Smith, the LCO tribal member, who is president of NAES College, a system of tribal colleges.

The writer also planned to interview Joel Spring, a Ph.D. in educational policy studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Spring’s major research interests are history of education, globalization and education, multicultural education, Native American culture, the politics of education and human rights education. Spring’s books include: *A New Paradigm for Global School Systems: Education for a Long and Happy Life*; *Pedagogies of Globalization: The Rise of the Educational Security State*; *How Educational Ideologies are Shaping Global Society*; and *Education and the Rise of the Global Economy*. The intent was to learn more about multicultural pedagogies that need to be implemented into our educational systems because of our global economies. Schedules did not work out to conduct an interview.

Subsequently, the writer also intended to interview Richard D. St. Germaine, PhD, an Ojibwe and a professor at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire where he teaches American History. St. Germaine is a nationally known Native educator and a former Chairman of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe in Hayward, Wisconsin. The intent was to identify the support systems for Native American students. The writer requested an interview via e-mail, Richard St.

Germaine declined. The second e-mail requested feedback and suggestions for improving the research. After the second e-mail, Professor St. Germaine responded and provided insight and suggestions. Professor St. Germaine also suggested interviewing David “Niib” Aubid, who is the researcher’s uncle. The writer requested consent from Richard Germaine over the phone, to reference our informal interview in the paper. He agreed.

The Elders are the experts, and the researcher respects their direction taken during the interview and the path of the information they are willing to share.

The writer also planned to interview someone from my tribe about Anishinaabe Philosophy. To this end, Joe Jr. Nayquonabe, a member of Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe band provided contact information to interview Joe Nayquonabe, Sr., Mille Lacs Band Elder.

David “Niib” Aubid, Mille Lacs Band Elder and Candi “Ozhaawash” Aubid, Minisinaakwaang Community Member read the research paper to provide culture corrections and insights for the research. Professor Tom LoGuidice, adviser for the paper, suggested that the writer research Tribal Colleges instead of completing an education project, which in turn, could be a design fundamentals book for my course. In doing so, the writer rediscovered the richness of life taught to her years ago by her grandmother, Rose Skinaway: Learning to trust and respect life’s journey based in the Elders’ wisdom. Lastly, Rhonda Vlasak Bingham edited the paper and provided support in finishing the research.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the data were collected and transcribed, the researcher began looking for connections with the Native Way of Knowing, by identifying keywords and/or concepts frequently mentioned by the participants, and by thorough analysis of the transcriptions and listening to the Elders circle of life and understanding the Anishinaabe culture codes. Specific themes began to

emerge from the traditional method: teaching by storytelling by the elders. Analysis was conducted to determine the similarities and difference between the elders. Comparative analysis of the Native Way of Knowing and interviews from the elders is discussed in the presentation section.

### **SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY**

Native American Elders play an important role the in informal education; they are known as the “Keepers of the Wisdom” in the tribal community. Elders are parents, teachers, community leaders, and spiritual guides. The Anishinaabe’s oral tradition is called Ojibwemowin; the Elders provide wisdom by guiding one’s interactions and way of life through by the learning process of observation and listening (Meyer and Bogdan 2001, p. 210). The Ojibwe language contains and perpetuates the depth, subtleties, and nuances of the culture by Ojibwemowin (Granberg, 2002, p. 1).

Travel time of six hours was spent to conduct an interview on the Mille Lacs Reservation, in East Central Minnesota. The purpose of the journey was to present the traditional tobacco and to ask, in the respectful way, for advice from an Elder. Joe Nayquonabe, Sr., Mille Lacs Band Elder, agreed without any questions, and stated that he would be free the following week. The interview was remarkably easy to schedule, in contrast to my other requests for interviews. In Joe’s words, never question why someone is in your life; just accept that there is a reason. Joe agreed to do the interview and did not question my intention because he respects his life path. This simple fact and point of view made a profound impact on the writer’s personal outlook.

Following the interview, after reflecting on Joe Nayquonabe’s life story, the writer chose to add the history of Native American education in the United States to the literature of review. Joe provided amazing stories. The depth, subtleties and nuances of the stories provided a history of

education and cultural traditions for this paper and genuinely impacted my personal growth. Joe also provided stories about my grandmother, which were heartfelt and very personal.

As time passed, the writer traveled on and, in the traditional way, offered tobacco to show respect to the other Elders: David Niib Aubid, Mille Lacs Band Elder, Candi “Ozhaawash” Aubid, Minisinaakwaang Community Member and Richard St. Germaine, Elder.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study was to develop a model that describes the relationship between Native American students and Native American Tribal Colleges, and to provide support to other colleges that want to develop or improve retention programs for their students. This chapter presents the review of related research of the components of the Native Way of Knowing (NWOK), teaching theories, and instructional methods that are relevant to Native Ways of Knowing. In the effort to understand why and how students are successful at Tribal Colleges, the observations and research provides insight for colleges to use to help Native American Students transferring to Western educational institutions. The research also maps out new pathways for western colleges for developing more flexible, personalized, and interactive experiences for all types of learners in our global society, by providing illustrations of the culture differences that educators should be aware of when teaching Native American students.

The objective of the study is to examine tribal college programs and to “illustrate how tribal colleges have multiple roles in Native American communities and how the education by tribal college accounts for the student’s health, spirituality and growth of the reservation” (Cunningham and Parker, 1998, p. 48).

In considering the over 565 federally recognized tribes in the United States (Myers, 2010), it is not reasonable to presuppose that an understanding of one indigenous way of knowing represents all tribes. The perspective is the Native Way of Knowing of the Anishinaabeg, grounded in the wisdom of the Tribal Elders.

## NATIVE WAYS OF KNOWING

“Native Way of Knowing” (NWOK) views nature as interconnected: Humans are connected to nature, not independent from nature as in the Western view. One living with nature is the Native way; one living above nature or separate from nature is the Western way. For example, Western conservationists believe that they are keepers or controllers of nature and education, and therefore work to conserve nature and culture for human benefit. (Fire, 2008, p. 15)

Native American tribal colleges provide Native American students with correct schemas (cultural) to help create the right connections about learning, which improves learning. One researcher argues that students have individual schemas, which is a cognitive structure that consists of facts, ideas and associations organized into a meaningful system of relationship. (Cross, 1999, pp. 8-9) The concept of schema reflects on their personal (culture) experiences or/and pictures the topic base on self-reference from their past experience. Learning is about making connections. The Native Ways of Knowing is about making connections.

Native people relied on the Native Ways of Knowing since the beginning of time. Indigenous people throughout the world are sustained by these views as well as sustain those views. In spite of being assimilated into dominant cultures as the result of need or social upheaval, generations of native people live in the same places as their ancestors and learn the lessons of these places. (Fire, 2008, p. 25)

There are four areas of orientation that represent the approaches of Tribal Teachers; Native American, Sufi, Taoist, and East Indian traditions and will help people understand the Native Way of Knowing: (Fire, 2008, p. 25)

1. Teaching students to respect their life journey by focusing on the present. Tribal teachers use strategies to enable learners to focus their attention, engage only with

- learning that has a purpose, and to be flexible and adjust to the experience of the moment” (Fire, 2008, p. 26).
2. Teaching students when they are ready to learn or expressed the willingness to learn. This method promotes the development of self-reliance and self-determination. (Fire, 2008, p. 25)
  3. Listening to teachers and using self-reflection. “Native Teachers apply ‘special intellectual, ritual, psychological and spiritual teaching tools’ that facilitate deep levels of learning and understanding” (Fire, 2008, p. 26).
  4. Students become aware of their self-knowledge and the natural capacities of learning. Using natural capacities of learning, we call upon our inner resources to access thoughts and ideas that originate from dreams, life experiences, and in spiritual ways. “They need to understand why they are learning and how they have been deceiving themselves. Teachers usually help with the task at hand. (Fire, 2008, pp. 27-28)

Fire’s orientations are similar to Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy (is a theory specifically for adult learning) with added emphasis on cultural point of view. Andragogy, initially defined as the art and science of helping adults learn, has taken on a broader meaning since Knowles' first edition. The term currently defines an alternative to pedagogy and refers to learner-focused education for people of all ages” (Conner, 2004).

The andragogic model asserts that five issues be considered and addressed in formal learning: Understanding why something is important to know or do, freedom to learn in their own way (learning styles), self-referencing their own life experience and how it relates to the topic they are learning, participating in learning when they are ready and motivated to learn. Of course, there is a need for helping learners overcome inhibitions, behaviors, and beliefs about learning. Teachers need to implement an environment that is positive and encouraging for all

students. (Lieb, 1991).

Educators can help students reflect on their past schemas by creating deeper learning based on their knowledge and experience by understanding students' cultural perspectives and the importance of their culture.

To emphasize the importance of cultural ways of knowing in 1997, fourteen representatives of indigenous people from around the world including Maori, Okanagan, Blackfeet, native Hawaiian, Australian Aborigine, Cochiti Pueblo, Oneida, Cherokee, Ojibwe and Athabaskan met in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Their goals were to understand the needs of indigenous children and to develop instructional methods and to develop a knowledge base for indigenous peoples. Additionally, representatives brainstormed to develop strategies to balance native value with demands of the modern global economy (Spring, 2004, p. 224). It is important to note that, Spring (2004) summarized the 12 instructional models into five themes:

- Achieving multilingualism. This includes maintenance of native language and a resistance to language imperialism, particularly the domination of English.
- Maintaining a native understanding of history and culture.
- Creating curricula that reflect self-determination, cultural esteem and personal vision.
- Linking native and non-native worlds by learning how to cross borders between the two.
- Developing native way of knowing in the modern global world or, in other words, learning to think globally while relating the global to native culture. (p. 225).

Understanding the Native Ways of Knowing can help educators understand the learning experiences of Native American Students. Teachers must have a basic understanding of the multi-dominant cultures in America to provide equal education: By providing accurate learning and evaluating for all students. Educators must provide culture relevant content to all students to foster deeper learning.

Important differences exist among American Indians with regard to culture and identity due to tribal differences and affiliation that make broad generalizations difficult. However, there are some commonalities with regard to the values and worldview of Native Americans that are important to recognize since they provide a foundation for Native American student development and shape its direction. Core values held by many Native American Indians include the following: Sharing, cooperation, noninterference, present-time orientation, being-versus-doing, extended family orientation, spiritual causes for illness and problems, respect and harmony and balance. (Guardia and Evans, 2008, p. 239)

The following statements are illustrations of Native American students' core values. By giving away your possessions to others you will be honored and respected. Most Native Americans dislike competing and will work hard to avoid conflict. Native Americans "are taught not to interfere with others and to observe rather than react impulsively; they respect the rights of others to make their own decisions" (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 240). Time orientation is flexible and focuses on the present. Native Americans are not fearful of time because they believe in a correct path. Native Americans develop the inner-self by focusing on "Being" rather than by working hard to accomplish external goals. Tribal members are taught that community is the highest priority. Showing respect by listening to others, avoiding eye contact and speaking softly and in moderation are ways to value the community. Young people are particularly respectful of authority figures and elders because they were taught to always honor the wisdom and knowledge of older people. By being part of The Circle of Life, one knows that all living things are sacred; by creating balance and harmony in the universe, one creates a balanced life. When one is not in balance with the universe, one has illnesses and problems. (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 240)

The Native Ways of Knowing are the basis for teaching and learning in most Tribal Colleges

the methods are based on growth and reflection. The Navajo Community College is the first successful Tribal College in the United States, established in 1968, their philosophy:

Sa'ah Naagháái Bik'eh Hózóóhn (SNBH) is the Navajo traditional living system. SNBH places the human on a balanced and harmonious path to old age. The sacred path protects and brings in well-being and blessings in all aspects of one's thought (nitsáhákees), action (nahatás'), living (iiná), and sense of security and stability ("sihasin"). SNBH teaches that it is one's responsibility to be successful and productive in life. The consistent and very positive philosophy gives Navajo students attending Navajo Community College strength of purpose and an understanding of their unique place in the world" (Braithwaite, 1997, p. 20).

One critical reason why Native American Students are more successful at Tribal Colleges than at Western colleges and universities are that Tribal Colleges teach self-awareness and multilingualism and multiculturalism as part of their foundational curriculum. At Tribal Colleges, students learn about other cultures and are taught to have deep respect and reverence for all human traditions. In this way, students develop a broad appreciation for multiculturalism in our society and have a greater understanding about how it affects the global community in general which is the Native Way of Knowing.

Everyone is born into a culture and the attributes of any given culture are passed on, learned, shared and adapted. Culture is a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating and behaving. [Native American] culture is so much a part of our lives that we often forget that as we move through life, many others we encounter don't share our culture, its attributes, or its manifestations. So, learning about the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, and traditions of other cultures becomes one important step for us to take towards peace and harmony in the world. (Guofang, 2006, p. 140)

## **TOLERANCE AND EQUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN UNITED STATES**

Reform of the United States educational system is critical based on six important factors which is already reflected in the native way of knowing principles, where everything is united and connected: (1) Equal education; U.S. Constitution right to an equal education; (2) Multi-dominant cultures; dynamic population growth, which has been dramatically shifting the facade of the dominant western (white) culture in recent years; (3) Age of Technology; globalization as a result of new technology; (4) Creative communities; Gen Y's with ages ranging from 25-35; they are highly mobile, creating economic development (the migratory patterns of the Creative Class cuts across the lines of race, nationality and sexual orientation. People of varied backgrounds are all migrating to the same kinds of cities, moving to diverse and tolerant communities) and (5) Creative Education; changing the old educational formula based on the Industrial Revolution in American and (6) Education of Sustainable Societies; educating students to have “the capabilities for critical thinking, analysis, and global understanding of the interrelatedness of consumption, development, economic and foreign policies, and quality of life for people and the planet are almost non-existent” (Benavides, 1992, p. 37), in our education systems.

### **Equal Education**

The United States must expand beyond the Eurocentric hegemony paradigm that is currently being taught based on the outdated history of the dominant New World and European cultures, especially because the collapse of colonial domination over Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans and African Americans. The multi-dominant cultures in the United States have U.S. Constitution rights to an equal education; protecting linguistic and cultural rights in education. “In the United States, [multi]-dominant and immigrant cultures can still choose to

assimilate to the dominant culture and language. It's their right, to choose if they want a bicultural education" (Spring 2004, p. 97). In North America, our education systems will have to adjust to the growing diversity of cultures and adjust to develop new curriculum based on cultures and creative thinking in order to provide all members of equal education in our society.

### **Multi-dominant Cultures**

The dominant culture of the United States has shifted to a multi-dominant culture. Developing academic programs that promote tolerance and multiculturalism, such as the pedagogical methods used in Tribal Colleges, is not only appropriate, it's necessary based on the learning challenges that we're confronting in our rapidly changing world. "Ethnic and racial minorities (mostly blacks, Hispanic and Asian people) now account for 34 percent of the nation's population" (Robert, 2009, p. 24). "As of July 1, 2009, racial and ethnic groups other than non-Hispanic whites accounted for 48.6 percent of all births and 48.3 percent of children younger than five years" (Robert, 2010, p. 18). "The growing diversity of the population has required greater flexibility and has engendered a certain wariness about the acceptance of culturally defined 'right' answers" (Cross, 1999, p. 6).

Our growing population of diversity is going to cause a lot of issues because of the current economy. Teaching tolerance allows students to see that there are more similarities than differences among cultures. More than ever, we need to make sure that our educational methodologies are educating people to understand tolerance.

### **Why Diversity and Multiculturalism?**

Nathan Glazer, (1997) a Harvard sociologist, observed: 'We all now accept a greater degree of attention to minorities and women and their role in American history ...' (Frey-Ridgway, 1997, pp. 13-14). And it is timely to extend this concept to a worldview. Indeed, if citizens of the world

are to be a truly global, educated community, one must explore issues of diversity and investigate how multicultural matters affect society. This exploration and investigation can take on many forms. One common way is to offer learning opportunities, whether in education or training, to various populations in an effort to recognize that cultural differences influence an individual's perceptions of both themselves and others (Frey-Ridgway, 1997). This process is more than simply reading textbooks and completing tests; it requires that a variety of strategies be used to bridge multicultural gaps. Integrating a wide variety of instructional strategies into a learning environment facilitates broad teaching and learning applications such as are required in the content areas of diversity and multiculturalism. These opportunities provide participants with the chance to expand their consciousnesses and strengthen considerations of diversity and multiculturalism in an ever-increasingly complex global environment. (Rasmussen, Nichols, and Ferguson, 2006, pp. 265-266)

### **Age of Technology**

Understanding the issue of diversity is critical for the future development and success of education. Within the global economy, the expanding population of diversity is defined by subcultures rather than mass culture. Exposure to cultural diversity prepares students to effectively navigate a global landscape by encouraging an understanding of cultural differences and facilitating collaborative skill development. To this end, in order to function productively in the international community, being comfortable with new technology and social media is crucial for the success of our young students. Students will need to develop new skills and learn how to communicate effectively using the technologies that will be dominant in our global social media community. Our students need skills in problem finding, problem solving, information synthesis, knowledge, collaboration, originality and critical analysis.

The crucial point is that these technologies have vast educational applications that personalize, customize and individualize learning in its many formats. Technology tools, systems and recourses encompassing the Web 2.0 — tools for producing and sharing audio files, create a live, interactive talk show, uploading personally produced videos or news, or posting ones, daily or weekly thoughts and ideas — foster learner exchange, collaboration and the design of new course content and information. (Bonk, 2009, p. 328)

The Internet and new technologies could help preserve Native languages and traditions and would be able to be shared worldwide. An understanding of cultural diversity is also critical for the future development and success of any student because it provides an awareness of the role and effect that individual cultures have within the context of the larger society. Students need to know about the different responsibilities and repercussions for what is being communicated to them and how they fit in our society. For example, one of the biggest issues facing the Native American community is our present course of economic growth vs. mass consumerism, especially as exemplified by the “new world teen generation” where brand names are unifying a generation. While teens may speak different languages across the globe, their universal language of global consumption avidly unites them. Today, just like teens around the world, Native American youth are inundated by the harangues of mass media and consumption. Over time, constant flow of the universal language of global consumption becomes a form of deculturalization in the Native communities, where mass consumerism combines with cultural assimilation to threaten not only traditional structure and heritage, but also tribal language. “Native languages provide access to traditional history, heroes, customs and beliefs (Spring, 2004, p. 225). Spring also says, “without preservation of traditional languages Native cultures become lifeless forms” (p. 225).

As stated earlier, within the global economy, the expanding population of diversity is defined

by subcultures rather than mass culture. A countermeasure to deculturalization is the philosophy of developing a cultural tolerance and multilingualism model for educators that is similar to the Anishinaabe Philosophy, which encourages an individual to develop maturity by learning to accept and appreciate others. As an educational model, this method fosters the best perspective for cultural diversity by helping students to think about aspects of personal heritage and to recognize their own biases and prejudices, and how these behaviors affect their entire community. It's of paramount importance that our society invest in the models of indigenous education by focusing on educating for the child, family and community, which many believe are the essence of human happiness (Spring, 2004, p. 225).

### **Creative Communities**

Futurist Florida an expert on tolerance stated in an interview. Economic growth is driven by creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

“For the first time in human history, the basic logic of our economy dictates that further economic development requires continued development and use of creative human capabilities. Creative workers, who are willing to take risks, make innovative decisions, and think critically will set them apart in the Creative Economy. In today's workplace, we have to realize our full talents: Self-express and self-actualize” (Laff, 2007, pp. 40-41).

An example of a changing subculture that is quickly emerging out of dominant culture is the Creative Class. Florida's analysis correlates these factors with economic growth and suggests that communities that have these demographic, community and economic characteristics are more likely to be economically successful. Communities need to attract young, educated and creative people who can contribute directly to economic growth. Conversely, the lack of diversity, tolerance, and a knowledge-based business base leads to a 'brain drain' of this

population as they migrate to more attractive Creative Class communities. (Holzheimer, Terry and Hodgin, 2005, p. 35)

There are some general characteristics of the Creative Class that include the following:

- In the United States, they are the Gen Y's with ages ranging from 25-35; they are highly mobile, the migratory patterns of the Creative Class cut across the lines of race, nationality and sexual orientation. People of varied backgrounds are all migrating to the same kinds of cities, moving to diverse and tolerant communities,
- People in the Creative Class are highly educated, usually have a Bachelors or advanced degree, and have creative occupations with a “super creative core,” for example, scientists, writers, artists, educators, architects, engineers, athletes, and entertainers,
- The ‘super creative core’ is the principal measure of the Creative Class. The Creative Class has a technology base and thrives on innovation. As a whole, people in the Creative Class are as likely to be descendants of a foreign-born population. Having arrived in an accepting and acceptable city, they tend to settle at the diversity-friendly location and look for affordable housing. (Holzheimer, Terry & Hodgin, 2005, p. 35)

Florida’s assumption that the creative class moves to communities based on three “T’s” of economic growth; Technology, talent and tolerance. Tolerance is a reflection of high levels of acceptance of ethnic and lifestyle differences, which are exhibited by the general population in the target location. Florida believes that these attitudes, contribute directly to economic growth. (Holzheimer, Terry & Hodgin, 2005, p. 35)

In today’s multicultural world, tolerance, respect, and appreciation for each other’s cultures is an imperative if we are to live peacefully as global citizens. “Everyone has a culture and cultures are learned, shared, and adapted. Culture is a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving” (Wan, 2006, p. 140).

The Native American Tribal Colleges are aware of these concepts, by providing thematic approaches in their educational systems, by integrating multiculturalism into student life experiences at their colleges, which enhances the students' awareness of diversity and allows them to see there are more similarities than differences among cultures. This pedagogy teaches tolerance. (Wan, 2006, p. 140)

### **Creative Education**

Western education systems were designed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to create a work force for the Industrial Revolution both in Europe and America. Focusing on math, science and language skills were essential for jobs in the Industrial Revolution. The current system is not working in the United States, illustrated by the fact that there is a “30 percent high school dropout rate—in the African American and Latino communities it’s over 50 percent, and in some of the Native American communities it’s nearly 80 percent—you can’t just blame the kids for it” (Azzam, 2009, p. 24).

Most of the non-white students view education a waste of their time. Educators are not engaging students and students are not discovering the things that excite them because there is no connection for deep learning (Cross, 1999). The culture of standardized testing in the United States is totally counterproductive; most of our education systems are “becoming so dominated by this culture of standardized testing, by a particular view of intelligence and a narrow curriculum and education system, that we’re flattening and stifling some of the basic skills and processes that creative achievement depends on” (Azzam, 2009, p. 25). Western education systems are not making connections with the students because it was not designed for critical thinking. The main design was only to create a literate workforce for the economic time of the Industrial Revolution.

The question is how teachers can motivate the new generation, who are comfortable with cell phones, downloading music and watching the TV. Plus have five or six windows open on their computers. (Robinson, 2009, p. 18) Ken Robinson (2009) states our world is experiencing “two major drivers of change—technology and demography. Digital technology is developing at a rate that most people cannot grasp. It is also the biggest generation gap since the rock and roll era” (p.17). There are solutions. For example, one may begin implementing the new generation’s technologies into practices to preserving the past by sharing information to other people in the world.

In addition, one must consider integration of the new technology with the languages on the web. Livemoch is one of the world’s largest language social networking learning communities. Online communities are morphing into language learning tools and they are free. The communities are teaching each other their different languages (Bonk, 2009, p. 338). Integration of new technologies into teaching activities would help close the learning gap of young students. This social dimension is creativity and innovation. Most original thinking comes through collaboration and through the stimulation of other people’s ideas. Nobody lives in a vacuum. Even people who live on their own—like the solitary poets or solo inventors in their garages—draw from the cultures they’re a part of, from the influence of other people’s minds and achievements (Azzam, 2009, p. 25). Azzam’s (2009), makes a critical point related to diversity by saying the schools need “A policy for creativity in education needs to be about everybody, not just a few” (Azzam, 2009, p. 23). Educators must promote and teach collaboration and diversity rather than promoting homogeneity.

## **Education of Sustainable Societies**

The education committee of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED): One needs to understand education as the process, which enables human beings and societies to reach their fullest potential in order that they might live in harmony among themselves and in nature. We also believe that education is critical for promoting equitable and environmentally sustainable development and improving the capacity of peoples, nations, and countries to address environment and development issues. Because of its role in human fulfillment and in promotion of harmonious coexistence in nature, education must be environmental and just in its essence, spirit and practice. ... Educators in coalition with all other groups and peoples, organizations seeking a better quality of life to practice this understanding of education and to promote the possibility to develop the political will to work for sustainable societies (Benavides, 1992, p. 37).

Globalization has escalated because of new technologies and population growth. New technology and social media are building new bridges and connecting different cultures. Social media is a great example of narrowcasting as an alternative to broadcasting; subculture rather than mass culture; and tailored products instead of mass production. (McCoy, 1998, p. 2) Women are blogging about products and services and people are listening. Customers are purchasing products and services based on other customers' opinions rather than corporate promotional campaigns, marketing, and advertising.

In the United States most of the professionals many become very sophisticated in their area of work, but are unable to see the integral relationship between environment and development. The failure to understand that the domestic policy of their nation is to have a foreign policy of exploitation, domination and intervention in our nations, which results in our poverty and in millions of "disadvantaged," some of whom U.S. citizens out of ignorance call "less-fortunate"

people. (Benavides, 1992, p. 37)

Administrators' implementing programs on global sustainability and tolerance will help students become global citizens. The two qualities have dominant factor in our rapidly changing world. The United States education system will need to teach our students how to navigate in our new global society. The Native Way of Knowing views nature as interconnected with humans and connection to the universe, a multi-perspective of the world through teaching different types of multiple intelligences to help students follow their correct path and respect of the world. Native Americans understand that everything and everyone is connected. As researcher Cajete (2005) has argued, "For American Indians, as with other nature-centered indigenous cultures around the world, the natural environment was the essential reality, the place of being" (p. 74).

The Native Way of Knowing is similar to Howard Gardner eight multiple intelligence. First introduced in 1983, the multiple intelligences model was widely known and utilized in educational settings. Gardner believes that these "types of intelligence are a result of a neurological predisposition in individuals and these operate within discrete sections in the cerebral cortex" (Smith, 2008). Gardner dispose that there are at least eight ways ("intelligences") people understanding the world: Linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, body-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, naturalistic (environmental) and intrapersonal. (Smith, 2008) The Native Way of Knowing also teaches the following intelligences that Gardner is struggling to add to the list of intelligences; Existential intelligence, spiritual intelligence and moral intelligence (Smith, 2008). The researcher examined the cultural and historical influences inherent within the Tribal College educational experiences of Native American adult learners in order to illustrate why Anishinaabe pedagogy should be included in the Western education environment. (Fire, 2009, p. 2)

The results of this study will advise instructional design, faculty-learner interaction, and

learner support services for ‘culturally connected’ learning: Fosters global sustainability and tolerance. Most importantly, this study can contribute towards improving the economic well being of Tribal areas through more affective [tribal colleges] workforce development and learning opportunities. (Fire, 2009, p. 2)

### **ECONOMIC SUCCESS VERSUS CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Spring (2004) recommends all American’s should have an understanding of how to be financially successful in our society. In the United States in order to be successful you have to have an understanding for the power elite, not the dominant (white) culture. Every education systems should teach about this so everyone can participate in the financial opportunities that are offered by the group. One example, INROADS is a non-profit organization that is designed to teach talented college students from the dominant cultures (Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Asian American and African Americans) how to be successful in corporate America or assimilate in Corporate America. Culture characteristics of power elite: “dress, manners, religion, educations, speech patterns and accents, areas of knowledge, golf and hobbies” (pp. 24-25). One corporate manager referred to the sharing of cultural capital as being comfortable. In Spring’s words, comfort, chemistry, relationship and collaboration (p. 24) are what are important in their world.

### **SURVIVAL CLASS FOR STUDENTS IN WESTERN EDUCATION**

Colleges must develop culturally driven “survival” classes for students that are not part of the western dominant culture to assist them in the transition to college life. (Braithwaite, 1997, p. 23) It is not recommended to assimilate only educate students about the differences between what economic success versus cultural awareness. By virtue of its definition, an assimilation results in

a loss of culture identity, and as evidence by research, does not promote self-confidence, motivation or determination in students. Assimilation results in low self-esteem, self-confidence or feeling like you don't fit in or are out of the mainstream, which are some of the risks for developing serious alcohol and drug problems. "Drug use is associated with a variety of negative consequences, including increased risk of serious drug use later in life, school failure, and poor judgment, which may put people at risk for accidents, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex, and suicide" (AACAP, 2008, p. 1).

### **ANISHNABBE PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES**

Anishinaabe is very complex it has several meanings based on your personal experience and how you see the world, Waasa Inaabidaa (We Look In All Directions). In this section, the intention was to define it, in the process of researching the researcher realized it's flexible, it's alive. It's like defining a line. Line is a point set in motion only once it starts moving can it be defined, straight, curve, gestural and so on. Anishinaabe is a life set in motion. It's not until you start living can you see it.

"If we lose the language, we are no more, we may become something else, but we will not be Anishinaabe, Walt Bressette, Red Cliff Ojibwe, Minnesota. Language defines the Anishinaabe people as a culture thriving in a unique relationship with the Creator and the natural world. As the second-largest tribe on the North American continent, they have maintained a vast history through oral tradition for thousands of years, long before European contact" (Norrsgard, 2011).

Anishinaabe's oral tradition is called Ojibwemowin, which is the cornerstone of how people learn by making connections; this method fosters deep learning and wisdom.

Plato's critique on writing and rhetoric and oral traditions are similar to the Anishinaabe view's of education. "Although many people assume that the discourse of pedagogy and

technology [writing] is a fairly recent phenomenon, in fact, Plato inaugurated this discourse in the fourth century B.C.E. criticized the use of the technology [writing] for teaching and learning purposes” (Roth, 2009, p. 125). Writing becomes “invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding.” Only offering learners the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom,(is) learning from instruction without direction, since they are not wise, but only appear wise. “Writing is an aid to memory, not memory itself, and a passive medium that instills in readers the ‘appearance’ of wisdom but lacks the qualities to teach true knowledge” (Roth, 2009, p. 126). Unlike the holistic and lively exchange and engagement of ideas characterized by a face-to-face dialogue, writing fails to activate permanent and deep learning. Reading and writing is passive and depersonalized. (Roth, 2009, p. 125)

Plato’s three principles about education:

First, that education must be interactive, for which the method of dialectic is most effective. Second, that interactivity is contextualized, and discourse that springs from it is personalized to an individual. Contextualized learning through the dialectical method stimulates and requires the activation of all one’s senses, thereby making it a holistic style of learning. Lastly, when learning occurs holistically, true knowledge and wisdom are instilled. (Roth, 2009, p. 126)

The fundamental essence of Anishinaabe life is unity, the oneness of all things:

Anishinaabe people believe that the wellness of the mind, body, spirit, and natural environment is an expression of the proper balance and harmony in the relationship of all things. Although Native American spiritual beliefs and practices can take the form of elaborate ceremonies, the basis for these ceremonies is expressed mainly in the interaction of everyday life. In Native American tradition, the Circle is a symbol of power, relation, peace, and unity. Each person stands at the centre of the circle and is

identified by their heart. The circle serves as a reminder of the sacred relationship we share with all living beings in this world, and of our responsibility as a helper and contributor to the flow of the Circle of Life by living in harmony and balance with all our relations. In Native American culture, the term “Medicine” refers to “the essence of life or an inner power. (Portman and Garrett, 2006, p. 458)

It is essential to know who the Anishinaabe are in order to understand their worldview and philosophical priorities. It’s a special way of seeing the world:

According to the Anishinaabe worldview, humans did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Therefore, kinship among all of creation, not the mastery of our relatives (other humans, animals, plants, etc.) is vital to harmonious living. To adhere to this philosophy is to be guided by the following values: Dabasendizowin (humility), Debwewin (truth) Zoongide’iwin (courage), Gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty), Manaaji’idiwin (respect), Zaagi’idiwin (love) and Nibwaakaawin (wisdom). Lastly, “seek guidance from Elders and qualified advisors” (Leech Lake Tribal College, 2011).

“Native American traditions cannot be taken out of the context of their relationship to the four constructs of spirituality (Creator, Mother Earth, Great Father), community (family, tribe), environment (daily life, nature, balance), and self (inner passions, thoughts, and values)” (Portman & Garrett, 2006, p. 455).

The author’s Indian teaching is critical to understanding this paper. I have been taught that there are seven directions in every instance of the present. There are the four cardinal directions, each with its own teachings, as well as above to Creator, and below to Mother Earth. But it is the seventh direction that is ultimately the most important. The seventh direction is the centre, and the centre is where I find myself. It is my responsibility to journey to the six directions, but it is

my duty to return to the centre with the new teachings. I have received in those directions. At the centre I must take those teachings received, and integrate them into my life as one being among many. I have been told that in doing this I will ultimately find the centre of the centre, that is, the underlying codes of a good life. (Rheault, 1999, p. 55)

### **Native Americans Perspective**

**The Native American Perspective sections are based on interviews and lectures with the identified Native American People from the Waasa Inaabidaa (We look in all directions) website and six-part historical documentary series for public television featuring the history and culture of the Anishinaabe-Ojibwe people of the Great Lakes, (Norrsgard, 2011).**

#### **Edward Benton-Benai, Lac Courte Oreilles:**

According to what we've been given to in the lodge that originally there were eight [original clans], but seven came to the earth. And in some kind of order it was the loon clan, the crane clan, the fish clan, the bear clan, the martin clan, the eagle and the deer clan. Each of those animals brought some quality, some gift, and some characteristic to human kind. And they also brought with them order, and that then was transferred to, given unto humankind. And so the clan system, not only did it deliver skills, characteristics, tendencies in that manner, but it gave pattern, it gave reason, it gave logic to the people.

Clan members were considered relatives and a child inherited the clan of their father at birth. One could not marry within their clan and each clan had a particular role in the community. For instance the crane clan was the leaders and the martin clans were the warriors, and similar roles. The clans were a form of community organization and governance. (Norrsgard, 2011)

**Wilf Cyr, from Northwest Bay in Canada, speaks about linguistics, and the beauty of the Ojibwe language, and the importance of preserving indigenous languages (The language is part of being Anishinaabe), in Norrsgard (2011) website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/W\\_Cyr\\_Ojib\\_lang\\_Outtake.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/W_Cyr_Ojib_lang_Outtake.pdf).**

The single most important fact about Anishinaabemowin is its single most value ... is life and life is the single most important thing for everybody. But when you start examining

the Western mind, it is structured very differently in terms of how it is going to influence your thought. And it also is very different from Anishinaabemowin.

I see these things. I may not see them very clearly or I may not articulate them that clearly, but I see them. And I can pretty much formulate a philosophy why we are the way we are, why we are different, and it is based on the languages that we use to communicate.

And so, this total immersion program, Vision 20/20, we will come up with a more focused plan. We will have a clear mandate and that is to be in the field of education. We will continue to teach our children to be successful in societies, the Western society and our own Anishinaabe society. But this is sort of like the bridge that brings us closer to continue, perpetuate our existence as unique people, based on Anishinaabemowin. Then, this schooling, which we are all affected, day to day, this will hopefully prepare people, those that want to go deeper into Anishinaabe culture, Anishinaabe religion, or anything that has to do with Anishinaabemowin, still maintaining its beliefs and its philosophies based on orality, because orality perpetuates relationships. (p.3 para. 3)

[Anishinaabemowin (language) indicates that life is the single most valued thing, whereas in Western language, it is “things.” Lep, a linguist from American University, did major research in the 80’s, and found that English language is predominantly made up of nouns, and the percentage he used was 60% nouns, and Anishinaabemowin is 80% verbs.] Understanding these different philosophies and you can extract deep philosophies just knowing those two things. To speak the Western languages is to shape values. The Western Speaker acquires houses and we begin to subdivide our lots, and try to acquire cars and other material goods. Different people have different levels of value to that aspiration. (p. 9)

[Concepts, words, words tell a lot. And the way our language is structured, because it is inflectional.] That means that the little units that have meaning, they are not necessarily words, but ... all have a common connection to this source, which is language vitality. So when one speaks Anishinaabemowin, [one is connected.] But because the language is based on orality, relationships, then each [person's] definition is valued because each [person's] definition is based on experience.

And so, when one creates, for example, a dictionary, and then that becomes the predominant dictator in how you are going to understand words. And English or Western language is based that way. It was not always like that, but that is the change referred to before. You know, if one follows that model is not going to work any differently. [To personalize] ‘We will become the same way, where we’re going to lose this connection, this vitality of the importance of life. This is just another example that indicates life is so important for Anishinaabe that each person’s definition of their word, as they understand it, is viable. And it’s acceptable’ [Personal interpretation of Leap by the Author]. (p. 10)

Well, the Anishinaabe, Mr. Benai, ... did that Anishinaabe. That is the very beginning or the phrase, or whatever you want to call it, Anishinaabe, you can take it further into Anishinaabemo and then take it further by saying Anishinaabemowin, or you can change tenses, like Kianishinabemo, Wianishinabemo. There is your transformation again. So it depends where you want to take it. It is very complex, very sophisticated, and it’s very flexible. (p. 20)

Okay, the phrase “Waasa inaabid” specifically refers to a— a particular person or one person. So if you wanted to translate ‘let us all look’ then we would say, “Waasa Inaabidaa” That includes— that’s inclusive. “Waasa inaabidaa” is let us all look forward or far into the future.

Of course, wherever your vision leads you, kind of like prolifically , ... or sideways, then it depends on your physical vision. That's what it's referring to. It's something that we know. It's something that we can see. That's what it's referring to. Those directional markers are different. They may be very circular or round.

Waasa mizi inaabidaa, and that means to look at all points or of course when you look at all points you're going to see all things that are within that, and it's the whole circle, mizi, it's all around, total. (p.30)

In order to understand different cultures one must learn their language. Several languages using one word to represent multiple meanings, the moment defines the meaning.

**Gerald White, Leech Lake Ojibwe, his understanding of Anishinaabe, in Norrgard (2011)**

**website, [www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/More\\_Series\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/More_Series_Overview.pdf):**

“These animals and the plants and everything else, their spirits feed our spirits, you know if we don't have the fish, if we don't have the deer, if we don't have the plants to feed us spiritually we are no longer Anishinaabe” (p. 5).

Understanding the Native Americans perspective is a paramount of importance to the Elders. The phenomenological approach is using human experiences it provides insight to the information that is being presented. It's making it come to life with life experiences. Educator should be aware of these interpretations of words to help communicate with Native American students.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION

#### **Finding 1. Interview: (Video) – Anishinaabe Philosophy**

Joe Nayquonabe, Sr., Mille Lacs Band Elder, is the District I Representative on the Nay Ah Shing school board. The intention of the interview was to learn about the Anishinaabe philosophy by listening to his life journey. Joe Nayquonabe is an extraordinary person, which is reflected in his life story and the way in which he told me his circle of life.

#### **Cultural characteristics – Traditional Anishinaabe informal education**

Joe Nayquonabe was born in 1944 and all Indians born at the Indian health service in Klokay, Minnesota. Joe stated that his grandparents raised him until age seven; the duality of this role supports the grandparents with an added role in the community and educates Ojibwe language and cultural traditions to their grandchildren.

And, as part of the culture, my grandparents were getting older, ... getting up in the years, and what my parent did was, they didn't give them to me, ... I was kind of keep them busy, ... make them still contribute to our society. By doing that they took me a very early age and they raised me and I want to thank them because they taught me the Ojibwe language. I stayed with them until I was about seven years old. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

It was very traditional for Native American children to live with their grandparents at an early age in order to teach the children the language and traditions of their culture. "Our grandparents are closer to the traditional path than our parents, and they were taught by their grandparents and so on, spiraling back to the beginning of the people" (Meyer and Bogdan 2001, p. 207).

## **Equal education and tolerance**

Joe started school at age 6 and only spoke Ojibwe his Native language. He recalls a young lady who only spoke Ojibwe and was also raised by her grandparents, she was the only one he could communicate with at school. They both experience verbal harassment from the other children because they didn't speak English.

We did pick up English very quick. I still think about that. I remember the first time they were trying to teach us how to read. We read from the left hand column, the first word, rather than go from left to right, I went down. I read first words from each line from the top down and I went to the top and came back. I remember my classmates trying to follow what I was reading and they would look around stunned, wondering "where am I at here?" My teacher looked at me and she never said anything to me. She just looked at me like she was questioning me, not in a manner, more curiosity than anything. I caught on to that too. I started reading from left to right then. It was a good learning lesson. ... I would catch myself. I would be speaking with my grandparents and rather than answering them in Ojibwe, I would answer them in English. I don't know if it was because of the way we were treated and that is why I didn't speak it. I almost forgot it but it came back. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

Educator should be aware of the nonverbal communications they are sending to students. By understanding multiculturalism the teacher could have used the reading lesson as a teachable moment to explain that not everyone reads left to right. In my opinion the teasing stopped Joe from speaking his first language, which is why I stop speaking Spanish or wanted to learn Ojibwe from my grandmother because fitting in was my top priority when I was a child.

Educators need to implement comfortable and safe environments for all students, like stopping verbal harassment.

### **Western deculturalization**

It's amazing that the tools that the United State government placed to civilizing Native American children: trading houses (post), missionary stations and small reservations (praying towns) are still affecting the people in our society today. It personally affected Joe and had profound impact on his life. Later in life when Joe reflected on the Vietnam War this experience affected him again especially the concept of going to "Hell" (fear), which only made him have stronger connection with the native way of knowing. Due to the fact that Joe's grandparents were in his life and stop the deculturalization was powerful.

While attending [Burrell] School, Friday afternoon they had religion and an alliance mission on our grounds along with the catholic service across the street from us. They are still there too. We had a kid that went to the catholic services and would be excused at noon to go to his religion services and learn about the catholic religion. I didn't go because of what my grandfather told me, so I stayed at school but my curiosity was bugging me. I wanted to see what these guys were doing. So, one day, I snuck over to the catholic services or the religion class, and when I walked in there, there was this nun that made me feel real bad. She said, "Now here's a guy who is going to go to hell because he doesn't believe in Jesus" or "God" or something. I can't remember what it was. I asked the guy sitting next to me, "what is this hell?" and he said, "It was a place where bad people go and burn for the rest of their lives in pain." I thought, "Whoa, I'm not sure I want to go there." So, when I went home, I told my grandfather, "Do you know what? If I don't become one of them I am probably going to go to hell. It's a bad place." He looked

at me and he said, “You’re not going anywhere. Where you are going is where the Indians go. If they go to hell, that’s ok.” I thought about that and I thought, “Ok, well.” It really make me, it really make me. But it made sense to me. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

### **Culture - spiritual healing ceremonies**

Joe had the opportunity to learn about Mide' (Great Medicine) to help with his understanding of the native way of knowing. Mide is a very private and spiritual healing ceremony.

At that time, at an early age there, they put me through the Mide' too and I thank them for that. One reason is, at our ceremonies, we will have funerals, and when they would sing the Mide' song all of the Indians would stand and sing and dance to it. Now in present day when I go to funerals and they sing the Mide' song very few Indians get up and dance to it. I think that is something we need to revisit again. I think some people are doing Mide' for the sake of doing it and not for the right purposes. My thoughts are, because I see people coming back, going through the Mide' four times and thinking, “Whoa, that’s kind of quick to be doing that.” Then talking about it, I’m not so sure that is supposed to be done here. But, maybe that is there way of doing it too. I don’t know. But, to me that is not the way it is supposed to go and that’s just my opinion. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

The Native American “education builds upon itself. What was knowledge for the earlier generations can be adjusted to fit present situations. Without the ancestors’ knowledge as a solid base, it will not be building, but instead just laying down a new base each generation” (Meyer and Bogdan, 2001, p. 209).

## **Drums our the heart of the community**

At a very early age, about 11 years old, they put me on the drum. I also belong to the drums here. I stayed with that and am still with that. The drum they put me on is my drum and I am the drum keeper along with my cousin. We keep that drum. (J.

Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

It's an honor in the community to be a keeper of a drum. Joe is very humble. The drums are the heartbeat of the community and "the drum has a spirit, so we follow it where ever it takes us" (Ray, 2009).

## **Native Americans Perspective**

**Fred Ackley, Sokaogon (Mole Lake) Ojibwe, Wisconsin discussion why the drums are the heart of the community in Norrgard, (2011) website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Ackley\\_Sokaogan\\_Econ.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Ackley_Sokaogan_Econ.pdf):**

They're hymns to the plant and to the Great Spirit to know that we're giving thanks for everything, the nourishment and everything they're doing for us and that's why we're asking that plant or the animal, whatever you take, to give up their life, and we respect that. When you go out and waste it, then you're being disrespectful, then you get other things that happen to you, because you forget about the Great Spirit who placed everything here on the earth including man.

It's set up like this, there's the earth and the sky. When the drum starts the vibration from that drum goes up and goes down, and that beat of the drum, when the song comes out, they're singing to the higher spirits. When you're dancing you move your feet on the ground. You're letting mother earth know you're respecting her. So all this talk when I was dancing when I was young... always dance light on the earth, that's your mother, respect her. So the four layers on the earth will hear you and the four layers in the sky will hear you and Great Spirit hears all and that's what it's about, the dancing, the drumming, and the singing. So you connect everything around the world this way and that way in the spirit world too. So everything is connected there and that's what you're doing when you dance and sing. You're really praying to give thanks for what you've received. No matter if it's maybe a child or mourn a member of the family, or child, or food, you may give here... or people that prepare the food for you, whatever you're asking for, all your thanks is what you give. (pp. 4-5)

## **Indian relocation act.**

The relocation program was controversial. Once again the U.S. government believed that industrial jobs would free the Native American from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) control, by exposing them to improved education, and provided a means to stop Native American poverty. “Others believed that the program forced Indians to leave reservations without improving living conditions or the quality of job training” (United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2011). Initiated within the bureau in 1948 and supported by Congress from the 1950s on, the relocation program was designed to transform the predominantly rural native population into an assimilated urban workforce, so they could be free and to terminate tribes. (Spring, 2007, p. 118)

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) created the Relocation Program in 1952 to sever Indian federal trust status and impose Euro-American values on [Native Americans] all under the guise of benevolence. Led from reservations to urban areas, [Native Americans] found the problems of their reservations in their new locations: few employment opportunities, poor housing conditions, and failing school programs (Laukaitis, 2005, p. 143).

The relocation program created the Urban Native Americans; many have no financial support for higher education, high chemical dependency and high suicide rate:

Urban [Native Americans] are not motivated generally for a higher education because of a lack of financial aid. Their position bars them from BIA and tribal ties by monies. It is for this reason of severing tribal ties by relocation that I do not believe the program to be a great success. Many of these people are left to die in cities. The suicide rate and those jailed weekly for drunkenness would justify this accusation (English, 1970, p. 5).

### **Lack of tolerance in high school**

Joe was affected by racism; he went to jail, because he reacted to racist remarks as a teenager. A lifetime of intolerance would cause anyone to react to this type of racism. You learn to let it go. It took me 26 years to learn to let it go completely. Growing up in the United States, all minorities in counter intolerance and sometimes on a daily bases. Reflecting on personal experience with racism my only intention in school was learning how I defend myself and to protect my identity. Instead of learning or thinking about my future. The United States must reform our education system to teach tolerance to provide equal education for everyone. Joe experiences the Indian relocation period in history and witnessed personally its effects on himself and his community. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011).

### **Racism in high school**

When I went through high school, I faced a lot of things, such as racism. I encountered a lot of hate. You almost felt like you weren't liked. It was kind of a new experience for me. But, went through it and I was ok with that. When I was graduating high school we had a counselor from the bureau of Indian affairs come and talk to us. I guess he came to every graduating class and spoke to the Indians that were graduating from high school that year. He asked us what our intensions were. What did we want to do? And, at that time I wanted to join the service. Ever since I was five years old and they dedicated the flagstaff or the flag pole at the school there. It was in honor of the veterans. I remember looking at those veterans and thinking that they looked so neat in their uniforms. I thought, "Oh boy, I want to be one of those when I get big.

So, that was kind of my goal when I was going through high school. But I got into some trouble when I was a senior in high school. There was a fella making racist remarks and

we got into it with him and we ended up taking his car and got into a tragedy. ... I ended up going to jail for that.

I had a teacher that came to my; I don't want to say rescue, but, he came over and enabled me to get out of jail and go live with him until I graduated from high school, until my sentence was up. So, I stayed with him through high school and I really appreciated that. When I look back at it now, I even appreciate it more. He stuck his neck out for me. So, I graduated from high school and went to join the service and was told I couldn't because of my record. So I thought about my next option and went on, under the Indian Relocation Act, to Milwaukee, WI to become a welder. That was quite a time there too because that is when JFK was killed. That was another troubling thing for me. I really admired the guy and they went and killed him. I am in Milwaukee at this time and everything is closed. Everything is closed, the stores are closed and the theaters are closed. I am there all by myself in this little apartment with this little black and white TV. All they had on there been the shooting coverage. On the radio, that is all they had on as well. So there was really a time for me that and I was trying to get through it and it was ok. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

### **Vietnam War - Zoongideiwin (courage)**

I started working in Milwaukee doing some construction. It wasn't too long after that; I got drafted into the army in 1965. I guess then, they just forgot about the record and decided to take me. So I put my time in and went to the Vietnam War and got wounded there. I got shot in the back. That was really a trying time too. There were good things about that too. I shouldn't say good things, but there was some camaraderie with the other soldiers. It didn't seem that color made any difference. We were all looking out for

each other there. I depended on them and they depended on me. That was kind of a neat thing there.

I found later that while I was over there, my relatives over here were putting out dishes of tobacco for me. It was an offering for me to be taken care of while I was over there.

But, during the time I got shot, we got into a big firefight. Bullets were flying everywhere. December 3, 1966 we got into a big skirmish and I remember there was a young guy there that got wounded and he was lying out there in the open. When I got up there, I could hear him screaming and I looked at the other guys and asked “Why isn’t anybody going to get him?” But, now there is a lot of firing going on out there and bullets flying around. I just decided that I should just go and get him. I thought it was just the thing I should do. So I ran out there and got him. I could hear the bullet flying around me. When those things go by you they make a pop sound and all I was hearing was “POP POP POP POP POP” all over me. I could see around me where all of the bullets were hitting. I thought, “I might not make this but whatever happens here, happens here” and I wanted to get him back and I got him back to safety.

I still get a Christmas card from him every year. But, I got a little cocky there and thought I was bullet proof. I went through a lot of stuff there. There were a lot of things that happened there and somehow I came out of that without a scratch or anything.

Well, the next day I found out that I wasn’t bullet proof because that is when I got hit too. From there I got flown back and there I kept thinking this was serious because I kept getting flown to different hospitals. I finally ended up in Hawaii. That is where I was recuperating. From there I came back to San Francisco and finished out my career at the

[Presidio] out in San Francisco. I met a lot of my relatives over there. A lot of my cousins were over there.

They were on the relocation act too. We did a lot of drinking and a lot of partying. It seemed to be the thing to do back then. I came home and got out of the Army and did some work around the reservation, whatever little work they had. I wasn't really too serious about the drums then either, not as much as I should have been.

Come to find out that I was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I was drinking a lot of alcohol. I was having some real bad nightmares. It has been 41 years since that happened and I am finally able to talk about it. I was never able to talk about that. It really brought back some pain but I am finally dealing with that now. One of the first encounters that I had while I was over there was when we got hit by some friendly fire. Some artillery hit us. First we thought it was the enemy that hit us so we jumped into our foxholes. We had a perimeter of artillery guys in the middle of us and that is where that thing hit, right in the middle. We thought "man, these guys really know what they are doing because they hit the artillery right in the middle." When we found out it was friendly fire we thought "Holy".

We went out to check on the guys that were wounded and the first guy I came across didn't have a face. He was begging me to kill him. He couldn't see me but he must have heard me and said "are you out there?" and I said, "Yeah, I am." He asked me "Do you have a rifle or a gun?" I said "Yeah, I do" and he said "Shoot me" and I said "No, I'm not going to do that" I got kind of lucky there because a doctor came over and got me out of that situation.

That was one of my nightmares when I got home. I would dream that I would hear the door and I would go and answer it and it would be that guy with no face asking, "Why

didn't you do what I asked you to do?" I thought "whoa". It was a scary feeling there. That was one of the things that I was suffering from and turned to alcohol. That was very bad. There was 20 years of that. During that time I lost a lot of my friends to alcohol; some got murdered, some were in car accidents.

I got married in 1973. I was still drinking pretty heavy then. I worked over at the veterans' hospital in St. Cloud. I worked in the kitchen there. It was pretty good money but a lot of my friends were back home. So, I come home and party and a lot of my friends were still getting killed from alcohol. One day I decided to sober up. I thought it was enough of this. So, in 1980 I gave up cigarettes and alcohol on the same day in the spring. I thought things would turn around and that I would start being happier but I wasn't. It seemed like I was still angry. I just wasn't happy. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

### **Cultural Connection - Drums - Anishinaabe**

So I went over and talked to a couple of elders that I had a lot of respect for. One of them is from Lake Lena and the other lady from East Lake District 2. I asked why I wasn't happy. It seemed like I was happier when I was drunk and out drinking. I saw them at different times but they both told me the same thing. They said, "You know Joe, we watch you at the dances and you do all of the things you need to do. You make your offerings and you give your offerings and you do all of the right things but I don't think you know why you are doing them." I went and thought about that for a while and here it is now 2011 and I am still learning. I am still trying to find out why we do this and why we do that.

Now I am a little more at peace with myself. The nightmares are gone and I started the drums again. I also started working in chemical dependency recovery here. We encourage AA. That is supposed to be a sober thing for people who want to recover and that is all good. People have sobered up from that but for me it is the drums and I go to them.

I go to every one of them. I belong to 7 drums now here in Mille Lacs. Most of them at Lake Lena and I have one at Skunk. I belong to one in Whiter and the also keep one here in Mille Lacs. I belong to 3 others here. I think if I had not turned my life around, I think for sure I would be dead now because I was heading that way. I was heading down a bad road there and I decided to come back.

So, I credit those drums a lot for helping me. A lot of people were praying for me when I was in the service and probably when I was suffering. People did a lot of nice things for me and I appreciate that. Now I try to go and help out wherever I can.

There was an older man here and he was talking to me and he told me that if I am asked to do something, I should do it. It is in the Ojibwa way with our people, everything has a purpose. So, when somebody asks you to do something there is a reason behind that. Something came to that person "ask Joe". So I thought about that.

I never spoke at the drums but one day when I was up they're at Crystal Lake they asked me to talk. I thought "Whoa". They kind of looked around to see if there was someone out there that could do it. They thought "God, there is nobody there". I am telling this guy that I have never done that and am not sure if I am ready for that. I was trying to make excuses to get out of this. But then I remembered the old guy that told me to do what is asked. I thought, "I guess something must have come to this guy to ask me to do this so maybe I should just get up and do this.

So I did. I was very nervous at first because of all of the people looking at me and watching me, but I went ahead and did it. I was so relieved when I got done. I sat down and thought that it was quite an experience. Other people came up to me and told me that I did pretty good for my first time. So, I started to ask people if there was other things that I should be talking about. I am still learning today.

When I would talk to kids I would always tell them to go get an education; Go to school, go do something. I would encourage them to do something. I told them that the creator gave us a brain and we should use our brains. I sat and thought about what I was telling these kids and thinking “I am telling these kids to get an education when I don’t have one myself.” So I decided to go back to school. I was 40 years old when I went back.

I had looked back at all of my friends that have passed on and I decided to become a Chemical Dependency officer, at the clinic here. It took me 5 years but I went through it and got through it. I was so proud of myself for doing that. Here was a guy that was a total alcoholic, a total loser that came out of that swinging and got out of that rut.

I had children then. I had 5 children. So I wasn’t just going to school, I was also working to support my family. But, I did it, I graduated and got my degree and am able to tell kids that if I can do it, you can do it.

Two of my sons have graduated from college and I am hoping that some more will do that. It was something that I always wanted to do. Now I am able to help out here at the reservation and help some of the people that are suffering here. I tell them that the creator put us her for a reason and what should we be doing here and I think I am doing what I am supposed to be doing by getting them out of the alcohol. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

### **Finding 1. Summary**

Joe focused on giving back to the community and respecting your path by staying positive. He also said, trust the circle of life. Joe illustrated how important it is to stay on the correct path, with his whole life story. One of the most profound stories that Joe reflected on was about the Vietnam War. He told me the rest of the story.

But, I got a little cocky there and thought I was bullet proof. I went through a lot of stuff there. There were a lot of things that happened there and somehow I came out of that without a scratch or anything. ... The day after he saved the young man the next day. I found later that while I was over there, my relatives over here were putting out dishes of tobacco for me. It was an offering for me to be taken care of while I was over there. (J. Nayquonabe, Sr., personal communication, January 14, 2011)

When he discovered that the tribe was protecting him, Joe questioned his Elders, “why did I get shot?” The Elders asked him to think about what he was thinking at the time he got shot? Joe told me that he was looking around and everyone was dying. Reflecting back on his life, I thought what if there is a hell. Then I got shot. Joe also said, Catholics have angels to protect them. We have are clan. My clan is the wolf clan. My wolf was protecting me in Vietnam until I questioned my path. The wolf could have let me died but he just wanted to wake me up.

Joe told me to always follow a positive path and trust that you're on the right path.

### **Finding 2. Interview: (Informal cell phone interview) – Advice on paper**

The researcher had an informal phone interview with Professor Richard D. St. Germaine, an Ojibwe, and a professor at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire where he teaches American History. He is a long term nationally known Native educator and is a former Chairman of the Lac

Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe in Hayward, Wisconsin. My intent is to identify the support systems for Native American students. Requesting an interview via e-mail, Dr. Richard St. Germaine declined. The second e-mail, requested feedback or suggestions on the research blog. Shortly, after the e-mail, the researcher received a phone call from Dr. Richard St. Germaine providing valuable insights and suggestions about tribal students. Our informal conversations lead to the discovery that Dr. Richard Germaine and my mother are very close friends. Dr. Richard St. Germaine suggested interviewing David Niib Aubid.

### **Finding 3. Consulted (advised, e-mail and edited)**

#### **– Retention Program and Anishinaabe Philosophy**

The consultation was with David “Niib” Aubid, Mille Lacs Band Elder and Candi “Ozhaawash” Aubid, Minisinaakwaang Community Member, about retention programs and Anishinaabe philosophy.

Candi Aubid, (2011), provided the following information about the retention program at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC):

The following are services that are offered to students to provide support at FDLTCC:

Career services, counseling services, disability services, CAA (Center for Academic Achievement provides tutoring in all academic areas), and TRIO student support services.

The TRIO program is a federally funded program designed to offer educational opportunities: provides resources, information, and academic instruction and support services to 175 eligible students each year. The purpose is to help low-income, first generation (neither parent has received a four-year degree), or students with disabilities,

to achieve their educational goals use of the information.

Also FDLTCC has the Anishinaabeg Club for Native students to get involved in the school activities. There are many cultural events, feasts, events with the local tribal community Fond du Lac Reservation, and a spring Pow Wow. All Native faculty assist students in being successful!

The other exciting news is the new FDLTCC Ojibwe Language Resource Center that is in the process of being developed creating many opportunities for Native students to learn more about the Anishinaabeg culture and language. Amy Robinson a FDL tribal member also works closely with students in the area of funding and scholarships for Native students. She also participates in a new initiative where a house on campus creates a space for Native students to gather, study, support one another, and attend cultural events.

I think attending a tribal college helps students make the transition from home/reservation life to college because we offer so many cultural events helping Native students feel comfortable. I think we are mindful of the historical events in education that still have an impact on Indian education today. Many Native students are first generation high school graduates and first generation college attendees so it is a tough transition and at times I think our Native families don't know how to support their family members since they have never gone through the experience. Being born and raised on the reservation and then just leaving for the first time is also another difficult transition so Native students need lots of support to be successful in higher education.

## **THE HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

The tribal college system in the United States has been poorly understood and has not been

recognized for what it has accomplished in American History. In the United States the historical issues of culture and linguistic genocide, and educational segregation, are still alive in the twenty-first century. The problem is the inherent tendency of nation-states to use their educational system to create a uniform culture and language usage as a means of maintaining social order and control. Consequently, it is increasingly becoming the task of international organizations to protect equal educational opportunities and cultural and linguistic rights. Advocates of international human rights documents are forcing national educational systems to provide equal educational opportunities and to end the practice of cultural and linguistic genocide. (Spring, 2007, p. 137)

This section of this chapter provides an overview of the history of Native Americans in U.S. education through four distinct periods: “(1) the colonial period, when the objective was converting Native Americans to Christianity through Indian missions; (2) the federal period, during which the federal government largely ignored Native American higher education, yet enacted a series of policies that were devastating to the Indian community” (Karlberg, 2008, p. 13); (3) the globalization period, (United Nations) international human rights period, upholds the principles of biculturalism and bilingualism, recognizing the rights to all human beings by providing citizens with “the use or the teaching of the minority’s own language, and (4) “the great civil right movement; the self-determination period, characterized by significant shifts in federal policy toward self-determination, as well as the founding of tribally controlled colleges” (Karlberg, 2008, p. 13).

For hundreds of years, the goal of post-secondary education in the dominant culture of the United States was not the educational development and progress for Native American Students; instead, the intent of higher education was to foster the assimilation of those students into Western society. Historically, “... not only are people of color omitted from the current

curriculum, but non-Europeans are marginalized and viewed as inferior, or at best, are represented as voiceless objects” (Granberg, 2002, p. 239).

### **The Colonial Period (1500s – 1775)**

The tribal college system in the United States has been poorly understood and has not been recognized for what it has accomplished in American History.

The colonial period, the meaning of “Uncivilized” and “Pagan” illustrated why Europeans to claim they had an obligation to spread European culture and the Christian religion to the rest of the world, including North America. (Spring, 2007, pp. 2-3)

During this period there were policies implemented, limiting the equal rights of specific human beings in the United States. Congressional approval of the naturalization act in 1790, to only include a “free white person” and later narrowing the definition of “free white person” to exclude “Asians with pale skin and East Indians who claimed to share common ancestors with Europeans. In the colonial period definition of “whites” meant those who where British Protestant descent” (Spring, 2007, p. 9).

In the early twentieth century the term “white” refers to all American of European backgrounds. Of course, that required years of social struggles for the Irish and Southern and Eastern European to gain acceptance as “white” (Spring, 2007, p. 9).

The educational and cultural differences fueled the English colonist to think they needed to help “the Native Americans be civilized by deculturalization, which included replacing cultural values related to family structures, gender rules, child-rearing practices, sexual attitudes, economic relationships and government” (Spring, 2007, p. 10). To understand why English colonist wanted to help Native Americans to be civilized one should understand the cultural differences (Spring, 2007, p. 11).

The Protestant ethic also valued the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God's blessings. In other words, hard work and the accumulation of wealth were considered outward sign of a godly life. "In contrast, Native Americans believed in the sharing of property. If another tribal member needed food or assistance, others gladly gave their food and time. Most North American tribes did not value the accumulation of property. In addition it should be noted there was no concept that work was good in and of itself" (Spring, 2007, p. 11).

"The Christian concept of sin was absent from traditional Indian cultures, therefore, tribal members were not driven by a fear of hell to replace personal pleasure with work and accumulation of property. The word "civilizing" was to change the belief systems of Native Americans by instilling of a work ethic, the creation of a desire to accumulate property, the repression of pleasure, participatory sexual pleasure, for work; the reduction of power of women; the implementation of authoritarian child-rearing practices; and the conversion to Christianity" (Spring, 2007, pp. 12-13). Spring goes on to say that "It should be duly noted, however, that whites attracted to the values and lifestyle of Indians found becoming a 'white Indian' a welcome relief from the sexual and economic oppression of white society" (p. 13).

Native Americans valued community instead of work because of the time spent away from celebrations and rituals that linked tribal members to nature and the universe. Native Americans would only hunt for food that was needed by the clan. Native Americans valued working efficiently in order to spend more time with family. European's viewed this as lazy. Spring stated that Europeans wanted to "replace of a peaceful, non-punitive, non-authoritarian social system wherein women wield power by making social life easy and gently with changed to be based on child terrorization, male dominance and submission of women to male authority" (Spring, 2007, p. 13).

The development of early Native American educational programs was due to the fact that

Native Americans demonstrated no interest in learning or being converted by the colonists.

Native parents believed that their culture was superior to the colonial culture so they didn't have their children educated by the protestant ethic.

### **The Federal Period (1775 – 1928)**

The federal period, the colonists to “civilize” Native American was replaced by a major effort of the U.S. government to use civilization programs to convince tribes to sell their land. The United States, educational policies have served the interest of those wanting to take advantage of others. The result was an education history of economic exploitation, cultural intolerance and racism in North America. Three tools were implemented during the period to civilizing Native America: trading houses (post), missionary stations and small reservation (praying towns).

Trading houses intention was to acquiring a desire for the accumulation of wealth and the purchase of manufactured goods on display at the government-trading houses ... believed, Native Americans would be become part of a cash economy and would become dependent on manufactured goods (p. 16). Thomas Jefferson stated ... “to encourage Indians to abandon hunting for agriculture and husbandry. [No need for more land] they will see the advantage in exchanging them for the means of improving their farms and of increasing their domestic comfort. ... Trading houses will make them aware of what they can purchase with the money earned from the sale of lands. (Spring, 2007, pp. 16-17)

### **The Civilization Fund Act (1819)**

Thomas McKenny, the first head of the Office of Indian Affairs, proposed of tribal school systems, to be operated by white missionary teachers who could culturally transform Native

Americans to be civilized. McKenny suggested the current system currently had several missionary stations near Native Americans, which helped established the Civilization Fund Act of 1819. The act authorized the president to have the missionary teachers to instruct Native Americans about the mode of agriculture and of course teach students reading, writing and arithmetic. (Spring 2007, pp. 22-23) While many Native Americans had requested to be literate they received an education designed to bring their culture and religious conversion. (Spring 2007, p. 25) Legislation provided annual grants of \$10,000, traditionally allocating most of the money to the missionaries. (Spring 2007, p. 25) Spring says “The missionary’s intention was to create a written language for the Cherokee not to preserve only to translate religious tracts to teach their culture” (p. 26). The missionary failed to learn the language or creating a written language.

The development of a written Cherokee language was for the purpose of preserving Cherokee culture by Sequoyah. A person speaking Cherokee could learn the alphabet in 1 day and learn to read Cherokee in 1 week. It was a matter of making their culture illiterate and able to build strong culture connections. The first Native American, dual language newspaper in English and Cherokee was printed in 1823 titled the Cherokee Phoenix (Spring, 2007, p. 26). Sequoyah’s extraordinary achievement marks the only known instance of an individual creating a totally new system of writing. “Sequoyah was honored for his invention by the Cherokee Nation in 1825 and by the United States government in 1828” (Thomas, 1972). Karlberg (2008) says, “Most notably, the Cherokee and Choctaw tried to negotiate provisions for education in many of their treaties” (p. 21).

### **The Indian Removal Act (1830)**

The U.S. government had been unsuccessful in the attempts to “civilize” Native Americans

from 1770 to the 1830s. When Andrew Jackson was elected president he concluded the civilization policies had failed to educate southern tribes to the point where they would want to sell their lands. Fear that educating the Native American would result to policy changes of the U.S. government. The justification of the land ownership to whites was because Native Americans never made an improvement to the land. The Indian Removal act in 1830, was offensive acts in human history, an entire nation of people were forced from their land. A Georgia volunteer reflected on the “Trial of Tears,” ‘I fought through the Civil War and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest work I ever knew’ (Spring, 2007, p. 28).

“Indian displacement became a blanket policy with the Removal Bill of 1830, and [President Andrew Jackson supported it vigorously]. The federal policy of moving all the Indian tribes from one vast area of their homelands into another violates the very principles on which the United States was founded. ... One overwhelming argument was advanced to justify assuming control of Indian lands, and it never has changed: Indians obstructed the progress of whites who could use land much more effectively, and thus it was the God-given right of the settlers or real estate promoters to obtain such ground. —This Land Was Theirs, Wendell H. Oswalt” (Norrgard, 2011).

### **The Indian Peace Commission (1867)**

The expansion of the United States into the Western territory created new policies; the U.S. government realized by allowing the Native American tribes large areas of land had become a problem. The western Native American tribes displayed more resistance to white incursions onto their lands with several wars across the plains. (Spring, 2007, pp. 30-31) The methodology to “civilize” Native Americans, changed based on knowledge of the cultural strengths of the Native

Americans: reservations, boarding schools and allotment programs were developed.

In 1867, congress created the Indian Peace Commission; the intention was to deculturalization through reservation and education to deal with warring tribes. By establishing reservations the U.S. government would have control over the “wilder tribes” specifically the Sioux and Chippewa had an “insatiable passion for war” (Spring, 2007, p. 31).

After 50 years, the Civilization Fund Act ended in 1870, because of the controversy of being unconstitutional arose over the issue of the separation of church and state. (Carney, 1999, p. 52)

### **Boarding Schools**

Secondly, the Peace Commission understood the power of language in relationship to their culture and traditions. In 1879, the Carlisle Boarding School was established and the beginning of the boarding school movement. The Indian Peace Commission intended to deculturalization of Native American culture by removing children from their family. It was thought that it would reduce tensions if Native Americans would learn only English. “Replacing the use of native languages with English, destroying Indian customs and teaching allegiance to the U.S. government became the intention of the educational policies of the U.S. government toward Indians during the later part of the nineteenth century” (Spring, 2007, p. 31). Karlberg says “It was hoped the children would later return to their families as missionaries and convert them to Christianity” (p. 22).

### **Native American Perspective on Boarding School**

**Again a contemporary Native American perspective is useful.**

**Linda Grover, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Minnesota in Norrgard (2011), website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Ackley\\_Sokaogan\\_Econ.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Ackley_Sokaogan_Econ.pdf):**

The boarding school period, the big time for boarding schools in this country I would say was from the 1870's to the 1930's. And during that time it became usual for many families to have their children taken from their homes, sometimes by force, and sometimes by coercion. The purpose of the boarding schools was to assimilate Indian children. And the assimilation process would eliminate the Indian problem in this country Indians would not exist anymore. First they removed them from family and culture and everything that the child was familiar with. The child needed to be removed far enough from home that they wouldn't be able to visit. Or visit often.

The child was then not allowed to speak Native language only English. Some children didn't speak English. Many children didn't speak English at all when they got to boarding school. But English was the only language that was allowed. The children's appearances were changed. They would come to boarding school dressed the way they were at home. Often boys with long hair their hair was cut. Girl's hair was rearranged in a western type hairdo. They were dressed in uniforms. At many schools the uniforms were defiantly of the military style especially for the boys. If they dressed alike looked alike and talked alike and were taught alike they would supposedly assumed another identity. (Norrgard, 2011)

**Yvonne Novack, White Earth Ojibwe, Minnesota in Norrgard (2011) website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y\\_Novack\\_Edu\\_Outtake.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y_Novack_Edu_Outtake.pdf):**

Well, I think Indians and education haven't always had the best relationship. I think that is a national issue. Here in Minnesota Indian children prior to the 1930s, 90 percent of them were not in public schools. They were in BIA schools that were like day schools on the reservation and some went to boarding schools. The ones who went to boarding schools, a lot of them had real uncomfortable and not the best experience. Some of them had great experiences. My grandmother when to Carlisle at 10 came home when she was 18. She loved school, but we saw the fact that she didn't have family skills as a problem. So, that was a problem, a problem that she didn't see but we saw. So, boarding schools cause problems even when they help the student, when they help the child, when they educated them and maybe the home they came from wasn't a home. So, maybe it was a good home for them instead of being farmed out to someone, maybe a local farmer or rancher who wouldn't let them grow with their family or with their culture. So, boarding schools on a whole were not the best avenue for education for all Indian children.

Though, in Minnesota there was a real hard time in the 1930s where Indian children were first allowed in public schools. And I use the word allowed very purposefully. It was about 1934 -1936 that the State Board of Education signed a contract with Bureau of Indian Affairs for \$80,000.00 to allow Chippewa children in to public schools in Minnesota. That first group of kids in the 30s, when they went to public schools it was because there was money behind them. That was the only reason they let them in. So, they were not really welcome. That is why you have that whole generation in the 30s who don't have high school diplomas except maybe if they went to a boarding school. Maybe they got their diploma at boarding school, but the rest of them if it was like a little town on the edge of the reservation not to many of them made it through high school. So, a lot of the generations, my mom's generation, she is 75 ... It was her generation that made

that transition from the day schools on the reservations to the local public schools and there are a lot of them who never finished high school. My mom went on and got a high school equivalency, but not in Minnesota.

I think if you want to qualify what they experienced ... was it racism? I think it was racism – yes, misunderstanding, very much so, and fear. And, fear I think is far more prevalent than racism. When I talk about this it upsets a lot of people. I spoke with some schoolteachers and I told my mom's story, and they were really mad at me, because they said, "That happened 50 years ago," and, "How dare you bring that up." And, I explained to them, I said, "Well this is my mom and I am explaining why, because I want you to understand why some of those grandparents and parents don't trust the public school." My mom raised all eight of her children out of Minnesota, so they would not go to a public school in Minnesota. That was her reaction to schooling in Minnesota.

Right. My mom's feelings ... she was very strong about education. She wanted all 8 of her children educated. She wanted them to go to school and she knew how hard school was. She wanted them to go without the extra burden of racism or misunderstanding. She wanted them to have an equal playing field with other children going to school, and because of her experience she didn't think she'd find it in MN.

I think if you are really looking at Indian education you start way back, when the Quakers and the all the religious organizations that were here in Minnesota that worked with children. So, not so much Quakers, but mostly Episcopalian and Catholics. The kids were divided up and that is how they went to school, at what mission. And then you go into the BIA boarding schools and then the day schools in Minnesota. And, a little interesting thing, Minnesota has what they call the Permanent School Fund for the State of Minnesota. Well, a lot of the money that started that Permanent School Fund for the State of Minnesota came from the 10 acres that were taken to build little schools on the reservation and it was given to the state. And then, the state closed the school down, cut the trees, sold the land and kept the money. So Minnesota's basic education programs have a lot tied to Indian monies and resources. ...

But from the 30s, where kids from Minnesota, and I think it's close to Wisconsin too, because a lot of kids went to boarding school at Genoa in Wisconsin and went back and forth... My grandfather went to school in Genoa and they experienced the same. A lot of kids didn't go to high school it was just uncomfortable.

And then what really changed everything was World War II. A high percent of American Indians joined the service. And they got high school equivalencies, GEDs, high school diplomas and they came back and they went on to college. You know there was Haskell Junior College. A lot of Minnesota American Indians went to Haskell, and a lot earned money and they moved from reservation areas into the cities in great numbers in the late 30s early 40s. So, it really changed the face of education in Minnesota, because now all the Indian kids weren't up north or in little pockets in the south, they were in the cities, and mainline education had to deal with Indian children. (pp. 3-4)

After reflecting on this period, it is amazing that the symbols (negative intention, bad energy) of these movements are still part of the reservation in Mille Lacs Band. The placement of the missionary station and the trading post are right across the street from each other and located near the cultural center of the band.

### **Dawes General Allotment Act (1887) and Indian Citizenship Act (1924)**

To return to the historical account the Dawes Act is important. The Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887, which intended to breakup Indian territories by allotting land as private holdings to individuals (Karlberg, 2008, p. 22), the allotment program stripped the tribes of 90 million acres almost 60 percent of allocated Indian Territory (Laukaitis, 2005, p. 140). The Dawes Act dismantled communal living styles of Native communities with the intent to assimilate families and communities to European value systems. In 1924, Indian Citizenship Act enabled Native Americans to become U.S. citizens.

### **Meriam Report (1928)**

The Meriam Report published in 1928, titled “Problem of Indian Administration,” condemned the federal policy for the abuse of the Native American education. It criticized the teaching practices and abuse that was experienced in the boarding schools. Students attended school half days and the rest reserved for heavy labor. The routine discipline had negative effects on the students. The isolation of children from their families and communities was not recommended. Reversing the education philosophy of the past is indicated in this sentence “the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life” (Spring, 2007, pp. 34-35). The report recognized the integrating of education with Native American cultures. The report was the first step the federal government took to move away from acculturation in Native American education. In the 1930’s, Native American education placed stress on community schools and rebuilding of the cultural life. (Spring, 2007, p. 35)

### **Termination policy (1940s -1960s)**

Until the 1940's and 1960's, the U.S. states policies were to terminate tribes. The termination policies intention was relocating Native American to urban areas similar to the federal policy that sent Native Americans to Indian Territory and reservations, where they would be part of the general population, to assimilate with the rest of the population. The leader of the termination policy, Senator Author V Watkins of Utah, declared in 1957, "I see the following words emblazoned in letters of fire above the heads of the Indians—These people shall be free! Freedom in this case meant freedom from federal supervision and control. It also meant the end of official tribal status" (Spring, 2007, p. 111). In 1961, at the University of Chicago, 450 Native American delegates from 90 tribes attended the American Indian Chicago Conference. The delegates issued a declaration of Indian purpose calling for the end of termination policies. The termination policies resulted in 3% of the tribes to be terminated including the Menominee of Wisconsin and the Klamath Indians of Oregon. (Spring, 2007, p. 118) The policies triggered Native Americans to demand greater self-determination, which was reflected in policy changes in the Bureau of Indian Affairs when President, John K. Kennedy took office. (Spring, 2007, pp. 118-119) Spring says, "Condemning the termination policies of the 1950s, the Kennedy administration advocated Indians participate in decisions regarding federal policies" (pp. 118-119). Kennedy's secretary of interior, Steward Udall, appointed a task force on Indian affairs, the report concluded, "To insure the success of our endeavor we must solicit the collaboration of those who we hope to benefit—the Indians themselves ... for equal citizenship, maximum self-sufficiency and full participation in American life" (Spring, 2007, p. 119). Navajo parents' main goals were to have control over their children's education by preserving their language and culture. In joint effort, Navajo reservation in Arizona, The Office of Economic Opportunity and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, established the Rough Rock Demonstration School in 1996, was a direct result from the drive for self-determination. (Spring, 2007, p. 119)

## **Native Americans perspective**

**Again the Native American perspective is important.**

**Yvonne Novack, White Earth Ojibwe, from Minnesota discusses the Meriam Report and the impact on the Minnesota Native American students, Norrgard (2011) website, [www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y\\_Novack\\_Edu\\_Outtake.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y_Novack_Edu_Outtake.pdf):**

Forties, fifties is termination for Indians. Being Indian certainly wasn't popular. Anything Indian wasn't popular. It was okay to adopt Indian kids but you didn't want their culture or anything coming with them. So, it was a real time where people really fought. It was a time where a lot of MN tribal people who didn't have that high of an education, may have gone to boarding school, worked really hard to preserve the tribal governments. And, some people went on to college, but not very much. Some people finished high school. I don't think there was really a change until the 60's and in the 60's with the Civil Rights.

Movement then education came on really strong and you go from the early 60's with different political groups in Minnesota and nationally looking at education you go to the Kennedy/Meriam report in '68/'69, I can't remember the dates now, and that spurred the Indian education act of 1972, which brought about federal programs for Indian children in public schools because the majority of Indian children in Minnesota are in public schools. That Indian education act in the Kennedy/Meriam report, a national tragedy, a national challenge, really was the emphasis for what you see in Indian education today.

It's sort of like the...that big ground floor. There's always the sub-floor beneath it, but that was where you saw all the people become involved in Indian education. The survival schools in MN, Heart of the Earth, the Red School House, those were from those times in the '60s and '70s and all that political action. (Norrgard, 2011)

## **The Globalization Period (1960's)**

The globalization period, the United Nation international human rights period, forced the United States to move toward a more equal society. The United States recognized the global trends of the great civil rights movement, especially with the Cold War, between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States worldview has always been "freedom and equality." So the existence of racial discrimination in the country reflected negatively on their image of freedom. The civil right movement inspired the "Liberation movement," which intended to stop centuries of colonial oppression in Africa and Asia.

In support to this movement the United Nation implemented the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, providing civil rights to “all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Spring, 2007, p. 112). Most importantly, the United Nation issued the Convention Against Discrimination in Education “which upholds the principles of biculturalism and bilingualism, recognizing the rights to all human beings by providing citizens with “the use or the teaching of the minority’s own language” (Spring, 2007, p. 138).

The United States was forced to participate in the general global movement, which became major issues in the country over deculturalization and school segregation, due to the fact, that the United States educational system promotes intolerance of other cultures. The global affairs of the Cold War put pressure on the United States to provide more civil rights to citizens.

The United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released the Convention Against Discrimination of Education, protecting biculturalism and bilingualism to provide equal education to all people. “If students are only taught in their minority languages without learning the majority language, then they would not be prepared to participate in the dominant political and economic system of the country” (Spring, 2007, p. 138).

### **The Great Civil Rights Movement (1950 -1960’s)**

The great civil rights movement started because of the United State school segregation and culture and linguistic genocide of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican (Native) Americans and Puerto Ricans. In the 1950s, the costs of integration were the killing of civil right workers, church bombings and race riots. There still persisted to the arguments that Protestant Anglo-American culture would be the dominant culture of the United

States. (Spring, 2007, p. 111) Schlesinger opposed multicultural education in public schools, “for better or worse, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition was for two centuries—and in crucial respects still is—the dominant influence on American culture and society” (Spring, 2007, p. 112).

The civil rights movement and the evolution of mass media in the 1950s was an important factor in the movement, turning local problems into national problems, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) helped overturn the 1895, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, “Separate but equal” by providing support. (Spring, 2007, pp. 114-115).

The Supreme Court, overturned the “separate but equal” decision in 1895, “In the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate by equal’ has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal” (Spring, 2007, p. 115). The 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* decision had one of the most controversial a single sentence ever to appear in a Court decision: “Whatever may had been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessey vs. Ferguson* this finding is ample supported by modern authority” (Spring, 2007, p. 115).

As African Americans were leading the fight against segregated schools, Native Americans were attempting to gain control of the education of their children and restore their culture heritage and languages to the curriculum, also shared a common interest with Mexican (Native) Americans, Puerto Rican Americans in supporting bilingual and multicultural education.

### **Native Americans perspective**

#### **James Shlender**

I think that in the sixties, in the early sixties was the civil rights movement and black power and all of that and I think that the Indians sort of trailed behind that. 1968 was the, well, '68 was when the AIM [American Indian Movement] was formed, primarily as sort of an urban protective force for Indians in that urban setting. And they very quickly became imbued with the spiritual aspects of Indians and really carried forth kind of both those standards of protection, and protection of the traditions and ceremonies as well. In

'72 you had the Noviate takeover in Wisconsin, in '73 you had Wounded Knee, and in 1971 you had the takeover of the Winter Dam in Lac Courte Oreilles, in 1975. I think those kind of national events, big media events really lifted the tide of understanding and a realization that here are these treaties, here are these rights and why aren't we exercising them. And that really led to a lot of people saying, we can do this, this is our right to do this and we're going to do it. (Norrgard, 2011)

### **Indians-determination and Education Assistance Act (1960)**

The development of the Pan-Indian movement was based on the assumption that Native American tribes shared a common set of values and interested, the native way of knowing. The American Indian Movement (AIM) led demonstrations demanding self-determination.

### **Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge (1969)**

The climate was right for civil rights activism and political support for Indian self-determination that the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare used in 1969, issued a report about "Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge." The reports details "a careful review of the historical literature reveals that the dominant policy of the Federal Government toward the American Indian has been one of forced assimilation ... [because of] a desire to divest the Indian of his land" (Spring, 2007, p. 120).

The report provides several recommendations for Native America education: (1) Maximum participation and control over their education programs; (2) Maximum participation in development of education program in federal schools and local public school; early childhood education, vocational education, work-study and adult literacy education; and (3) create bilingual and bicultural education programs. (Spring, 2007, pp. 120-121)

### **Bilingual Education Act (1968) and Indian Education Act (1972)**

The report resulted in Bilingual Education Act, funds to provide bilingual programs in

education. The Indian Education Act of 1972 was to produce financial assistance to local schools to develop programs to meet the “special” educational needs of Native American students. The legislation also created the Office of Indian Education. In 1974, the Bureau of Indian Affairs granted the right to freedom of religion and cultures. (Spring, 2007, p. 120)

### **Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975)**

The 1975, Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act was the most important legislation to the Native American’s:

It gave tribes the power to contract with the federal government directly to run their own education and health programs. The legislation opened with the declaration that it was ‘an Act to provide maximum Indian participation in the government and education of Indian people; to provide for the full participation of Indian tribes in programs and service conducted by the federal government (Spring, 2007, p. 120).

In 1988, the act was strengthened, with the passage of the Tribally Controlled School Act to provide grants to tribes to support the operation of their own schools. In 1978, congress granted all Native American religious freedom:

That henceforth it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express and exercise traditional religions ... and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites. (Spring, 2007, p. 121)

Also protecting their language with the Native American Languages Act of 1990, to “preserve, protect and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice and develop Native American languages” (Spring, 2007, p. 121).

In 1992, the United Nations Draft Declaration of Indigenous People rights and 1999

United Nations, Declaration on the rights of person belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the International Labor Organization's Convention No. 169 on the rights of indigenous people. Each of these periods significantly influenced the evolution and direction of higher education for Native Americans in the United States. Most importantly everyone has a right to education in their Native language because of our global community not because of the freedoms in the United States. (Spring, 2007, pp. 96-102)

Tribal College started partly because of the self-determination movement in the 1960's. (Spring, 2007, p. 120) Today there are thirty-six United States Tribal Colleges that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). Creating institutions and defining their own policies are critical turning points for Native Americans in tribal communities. In this way, tribal leaders can strengthen reservations and tribal cultures without resorting to assimilation. (Cunningham, 1997, p. 47) The Native American self-determination movement started providing affordable and culturally relevant education to tribal members.

Traditionally, Native American students have not been successful in Western colleges, largely due to the fact that the higher education for Native Americans in the United States was failing the students. Tribal Colleges were “established to create educational programs that meaningfully connect Western educations to the [Native] experience and knowledge of the traditional and contemporary worlds” (Braithwaite, 1997, p. 20).

### **Tribal Colleges Today—Purpose and Philosophy**

“In the United States, tribal colleges evolved because existing systems of higher education still required assimilation and were not benefiting Native American students, who were often geographically isolated, had fewer opportunities to access post-secondary education, or did not have the academic preparation to succeed in mainstream post-secondary institutions. (Karlberg,

2007, p. 38). ... More Native American students are attending tribal colleges to avoid racist and non-relevant [curriculum], to counter prior negative experiences in mainstream community colleges and universities, and to be educated in an environment that addresses the needs of tribal communities” (Karlberg, 2007, pp. 38-39). Karlberg (2007) states that, tribal colleges were established for a two-fold purpose: (1) to preserve and restore traditional tribal culture and knowledge and (2) to provide certificates or associate’s (two-year) degrees that would provide Native American students with better employment opportunities and facilitate transferring to four-year colleges or universities. (p. 38) “Tribal Colleges have established a learning environment that supports students who had come to view failure as the norm. These schools have succeeded despite a host of obstacles, including a chronic lack of funding, dilapidated facilities, low income levels, and poor academic preparations of many of their students” (Cunningham, 1998, p. 45).

### **Native Americans perspective**

**David Beaulieu, White Earth, Minnesota, part of the Norrgard (2011) website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y\\_Novack\\_Edu\\_Outtake.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y_Novack_Edu_Outtake.pdf):**

Tribal Colleges are higher education institutions partially or wholly funded and controlled by Native American tribes. ‘The real new feature of Indian education is the institutionalization of education for Indians under Indian control, and that process has been an amazing process of transformation and of rediscovery and of serving one side as a people through that movement.

The most significant thing, I believe, in Indian education is the advent of tribal education: tribal schools and colleges. The potential of what those institutions can do and what they have done are amazing and need to be a part of sort of Indian community life, sort of a new part. It’s a new frame of to be what it used to always be a way of doing things.

People used to debate issues at meetings and council.... That’s typically what colleges and universities allow people to do in a non-political setting, just to do that you know, a lot of discussion on ways, places to create new art, to write, to write poems, to do all of that type of stuff, to you know to do that type of thing, a place to keep the community’s history, its treasures in art and so forth and colleges and universities can do that for society as a whole, and Indian communities used to do it in their own ways, and so we’re sort of becoming ourselves again by this ability to say no to the outside and allow an

opportunity for us to be, I think that's the new idea of what a school is. (Norrgard, 2011)

### **EXPLORING THE TRIBAL COLLEGE'S MODEL FOR SUCCESS**

One of the most important reasons why Native American Tribal Colleges have been successful is that rather than face assimilation; students can remain Native American with their self-respect and pride intact. In the curriculum, tribal colleges provide Tribal languages and culture courses deepening the spirit, reinforce values, and honors traditions. Students are provided with transportation and daycare centers to ensure that low-income students stay enrolled. Mentoring programs are key for first-time students, and are the most effective college-level retention mechanisms. Tribal Colleges offer a wide range of support programs for students for a variety of purposes, and are able to help the students confront and deal with everything from personal issues like alcohol and substance abuse, to tutoring or financial counseling. Tribal Colleges also design programs to inform students of what to expect at predominantly white institutions and how to best handle the environment. (Guardia & Evans, 2003, p. 257)

#### **Indigenous Knowledge and Culture**

Native American oral traditions and storytelling provide students with rich personalized learning experiences. The Ojibwa language contains and perpetuates "the depth, subtleties, and nuances of the culture" (Granberg, 2002, p. 1). The Elders are a very important part of learning and understanding and appreciating the differences in their teaching and where the teaching came from is very important to students. Elders have historically provided the cultural, ceremonial, and historical teachings to the Native American learners. It's important to understand that Elders' narratives can be different from one another and it's also important to understand "Why" there can be differences in the narratives. "Students need to start learning about past and anticipating the future and understand that the past and future is continually

evoking in the present. People's stories continually change based on passage of time, which one is telling the story, the receiver, and the solution in which the story is told” (Guardia & Evans, 2003, p. 247).

Understanding the culture characteristics of the Native American students will provide a comfortable environment for the students. By implementing strategies to provide real life experiences by making culture connections with material: Storytelling activities, peer-to-peer discussion, and Elder guest speakers (bilingual speaker).

### **Pedagogy**

The Native Ways of Teaching focus on learning with the heart instead of learning with the mind. (Fire, 2008, p. 81) This method involves teaching students to use their intuition, which is based on past knowledge and occurrences in life — including events, schooling, other education, and life experiences. Pedagogical bilingual and multiculturalism learning activities provide Native Students with multi-dimensional analysis skills and perspective, which in turn gives students more accurate intuition in a global world. “Remember that learning is a natural instinct and that success in learning something new is tied to human feelings of self-worth. Fire (2008) says to... “Create a learning environment that flows with this natural current of humanness” (p. 11). Karlberg (2008) says “By framing the curriculum in a holistic and culturally relevant way, the instructors reaffirm the identity and values of their students, as well as of the surrounding Native American communities” (p. 49).

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum at tribal colleges emphasizes not only academic requirements but also the

cultural knowledge and traditional pedagogies of Native American communities. All tribal colleges offer Native American studies courses in areas such as history, art, philosophy, botany, and local language. Restoring the use of traditional languages is of particular importance to Indigenous knowledge, especially when a language is at risk, so is a culture” (Karlberg, 2008, p. 51). “Tribal Colleges play a powerful role in the personal development as well as the academic development of Native American Students. By providing access, exposure, native culture, personal support, preparation for further education and a sense of empowerment. Tribal Colleges are influential in advancing self-awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, intellectual development, acculturation, and the identity development of their enrolled students” (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 237).

Tribal Colleges are instrumental in creating a sense of empowerment for the students who attend, by implementing strategies and policies that emerge from a vision of working with the “Native Americans toward a participatory goal of emancipation and empowerment” (Guardia & Evans, 2003, p. 257). By fostering this environment, students come to understand that they have the right to get an education outside the tribe. Students become more self-aware and know what “they want to accomplish for themselves and for their tribe” (Guardia & Evans, 2003. p. 257).

### **Native American perspective**

**David Baker, PhD, White Earth, in Norrgard (2011) website,**

**[wwwojibwe.org/home/pdf/D\\_Beaulieu\\_Edu\\_Outtake.pdf](http://wwwojibwe.org/home/pdf/D_Beaulieu_Edu_Outtake.pdf):**

To create opportunities which are important for one’s self and one’s family, for one’s community, and to sort of keep the outside at bay and how do you do that. How do you in a traditional society community faced with the inundation of what’s coming at you and it’s not just people taking land, it’s not just people coming to take trees, it’s not just people looking for a day labor or wage income or all these other things that so forth and then the need to supply food and all of that, but it’s the influence of ideas and of language. It’s an interesting question of how the communities control that or do it to

make those decisions. Especially when you are poor and powerless and haven't got an ability and sort of formal way to do that.

There were certain things that were set up early on in Minnesota that I think are kind of the critical components for successful programs. I guess the main points haven't changed, and it's what we've done with those points I think that are interesting. The state of Minnesota assumed responsibility for the major part of the federal government's role in Indian education, the formal schooling role. It did so with a couple of promises in mind the connection with tribal leaders and communities in the state. One was that in distinctly Indian communities there would be a school that be maintained for Indian students. The other was the question of equity that Indians would not because they were Indians be deprived of any other services that were around, and then the third was a recognition of the special educational culture related academic needs of Indian learners. We've been wrestling around those three points in different ways, and working in different ways and mostly in other places for a long time.

A lot of our state legislation maintained Pine Point School, Grand Portage Elementary and so forth come from that original promise and despite real consolidation in Minnesota we still have small village elementary schools for Indian students in some of our communities. And our state statutes that sort of back that up, and have continued that. We have a promise of equity and a unique role of federal government in guaranteeing Indians sort of an access to educational services coming out of the treaties. I mean it is original promise to provide for education in lieu of land and so forth and in lieu of at least in recognition of the community would be hard pressed to support itself without education and to find new avenues through education.

And lastly I need to recognize the purpose of doing education, what is culturally unique about Indian learners, and secondly is something, a part of the content of what education should include for Indians.

Those three points have been there since the late '20s, and we have struggled three different entities the tribal government, state government and the federal government to figure out how to do that and how to be effective.

One of the most interesting discussions I think that has emerged which gets to the issue of culture and speaks to the purpose of education. I think Indians bring to this discussion this element more than any people in the United States, and I think will sort of keep us healthy in that regard as a community of people. The debate today is just amazing in terms of what people are talking about we've got to do something about education, our kids are failing. And yet the only purposes that are mentioned that are important for education is getting a job, of being employed, having greater math skills so we can do better at math work than other people in the world.

For little discussion nationally about citizenship, the importance of being a human being, of expressing one's self as a human, sort of taking who you are, about what you are, what's in your past, and taking a hold of it and sort of expressing it in the present. That's what a culture is. It isn't something that's stored away, put on videotape, kept on tape and stored other places. It has to be lived, it has to be re-expressed with every generation in things, which are appropriate I suppose because of the circumstances we have. And so we sort of bring forward that treasury of heritage of language, of ways of doing things, of how we interacted with people, how we bringing forward of metaphors, and creating new ways of expressing it, and doing that, but it has to be a living thing to do it well. We do not save the culture by recording it; we don't save that at all.

There was a woman that I heard about some years ago I was involved with a library project the national Indian education association wanted to establish libraries in a number of Indian communities, and the idea was to, well it was radical in those days was to ask what kind of nation they would like, you and let them just transport existing collections, and then put them there in this community where they could use it, no I don't think so, not necessarily. The idea being is he had the kind of information the people wanted to use it. So he asked people what do you want, so we had a survey and, we developed bilingual surveys, and then they had people they could ask in Native languages in the communities where we were and so forth.

Well there was this one fellow that we met; he was gung ho at the time. He wanted in the worst way to preserve, there was this elderly woman who knew how to tan deer hides in the old way. She knew exactly how to do it, she was a, the belief was this young man and he had sort of a panic reaction that if we didn't record this that that custom would be lost for all time, and it was out of pressure put on this elder to relent and be recorded and she refused, she wouldn't do it. You know, he wasn't feeling good about that you know they put more pressure on her and she said no she says first of all she said as one of her defenses she said I cannot imagine why anyone wants to learn how to do that. She says we'd learn to do it better, there are much better ways of doing it, she says and besides it stinks, it doesn't do very well and, we gave it up a long time ago, why does anybody want to learn that. Oh but you should you know, kept pushing her and pushing her, finally she relented and she said that she would but she gave some conditions that were important.

Those conditions have always sort of told me what is really important with regard to education. First of all she said it had to be done in the Native language. It had to be done where it typically would have been done which was along a creek bed where you could wash out things and the water would sort of take care of things, and it had to be done with young people appropriately aged and appropriate sex, and all this other business. And they had to be there to help and assist and so forth, and I thought it wasn't interesting what she's interested in preserving, she doesn't care about this custom really, but she is caring about her relationship to young people, and how teaching occurs. That the education, what she wanted to preserve was education, and she wasn't caring too much about the topic, she wanted to keep the relationship of herself with those people.

And it's interesting if you think about it Native people have always been adaptive. They have picked things up and taken them in and redid them and discarded certain things or added this and that and so forth, but has always been around something which is continuous in a sense of who they were and what they're essential belief was about who they were as a people, and for why they were living, and so that was what she wanted to preserve. It was a big lesson I think, it's a big lesson about what culture is and what isn't and what we need to preserve and what isn't necessary, it's nice to know that I mean it would be interesting to see that historically that kind of information, but its not critical. The culture preserved I would imagine in how we interact with each other, how that woman interacted with those young people, how they remember and think about that, and respond. Also it was kind of like a mini classroom and how could we ever enable schools, if we could ever make a school do that, to model that for Indian education.

We've been struggling to try to transform schools, which were not Ojibwe inventions even though tribal groups always had ways of educating their people. Tribes had traditional learning that involved passing on what was important in life to the next generation. It was always done in an oral fashion, and it was done in a way that was

remembered, and in a community of people who remembered and listened and told and talked and remembered and shared and so forth. And so you have this sort of sense of the world of storytelling existing of people connected to each other in this constant of education all the time, and it continues that way.

How do you do that today? How do you, how we've been trying to transform that and it's interesting we had been trying to do that, there is nonetheless been a consistent effort to transform the schools in which our young people attend so they can be like that, they can feel like home, they had something that is of the way in which we think young people should learn, that's what we really would like to cause them to happen. The other part is interesting you want to allow them, a person to be a human being to express yourself. I think all tribal cultures had ways in which people could write songs, not write songs, that could sing songs, invent songs could, and could express one's self in art, and the way in which they around common themes could create beauty and craft and all this and so forth. How do we do that? How do we allow this sort of emergence of self today in our schools, and that's, I think we've always been trying to do that, incorporate what is part of our history, things that we can work with, the language and that too, to allow ourselves to re-express that [in a contemporary sense.] (pp. 4-8)

## **CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS**

Research implies that by understanding the core values of Native American students, the learning environment can be improved in many ways that are beneficial to the whole classroom. Western institutions can develop appropriate retention strategies that impact Native American students' point of views for attending college by understanding their cultural motivations. Understanding that the Native American learners have bicultural experiences can help educators expand learning activities to be more multicultural for all students. All adult learners have rich life experiences to offer in the classroom if there is a safe and comfortable learning environment for all learners. All adult learners provide life experiences that can be available to the learning environment.

### **Cultural perspective of Native Americans**

There are several misunderstood cultural differences that cause most students problems when navigating in Western culture, in part because of a confluence of multiple and conflicting

realities: The concept of time; the Western expectation of eye contact as an indication of listening and understanding; the requirement to participating in tasks that are based on competing; the use of silence as a sign of respect for most American Natives; and the level of community support available to students.

For the American Native, listening is about respect and learning. “Children are told that ‘thinking is sacred’ and ‘listening is sacred’” (Meyer and Bogdan, 2001). The dominant cultures perception of listening and self-reflection is being silent. Eye contact in the United States dominant culture/western culture implies that an individual is listening and being truthful. You are being honest if you are looking me in the eye. Native Americans value lack of eye contact as a form of respect; similarly, they value speaking softly and in moderation, so others can listen to Elders and as a tool for remaining present in the moment.

The dominant culture believes that competitive learning activities motivate students. Those in the dominant culture often interpret lack of participation in tasks that are based on competing as lack of drive or motivation. Why don’t you want to win? The need to win helps only one student’s self-image. Native American cultures dislike competition because it doesn’t promote community or collaborative learning. Respecting people and their feelings are very important in the Native Way of Knowing. Most Native American students will not participate in these activities.

Note: Regarding the concept of time in the Native Ways of Knowing; Natives are taught to develop inner-self by focusing on ‘being’ rather than by working hard to accomplish external goals. Native students that start and stop and later return to college do so because life is more important than attending college. Western college has a timeline during which students are expected to go to school and learn. Native cultures believe you should go to college when you’re ready. Lack of concept of timeline would be translated in the Western culture as lack of

motivation, when in fact; a Native student is simply concentrating on their life's purpose and following their life's path.

One example, if a family member is sick. Most Native American students' perspective is to be with the family member until they get well, college will be there when life is more balanced:

Faculty and staff should also be aware of cultural differences in the area of dealing with conflict. Much of the research on Native Indians has shown that conflict situations often appear to be muted or even avoided when compared with Anglo standards. For example, the Navajo desire for harmony in all aspects of life means that many disagreements and arguments will not be conducted as overtly as Anglos would expect. What this means for faculty and staff who work with Native Indian students is that just because students may not openly state their opinions does not mean they are in agreement. Directly asking Native Indian students to disclose whether or not they understand an assignment or instructions may elicit a response that from an Anglo perspective could be taken as an affirmative answer. What I have learned to do is to try various and repeated ways of looking for signs of comprehension and agreement so I don't mistake silence for lack of conflict. As indicated earlier, with time and by continuously working on credibility, faculty and staff will eventually learn to be sensitive to this aspect of Native Indian communication. (Braithwaite, 1997, p. 22)

Most Native learners have had cultural and practical encounters with nature that are unfamiliar to Western culture, and which provides different perspectives of the world. The following list from Fire (2008) is to help the dominant culture (United States) understand some core values of different cultures:

1. Orientation to the previous knowledge and experiences of the learner
2. Respect for the individual learner including silence

3. Decreased pressure to participate before ready
4. A sense of belonging and cooperation
5. Decreased emphasis on competition
6. Effective use of discussion; not talking just to talk
7. Use of storytelling, case studies, and experiential learning
8. Emphasis on observational experiences
9. Flexibility of scheduling
10. An orientation to the here and now rather than the future
11. Relevance to the learner in the current situation
12. Use of concrete examples and activities with movement to abstraction
13. Holistic perspective rather than linear content
14. Incorporation of spirituality
15. Creation of a safe environment for expression
16. Use of encouragement and guidance in relationship with teacher. (pp. 10-11)

### **Engagement activities**

Fire (2008) also suggests implementing effective strategies:

Use of collaborative work, support from teachers, multiple representations of content including audio from experts, support services, shared workspaces, and clear learning outcomes. Higher order thinking is encouraged through reflective assignments such as journaling, questioning, belief-based responses, and development of solutions to problems. (p. 39)

“Native American learners tend to respond best to learning formats that are group oriented and humanized through the extensive use of narration, humor, drama, and affective modeling in

the presentation of content” (Fire, 2008, p. 11). Self-reflection on one’s personal experience about the topic is more valuable to Native American Students, by respecting student’s culture, western educators have to start understanding there are more than one right answer.

Native American Elders are viewing the general America culture of consumerism as form decentralization: Internet, media, travel, migration and interdependent economic system are creating a global culture based on production and consumption of brand-name manufacture products. Calling then the “new world teen” they have global culture of speak the same language of global brand consumption.

Dr Richard St. Germaine stated in an informal interview and also in News From Indian County, “We live in a Wal-Mart/McDonald’s world today,” he said. “The notion of commercialism, consumerism, has overwhelmed us. Unfortunately, a lot of people have turned their backs on preserving the past” (Graef, 2011). Richard also stated that young tribal members are not participating in cultural education. Some of the learners are escaping to Wal-Mart or the movie theater instead of participating in traditional customs.

Which is one of the biggest issues in the Native American community and the understanding our present course of economic growth and global understanding of the interrelatedness of mass consumerism; especially the “new world teen generation” where brand names are unifying a generation, to preserve the Native Way of Knowing.

Native American students typically fall into the upper demographic sets in terms of age, and many of these students are parents looking for retraining or deciding to attend college later in life. For example, within the tribal college system, education is viewed through a "whole community" approach to lifelong education, based on the principle that a student does not have to abandon culture or family to obtain an education.

“According to American Indian College Fund statistics, 91% of scholarship recipients are

nontraditional students, that is, they have dependents, are older than 24 years of age, and work full time or have a combination of these characteristics. These students take longer to complete their education when faced with financial and familial demands” (Guillory 2009, p. 18 ).

Professor Richard St. Germaine provides an example that a student does not have to abandon culture or family to obtain an education. Germaine mentioned two beautiful young women Native American Students who had received the same support and guidance in life to attend college. Both applied to the Western College however only one was accepted. The second started attending the Tribal College and later is now raising a child. The expectations for both women to finish college are the same. However their paths are different and the young woman with the child will finish in about seven years.

### **BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS**

Native American students have traditionally not been successful in Western colleges. The greater degree of success is directly attributable to the fact that these students are taught by members of their Tribe, and that the context of the educational experience has been adapted to the unique cultural background of the students. The following section, illustrates several different options and suggestions to building support systems for Native American students. It is critical to understand the cultural capital of their regional tribes and to use the knowledge to increase college retentions: understanding and investigating what motivates Native American students is the key for their success. (Gullior, 2009, p. 21)

### **Students**

Native American students “average age at a Tribal College is twenty-eight; sixty-four percent are women, and a large percent are single parents” (Guardia and Evans, 2008, p. 241). Most are first-generation college students that are usually uncomfortable about being the first member of

their family to attend college. (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 241) The two primary reasons why students attend Tribal Colleges are location and cost. The most sagacious reason to attend Tribal Colleges or universities is because a person places an extremely “high value on a culturally relevant higher education” (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 241). Most Native American Students enroll on a part-time basis and have jobs outside the school. Native Americans also leave school more frequently than Western students at other community colleges, usually because of financial concerns or family obligations. The majority of Tribal College students are unmarried women; 70 percent are in their thirties and have at least one child (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 242).

### **Factors influencing access, retention, and success in mainstream higher education**

As a group, Native American Students are older, lower income, and often the first one in the immediate family to attend college. These students are relatively inexperienced and unused to Western cultural expectations in higher education. It’s interesting to note that the single, 30-ish, female Native American student majority has a higher percentage in Tribal communities than the similar demographic in other ethnic populations in the United States.

Knowing these specific characteristics provides a framework for helping Native American Students be successful in any college.

Further research show that factors assisting the successful transition from high school to college also included a degree of family involvement; giving back to tribal community; dealing with instances of campus hostility; creating an environment for culture expression; and taking into account the unique academic, social, cultural and psychological needs of these students, all these factors play a role in the decision for Native American students to attend, persist or leave college. (Gullitory, 2009, p. 13)

Braithwaite (2009) spent eight months at a Tribal College investigating the strengths of the schools and how the structure of this learning style could translate to helping Native American students in Western colleges and universities. In general, Braithwaite recommended that Western colleges should pay close attention to three important areas: (1) Experience of the adult learner: “the strengths of Native American Students educated at Tribal Colleges” (p. 20), (2) Social support: the “concerns that some Native Americans have about attending college off the reservation” (p. 20), and (3) Faculty: “the kind of support and assistance Native American Students would find genuinely helpful” (p. 20).

### **Strengths of Native American students educated at Tribal Colleges**

Understanding the strengths of Native American adult learners who have attended Tribal College is critical because since they are older they have greater experience with bicultural issues and situations because of acculturation. Also, their intellectual diversity is very developed because of Native Ways of teaching. Most Native American students have experience in bicultural education by attending both Native and Western education systems, providing valuable insight on how to implement multicultural education. These adult learners are experts on their own development.

### **Social support system**

One of the major concerns that Native American students have when transferring to Western colleges is stereotyping: All Indians are plains Indians, all Indians are spiritual and/or medicine men, and all Indians are poverty stricken and/or alcoholics. Fortunately, many tribal colleges have courses to help students learn “what to expect at predominantly western institutions and

how to best handle the environment” (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 257), while maintaining one’s dignity as a Native American. Western colleges must provide all students with courses on how to adjust to western institutions and how to best handle the environment.

### **Faculty education**

Another suggestion is to have all teachers participate in multicultural courses. Culturally sensitive or appropriate instruction can be provided if educators are aware of the socio-cultural backgrounds and learning styles of their students, and if an appropriate instructional paradigm is applied to the process of development.

### **Native American perspective**

**Yvonne Novack, White Earth Ojibwe, Minnesota in Norrgard (2011) website,**

**[www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y\\_Novack\\_Edu\\_Outtake.pdf](http://www.ojibwe.org/home/pdf/Y_Novack_Edu_Outtake.pdf):**

My name is Yvonne Novack. I am a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe from the White Earth Reservation. I am currently the manager of Indian education in the Department of Children Family and Learning for the state of Minnesota. I’ve been involved in Indian education for 24 years, 24 years this year. I wasn't raised in Minnesota, but Minnesota was always home, White Earth was always home. I don't care where you are raised, an Indian from a reservation, you just have this sense of knowing that that’s home and that is where everything happens. My mom was born and raised on White Earth in the village of Nitawash along with the rest of my family from here, so when I came home, I did come home. And that is a strange thing to say when you move to some place. You usually say I moved to some place and made a new home, but I actually came home.

Well, I started out ... I got married really early. I had a baby and was a housewife for a long time and dabbled at going to school, you know community college, like a lot of Indian women. And then I started working in Indian education. It was then Title 4 Indian education and I started as a tutor, and I worked my way up to program manager. Then, I had what I guess you would call a change in life style, and I went back to school, and through the support of my family and the Indian education community where I was working, I went to University of California at Berkeley, and that is where I did my undergraduate work. Then, I had the opportunity to go to Harvard, and I earned my masters in education in Harvard. Then, from Harvard I came to Minnesota. I came as a Woodrow Wilson administrative fellow and worked at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. So, I have worked in education from preschool through graduate

school.

I think there are learning styles; there are learning activities that children do that are specific to American Indian children. But, I hate to use that term because it pinpoints kids, and to best explain it, I have a teacher that called me about a week ago and said, "I am really working hard with this group of Indian children in my reading group, but they don't sit in a circle well and listen and they don't learn orally." I said, "Why would you think they would do that?" and she said, "Well, I read this book and it said that American Indian kids learn better in a group and orally." And I said, well, no that's not every American Indian child, it really is an individual issue". There are some common things like not really looking you in the eye when they talk to you, or maybe their language pattern is different. Maybe they need to watch it, what you're doing first or practice to themselves first before they do something. And then I said but there is the Indian kid who is going to sit there and be just as vocal and just as whatever as any other child in the classroom, so I don't think in Minnesota in public schools... so much you can't target one learning style and I think we've run into too many problems by targeting one learning style, or saying that all Indian children learn the same, because they don't. Karen Schwisher, who did the big work in the 70's on Indian learning styles wishes now, that she didn't coin some of those phrases because again it has stereotyped kids and that is what we don't want to do, is stereotype children.

If you are going to have children in your classroom, who come from various backgrounds, the teacher needs to know about that child and needs to know about their culture. American Indian children have some real culturally specific issues in their families. Extended family... different seasons of the year where they do different things. Some of them, some children are very culturally involved some children are not culturally involved. Teachers need to know about the children in their classroom. If you are going to have a classroom of kids and ...When teachers are working in a classroom and it is all children who are the same group all non Indian children or all dominant culture children well the teacher automatically knows their history their language and their culture and it is something they practice every day so it is easy to communicate to the child it is easy to make the child feel welcome and the parents feel welcome. And when the child feels welcome and secure they learn better. So, if you are going to have American Indian children in the classroom a teacher really needs to know something about that child's tribe, that child's specific tribe. Instead of studying Navajos or Hopis in Minnesota, the teacher needs to know something about the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and the four Dakota communities and the Red Lake reservation; they really need to have some understanding of that.

It makes a difference. It makes a difference on how they treat the child. It makes a difference on how they interact with the parents and it makes a difference when they come to choose curriculum and how they present things. (pp. 1-3)

## **Curricula**

Fire also suggested that one of the goals of college is to provide "a learning environment in which students develop skills in effective communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding, and citizenship (the "4 C's") ... to insure that the graduates are becoming good

citizens, are thinking critically, have an awareness of culture, and a sense of their place in the community. These are strong and foundational goals, the ‘building blocks’ for a healthy diverse community. These "4 C's" are "rules" that direct the syllabi for all courses and therefore provide the framework for the design of objectives and assignments” (Fire, 2008, pp. 241-242). By having the “4C’s” in the syllabus both educator and learner will focus on their cultural awareness, building a community in the classroom and understanding how the course will help them in their communities and real-life experiences.

### **Successful retention program at western universities**

This section is based on Guillory’s (2009) a qualitative study that examined Native Americans students perceptions and the perceptions of the state representatives, university presidents and faculty to learn about factors and barriers; specifically on degree completion. The study highlighted three Universities for three reasons: larger population of Native American students, the colleges had implemented retentions-to-graduation strategies and their retention programs have been successful (Students go back to the band after college). (p. 16) The implication for practice: retention strategies for Native American Students include: (1) Maintain Connection to family and Tribal Community; (2) Address single parent students and students with family issues; and (3) Academic Assistance through Peer Mentoring. (pp. 18-19)

### **Understanding Native Americans students culture characteristics**

Understanding characteristics, motivation and barriers of students helps colleges develop successful programs. For example, financial support is a high priority when, 70 percent of

students attending Tribal Colleges are single women with children. Consequently, understanding Native American students' motivation is critical. Most Native American students are motivated by their family and giving back to the tribal community, which provides the determination and desire to finish college. A Native American student's culture identity is a strong contributor to their college persistence. (Guillory 2009, pp. 16-17)

Western institutions and Native American students had very different views on the motivation factors for attending and staying in College. The western institutions placed a high premium on a misconception that financial support drives or motivates Native American students. The Native American students agreed without financial support they would not be able to attend college; however it was a barrier not a motivation. The key factors that provide Native students determination and desire to finish college or attend college are social welfare. The main motivators are their family and giving back to the tribe for the students driving force to attend college. (Guillory 2009, p. 16)

#### **Academic programs versus campus social support (students)**

In Guillory's (2009) study, it questioned both the institutions and Native American students about what are the driving forces for Native American students to stay in college. The administrators and faculty thought that if the university offered academic programs that had strong appeal for Native Americans they would be more inclined to finish college. Once again this was just a barrier not a motivation factor. The Native American or Multicultural Student Centers on each campus provided the "community" that the students deemed essential in reducing their sense of isolation and alienation. (p. 18)

#### **Lack of Academic Preparation at K-12 Level**

“Both groups emphasized that public school systems on Indian reservation land are substandard and that ill-prepared students sometimes avoid more rigorous college-level courses, particularly in English, math, and the sciences. The implication is that better schools and improved teaching at the K-12 level would increase the likelihood of Native American students completing college since they would not have to play "catch up." Unfortunately, it is not until they actually get to college that they realize they have some catching up to do” (Guillory 2009, p. 18).

Understanding of the culture characteristics of Native American students will help institutions develop better retention programs. If the institutions were educated about multiculturalism they would have understood that all tribal members are taught that community is the highest priority in Native American culture.

### **Strategy 1: Maintain connections to family and tribal community**

The first strategy for western institutions; create programs that allow Native American students to stay connected with both college and tribal communities, in order to have Native American students obtain professional careers on the Reservation. The three main components of this strategy: A family model, developmental education positions and collaboration programs.

The family component to this strategy was inspired by the student interviews and supported by the Family Education Model (FEM). The model's principles are based on education and social work, which promote action, like how to deal with Native students' attrition. The indigenous-based model promoting student persistence in higher education that explicitly concentrates on Native American students. The FEM focus is to make the Native American Students life on campus like a home environment by having the connection with family members and tribal members participating in their education process, which increases the students' retention.

Secondly, highlight two programs that exemplify how to maintain a strong community connection to build trust and collaboration between the university and tribal communities and the most critical component, to provide a culturally sensitive career counselor by creating a developmental education position, where Native American students can be guided into professional programs and eventually careers at their Reservation.

Offer collaboration programs with Tribal communities and universities where Native American professionals, Native American professors, Native American education coordinators and tribal elders, can inform career counseling faculty and staff on university campuses regarding what is most needed in the native communities.

Montana State University developed a program call Caring for Our Own: a Reservation/University Partnership (CO-OP) emphasizes on the partnership of university nursing educators with tribal leaders, reservation-based educators and Native American professionals. CO-OP identifies Native Americans students who have a desire to provide the very best health care available to their own people. “ The many benefits of the program include expert, culturally-sensitive career counseling, academic assistance and assistance with social and financial aid services available from MSU” (Guillory 2009, p. 20).

Another beneficial program sponsored by MSU is called “Rockin the Rez”. This program includes faculty and staff from various programs on campus who tour public schools and/or tribal community colleges at each Indian reservation in the state of Montana. This is a concentrated effort to get representatives from MSU to discuss the many available opportunities on campus for Native American students with them on their tribal ground. ...These programs are excellent examples of maintaining strong community connections to bolster trust and collaboration between the university and tribal communities. (Guillory 2009, p. 20)

### **Strategy 2: Address single parent students and students with family issues.**

A second strategy is for western universities to offer family-care services, special packages, or unique financial assistance for single parents and students with families (in some cases with four children). Most Native American single-parent students take longer to complete their education, it's important that universities need to provide scholarships or financial aid programs, similar to the American Indian College Fund, that take into account the culture characteristics of Native American students attending college (time orientation component).

In addition to these recommendations, the research findings in this study support the use of the strategies offered within the aforementioned Family Education Model, in particular, the use of the Family Specialist. The Family Specialist meets these criteria by helping student/parents identify financial resources, obtaining childcare information, providing family-life skills training, helping individuals deal with the tremendous pressure of being student/parents, and even assisting with family problems back home through counseling. Serving as a liaison, the Family Specialist can be especially beneficial for Native American students who have the tendency not to use the general services available to them to their maximum benefit. (Guillory 2009, p. 20)

### **Academic assistance through peer mentoring.**

After initiating the recommended types of services for Native American students, institutions need to build confidence by providing academic assistance for these students, particularly in the areas of mathematics and English, because most Native American students have had limited exposures to advance mathematics and poor English writing skills, which results having to catch up academically, when attending College.

For the Native American students in the study, academic self-confidence was a huge factor in believing they could succeed at the college level. Providing a boost of self-confidence through strong academic support systems with cultural connections, such as hiring Native American student tutors or encouraging faculty to help students in these academic trouble areas, can go a long way in helping Native American students mitigate feelings of inadequacy as it relates to academic performance. (Guillory 2009, p. 20)

Western Institutions have impermanent peer-mentoring programs to help Native Americans freshman and transfer students by partnering with mentors that are typically upper class-level students to guide and advise the incoming students. The freshman peer-mentoring programs have tremendous benefits on academic achievement. Students learn best from each other from observation on what is successful and not successful. “ Other institutions across the U.S. have implemented similar peer-mentor programs to reduce attrition rates among Native American freshman, sophomore, and transfer students” (Guillory 2009, p. 20 ).

The University of Oklahoma (OU) called RAIN (Retaining American Indians Now) program is a student-initiated, peer-mentoring for freshman, sophomore, and transfer Native American students. RAIN matches students with mentors who have similar academic majors, provides academic assistance, and ultimately develops academic resilience as well as social and personal growth. Support is on a weekly base and regular reports mentored by a student coordinator, governed by a student advisory board, and housed at OUs American Indian Student Services. (Guillory 2009, p. 20)

It is critical for western colleges and universities to understand the cultural and Native American students’ characteristics of their regional tribes in order to build successful retention programs.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After reflecting on the concept of tolerance in education, it's enormously important for teachers to become aware of the growing multi-dominant cultures in the United States. We must develop a new education system that teaches multiculturalism and multi-perspective in order to provide equal education for all students. Educators need to learn about different culture characteristics of students in order to foster deep learning. Most tribal colleges provide curriculum that promotes tolerance by teaching self-awareness, multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Recommendations, update our education systems based on the new global world: new technology, equal education (language and culture in western cultures), sustainable education, (global awareness of mass consumption), multiculturalism and multi-language education (multi-dominant culture in the United States) and creative education (learning about students passion will foster new economic development in the world, jobs that have not been created.) like the native way of knowing.

Implement and develop support and assistance programs for Native American Students: Provide housing on campus with childcare, financial programs to provide support of families, freshman peer-mentoring programs, cultural advising and counseling, social relationship communities and partnerships with Western institutions and tribal education leaders.

The Anishinaabeg is based on the Native Way of Knowing which simply means learning is about creating connections, which foster deep learning. The Native Way of Knowing is about unity. Everything is connected. Natives are taught to respect other cultures, nature and the universe. Basically teaching tolerance. All learners have schemas; the multiple realities that make the connections with their life and learning.

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